

**Lesson Topic: Be the Iron Chef in Your Kitchen**

**Supplies Needed:**

Panel of Judges (recommend three) - Could be volunteers, Extension Staff Members, or guests

Prizes for winning team (i.e. restaurant gift card)

Recommended supplies for each group include:

* Electric skillet
* Utensils such as spatulas, dish towels, dish cloths, plates, forks, knives, cutting boards

Other items recommended to be available if needed:

* Ovens
* Microwave
* Stovetop
* Food Thermometers
* List of ingredients in supplemental Iron Chef Needs List
* Secret Ingredient

**Concepts and/or Learning Objectives:**

To develop a sense of teamwork among the members, and to allow an outlet for creative thinking and decision-making as a group, while learning basic culinary skills.

**Introduction:**

Prior to the event, teams can be set up and do advanced planning to help modify the supplemental Iron Chef Needs List. Be sure to work with the club treasury to determine resources available. The facilitator should also pick a “mystery ingredient” that is not shared with the participants until the challenge begins.

Prepare youth beforehand that this could be a long meeting with the introduction information, activity, judging, and clean up.

Before teams start cooking, present a short safety session related to food and kitchen topics. Check the sources section for resources, and ensure making these points:

* Preventing kitchen fires (use of electric skillet and hot plates)
* Safely walking around kitchen and watching for others while walking with hot materials
* Hand washing
* Food Safety and cooking temperatures (Clean, Separate, Cook, Chill)
* MyPlate and healthy meal planning

Also remind them that they are the cleanup crew, which will work best if they keep clean up in mind as they work. This activity takes some time, and cleaning is part of the process of being responsible.

**Activity:**

1. Divide the group into teams of five or six members.
2. Have each team become familiar with their “kitchen” space and the available tools.
3. Announce the Secret Ingredient.
4. Give each team approximately 40 minutes to complete a dish together.
5. Teams should be prepared to present their dish to the judges, explaining how the secret ingredient is used. Encourage them to think of all MyPlate food groups when planning their dish.
6. Have judges provide feedback. Though winning is not the point, you could award winners with small gift cards, 4-H swag, or other prizes.
7. After judging, everyone should ensure the space is cleaner than when starting.

**Tips for Facilitator:**

* Be aware of food allergies among the youth and adults and avoid including those ingredients.
* Try to think of a theme for your secret ingredient. For example, if you are close to observing Groundhog Day, the secret ingredient could be “ground hog” (sausage). You could end up with meatballs, biscuits and gravy, stuffed peppers, and more!
* Participants could use a recipe, but they would not have to.
* You could give teams five minutes to plan before they can start cooking.
* Try to ensure all members have a role on their team.
* Adults should circulate to watch how youth work together and watch for kitchen safety.
* Prepare judges they could get a variety of dish quality, so they can be prepared on how to handle tasting and feedback.

**Discussion Points/Reflection Questions:**

* How did your dishes turn out?
* What worked well with your team? What were the challenges?
* What did you learn about working in a kitchen?
* What would you do differently if you ever repeated this experience?
* What might you try (or not try) at home as a result of what we did today?

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**Sources:**

* Adapted from activity from Morgan County Junior Leaders with Purdue Extension.
* U.S. Department of Health and Human Sciences- Food Safety: <https://www.foodsafety.gov/keep-food-safe/4-steps-to-food-safety> and <https://www.foodsafety.gov/food-safety-charts/safe-minimum-cooking-temperature>
* Common Foods Infographic<https://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/pdfs/safety-tips-for-handling-and-preparing-common-foods.pdf>
* CDC Handwashing and Hand Sanitizer Fact Sheet: <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/pdf/hand-sanitizer-factsheet.pdf>
* University of Maine Cooperative Extension- Kitchen Safety (Bulletin #2314) <https://extension.umaine.edu/publications/2314e/>
* Iowa State University Extension and Outreach: Knife Safety <https://blogs.extension.iastate.edu/spendsmart/2018/02/19/kitchen-safety-knife-safety/>
* National Park Service- Fire Prevention 52- Keeping Safe in the Kitchen: <https://www.nps.gov/articles/p52-keeping-safe-in-the-kitchen.htm>
* USDA ChooseMyPlate: <https://choosemyplate-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/printablematerials/myplate_green.jpg>

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