Lunchroom Décor Look Book:
Easy, Fun Ideas
for Adding Flavor to Your Lunchroom

- Pinterest
- Google search
- Keywords: lunchroom, kids, fun, healthy, food, elementary/middle/high school, cultural, foods of the world, flavors, mural, bulletin board, décor, decoration
- Aligns with many items on the Smarter Lunchrooms Scorecard
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Bulletin Boards

Tips:
- Colorful, bright, and age-appropriate
- Topics may include nutrition, school spirit, students’ cultures, seasonal interests…almost anything cheerful and fun!
- Try to represent student diversity, cultures, and interests
- Involve students within the district: design contest, doing the artwork, upkeep
- Great way to introduce new foods; can pair with a taste test
- Partners well with nutrition education, food/fruit/vegetable/etc. of the month, local produce, and other promotional initiatives
- May earn points in the Lunchroom Atmosphere and Student Involvement categories of the Smarter Lunchrooms Scorecard

Nutrition themes and information
Many age groups represented
Diverse student representation

3-dimensional design adds interest
Seasonal flair
Pairs with nutrition and wellness initiatives
Nutrition education
Fun with New Foods, Food Names, and Food Promotions

Tips:
- Promote new foods (especially fruits, vegetables, salad options, and entrees) with fun names, food art, and other attention-getting pizzazz
- Fun, colorful, age-appropriate
- Food art and other examples can be one-time-only or only on special occasions, such as taste tests; fun names can be used every day (focus them on target items only)
- Fun way to introduce new foods and lower the “scariness” level of the unknown (“threshold to entry”)
- May earn points in the Fruit, Vegetables, Salad, and Reimbursable Meals categories of the Smarter Lunchrooms Scorecard

Food art
Fun ideas: cut out letters naming the food itself or the school name; partner with teacher to let kids make self-portraits or use school-grown foods or food-of-the-month
Fun way to plate a special entrée with sides
Fun food name labels (see Smarter Lunchrooms Strategies for more examples and tools)
Kid food bingo – taste test idea?

Food “passport” to encourage kids to sample foods of different cultures
Lunchroom Murals

Tips:
- Colorful, bright, and age-appropriate
- Topics may include nutrition, school spirit, students’ cultures, local foods and produce, town scenes, favorite characters, local sports teams or landscapes… almost anything cheerful and fun!
- Try to represent student diversity, cultures, and interests
- Incorporate architectural features such as windows and doors into the design
- Involve students within the district: design contest, doing the artwork (counts as student service hours or collaborate with art teacher as a class project) or raising money to pay a professional artist (perhaps an alum of the school/district or a local artist)
- Mural may contribute toward Student Involvement and Lunchrooms Atmosphere items on the Smarter Lunchrooms Scorecard

Nutrition themes
Representative of students’ cultures and interests
Town scenes
Incorporate architectural features into the design!
Lunchroom Posters and Signage

Tips:
- Colorful, bright, and age-appropriate
- Topics may include nutrition, school spirit, students’ cultures, seasonal interests… almost anything cheerful and fun!
- Try to represent student diversity, cultures, and interests
- Look online and ask your vendor: Many free printed posters and free downloadable print-your-own designs are available from vendors, commodities groups, the USDA, and civic groups
- Involve students within the district: design contest, doing the artwork
- Great way to introduce new foods, pair with a taste test
- Partners well with nutrition education, foods of the month, local produce, and other promotional initiatives
- May earn points in the Lunchroom Atmosphere and Student Involvement categories of the Smarter Lunchrooms Scorecard

Nutrition themes
Student work
Cultural themes
Nutrition themes/nutrition education
Cultural themes
Nutrition education
Food from Around the World
In what country did each food originate?
Flavor Stations
Tips:
- Use a freestanding condiment island, movable cart, or part of the service line
- Kids love being able to personalize their food (fruits, veggies, and entrees)
- Great way to introduce new foods; can pair with a taste test
- Try our Best Bets (most popular) or New and Regional Flavors (trendy, local favorites), or any combination
- Use colorful, neat, age-appropriate design with a fun name like “Flavor Town,” “Savor the Flavor,” or “Flavor Station”
- A strategy in the Vary the Veggies category of the Smarter Lunchrooms Scorecard

Convenient and visible
Age-appropriate design
Introducing:
The Flavor Station
Choice of several flavors to enhance your School Lunch!
Enjoy!
Example and signage from the Smarter Lunchrooms Movement
FLAVOR STATIONS

A flavor station (also called a spice station or flavor bar) is a great way to get kids excited about trying new foods and participating in school lunch!

What is a flavor station?
Any area where kids can self-select spices to add pizzazz to their meal. They can be on the serving line, attached to or next to the salad bar, or on a freestanding cart or table. It is a good idea to offer suggestions for which spices can go on which foods, as a way of making kids feel willing to try new flavors and expanding their taste horizons.

Why are they popular with kids?
Kids love being able to customize their meals and personalize their dining experience. They can experiment with different flavors.

What spices can I include?
Variety is the spice of life! Check out the sample flavor station for ideas. Popular favorites include black pepper, crushed red pepper (anything spicy, really), cinnamon, nutmeg, chili or cumin powder, garlic powder, oregano, basil, and balsamic vinegar. Customize to your popular foods – in

How to create a flavor station

1. Select a site for the flavor station. It should be easily accessible to all students in a visible, high-traffic area. Good options are attached to the side of the salad bar, or on the serving line itself (if there is only one serving line). It is a cart, decorate the cart, it’s desired.

2. Choose and order spices and other items (vinegar cruets, lemon wedges, etc.).

SPICES & SEASONINGS

NEW & REGIONAL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spice</th>
<th>Flavor Description</th>
<th>Try It On…</th>
<th>Heat Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apple Cider Vinegar</td>
<td>Bright, new tang</td>
<td>Cabbage, kale, cooked or raw green veggies, salad</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cinnamon</td>
<td>Mysterious, warm, sweet, a little bit hot</td>
<td>Yams, sweet potato, squash, apples, cooked fruit, and in smoothies and desserts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coriander</td>
<td>Hot, spicy</td>
<td>Flavor to soups, tacos, rice, eggs, caviar, and any Spanish/Mexican/Southwestern cuisine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chipotle Pepper</td>
<td>Smoky, fiery</td>
<td>Rice, soup, Spanish/Mexican/Southwestern rice, and other cilantro</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oregano</td>
<td>Fresh, citrus leaf</td>
<td>Spanish/Mexican/Southwestern dishes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SPICES & SEASONINGS

BEST BETS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spice</th>
<th>Flavor Description</th>
<th>Try It On…</th>
<th>Heat Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balsamic vinegar</td>
<td>Complex, herbal, mint, and sour</td>
<td>Dressing topping, salad, raw veggies, bread</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basil</td>
<td>Popular fresh, nutty Italian herb</td>
<td>Pasta, rice, salad, cheese, salad, fresh tomatoes and other salad veggies</td>
<td>chili</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Pepper</td>
<td>Smoky, dry rub</td>
<td>Nearly everything! Meat, rice, potatoes, raw and cooked veggies</td>
<td>chili</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chili Powder</td>
<td>Smoky heat</td>
<td>Chili, rice, Spanish/Mexican/Southwestern rice, and even raw cabbage</td>
<td>chili</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cinnamon</td>
<td>Sweet, woody</td>
<td>Yams, sweet potato, squash, apples, oatmeal, dessert, pudding, red meat</td>
<td>chili</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Download full-text PDFs from www.SmarterLunchrooms.org