

School Salad Bars

Salad bars can be a great way to feature local food items and to help meet the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act meal pattern. Check out the information below on how to fully utilize salad bars in the School Nutrition Programs.

Reimbursable Meal-Schools can easily transform the salad bar into a complete reimbursable meal by incorporating foods like chicken, cheese, eggs, tuna, and grains.

Vegetable subgroups (red/orange, dark green, beans/peas (legumes), starchy and other) can be offered daily to reach weekly requirements, or vegetable subgroups can be rotated each day to meet the weekly requirements.

Grains-If grains are being used to meet the grain components, schools should offer whole-grain rich products. Items such as croutons and crackers can be used to meet the grain requirement, or served as extras if the daily grain requirement has already been met.

Breakfast-Salad bars can also be used for breakfast to offer a variety of fruit.

Nutrient Analysis-Pre-portioning the grains and meats will help to keep calories, sodium, and saturated fat within required weekly limits. It will also help cashiers from needing to quickly identify proper portion sizes.

Standardized Recipe-Schools should develop a standardized recipe for a salad bar. To do so, measure the amount of each ingredient placed on the salad bar on a typical day, measure the amount of each ingredient leftover on the food bar at the end of the meal service, and subtract the amount leftover from the amount placed on the salad bar.

Accessibility-Place the salad bar before the cashier or have a monitor at the salad bar to count the components featured on the salad bar as part of a reimbursable meal. If the salad bar is not accessible to all students within the serving area, schools will need to make sure that vegetable subgroups are available on all serving lines.

Signage-Placing visual aids and signage at the salad bar can help students select proper portion sizes.

Production Records-Visit our webpage to view sample salad bar production records. Click [here](#).

Health/Safety-Work with the local health department on food safety with salad bars.

State Agency Support-Work with the school's field specialist to make sure the school's salad bar meets the requirements for the meal pattern.

Resources

- USDA's Salad Bar Memo <https://www.fns.usda.gov/salad-bars-national-school-lunch-program>.
- Best Practices when Handling Fresh Produce in https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/Food_Safety_Produce_Best_practices.pdf.
- Let's Move Salad Bars to Schools website and to apply for a free salad bar <http://www.saladbars2schools.org/>.
- For questions or concerns about obtaining a free salad bar, contact your Field Specialist.

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