Tips for a Successful Cooking Demonstration

Cooking demonstrations are useful tools that show participants quick, easy ways to prepare Ornish-friendly foods.

- The demonstrations should focus on “new foods” that the participants are having a difficult time implementing into their eating style.
- The recipes should be easy to reproduce at home.
- Soy foods, whole grains and holiday foods are some of the suggested themes for the demonstrations.

Pre-Program Planning

- A minimum of two cooking demonstrations should be scheduled during Stage I of the program. The PMRI-trained chef and/or dietitian should conduct the cooking demonstrations.
- If a meal is planned on cooking demonstration days, tailor the meal to make it light. Participants may become too full to taste the demo samples if a complete meal is served.
- If the participants will solely be eating food prepared during the cooking demonstration, you may wish to begin the demo with a pre-made soup or an appetizer(s).
- Plan ahead to take advantage of time-saving strategies. Consider demonstrating the same foods that will be served for the day’s cohort meal. Taste-testing can then be accomplished at mealtime.

One to Two Weeks Prior to the Cooking Demonstration

- Plan to prepare three to seven recipes during the cooking demonstrations. (See “Sample Cooking Demonstration Recipes Featuring Soy and Whole-Grain Foods”)
- Focus on recipes using whole foods, as well as soy and whole-grains. These foods are often difficult for participants to work into their meal plan and to meet suggested servings.
- Incorporate ingredients, such as: soymilk, tofu, tempeh, soybeans, dry-roasted soy nuts, whole-wheat pasta, brown rice, whole-grain cereals, barley, bulgur and quinoa.
- Prepare a cooking demo handout listing the foods and recipes featured so that participants can replicate the recipes at home.
- Plan for items or equipment that your foodservice can provide, such as: portable burners, pots, pans, cutting boards, knives, utensils and food items that they typically have on hand.
- Encourage support people to attend the cooking demonstrations.
- Ask staff members to be available the day of the demos to help pass out samples and help clean up.
- Reserve a demonstration room. Cooking demonstrations can be time consuming, therefore, you may want to conduct the demo in a room dedicated just for the demonstration.
The Day of the Cooking Demonstration

- Pre-prep any food or items ahead of time (i.e. cut and chop fresh vegetables; cook grains such as, pasta and brown rice; assemble items, such as trail mix, etc.). This saves time and can be done at your facility or at home.
- Have different whole-grains, such as quinoa, bulgur, barley, kasha and amaranth, prepared for taste-tasting.
- Distribute handouts and recipes to participants. If a food list or recipe is not provided in the handout(s), inform the participants that they will need to take notes.
- Pass out or refer to the Quick and Easy Meals handout to provide more recipe ideas.
- Explain each recipe that is being prepared. Be very specific as to what food items are being used in each dish.
- Allow participants to view food packages for the featured items.
- Remember, the goal of the cooking demonstrations is to provide participants with experience and knowledge.

Sample Cooking Demonstration Recipes Featuring Soy and Whole-Grain Foods

The following recipes can serve as a guide to provide ideas for your cooking demonstrations. Use your creativity to adapt themes and recipes to satisfy your own style and meet the needs of your participants.

Tofu Ranch Dip
Yield: 6-8 servings
1 package silken tofu*
1 envelope fat-free ranch dressing mix

Combine items in blender and blend until smooth. Serve with assorted cut vegetables.

Ornish Trail Mix
Yield: 4-6 servings
1 cup Cheerios**
1 cup Wheat Chex**
1 cup Quaker Toasted Oatmeal Squares**
1/2 cup dried cranberries or raisins
1/2 cup dried mixed fruit
1/2 cup dry-roasted soy nuts*
1/2 cup fat-free or low-fat granola (optional)**

Combine all ingredients in a large bowl, mix well and serve.

Tofu Stir-fry
Yield: 4 servings
1 package firm or extra firm tofu, diced*
1 cup edamame (soy beans)*
1 package Create-a-Meal, sweet and sour variety
2 cups cooked brown rice** or quinoa**

Heat sauce from Create-a-Meal package in large skillet. Add vegetables to skillet and heat until warm. Add edamame and tofu and heat until hot. Serve over brown rice.

Soynut “Butter”
Yield: 3-5 servings
1 package dry-roasted, unsalted, unflavored soy nuts*
Water, about 1/4 cup
Honey, about 1/4 cup

Grind soy nuts into a fine powder using coffee bean grinder or food processor. Transfer to bowl and add water and honey slowly to ground soybeans until desired consistency is achieved.

Banana-Strawberry Smoothie
Yield: 1 serving
1 cup full-fat vanilla soy milk*
1 banana
1/2 cup strawberries (fresh or frozen)

Place all ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth. Additional fruit can be used as per preference.

Cheese and Pepperoni Appetizers
Yield: 6-8 servings
1 package Veggie Slices, flavor of choice
1 package Yves Veggie Pepperoni
1 package whole-grain crackers (Quilt crackers, Woven Wheats, Ryvita, etc)

Cut each slice of cheese into quarters. Place one square of cheese on a cracker and top with slice of pepperoni.

Lemon Pudding
Yield: 2 servings
1 (10.5-ounce) package silken tofu*
1 tablespoon lemon peel
1/3 cup + 1 tablespoon granulated sugar or other sweetener
1/4 cup lemon juice
1/4 teaspoon salt (optional)
Pinch turmeric (optional)

Place all ingredients into a food processor or blender and blend until completely smooth. Spoon into bowls and chill.
Adapted from: Fat Free & Easy; Jennifer Raymond, p. 137
Mock Chicken Salad
Yield: 4 servings
1 package (8 ounces) tempeh*
1/3 cup chopped onions
1/3 cup chopped celery
1/3 cup chopped green bell pepper
1/3 to 1/2 cup fat-free mayonnaise
1 to 2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
1 to 2 teaspoons lemon juice
8 slices whole wheat bread, toasted**
Lettuce leaves, as garnish
1 medium tomato, sliced

Crumble tempeh, or mash coarsely with a fork. Combine tempeh, onion, celery and bell pepper in a bowl. In another bowl, mix mayonnaise, mustard and lemon juice; stir into tempeh mixture. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Spoon tempeh mixture onto 4 slices of bread; top with lettuce, tomato and remaining bread slices.
Adapted from: *1,001 Low-Fat Vegetarian Recipes*, S. Spitler with L. R. Yoakam, p. 409.

Soybean Minestrone
Yield: 4 servings
1 cup diced green cabbage
1/2 cup diced onion
1/2 cup diced carrots
1/2 cup diced celery
1/2 cup diced peeled baking potatoes
1/2 cup diced red bell pepper
1 cup canned ground tomatoes
or diced tomatoes, diced finer by hand
5 cups vegetable stock
1/2 cup diced zucchini
2 cups fresh soybeans*
1 tablespoon minced fresh oregano
2 cups cooked whole-wheat pasta**

In a large pot, combine cabbage, onion, carrots, celery, potato, tomatoes, bell pepper, and vegetable stock. Bring to a simmer over moderate heat. Cover, adjust heat to maintain a simmer, and cook until vegetables are half done, about 15 minutes. Add zucchini. Cover and simmer until vegetables are tender. Add soybeans, oregano, and pasta. Simmer for 5 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper.
Source: Jean-Marc Fullsack

Quinoa Salad with Apricots and Currants
Yield: 3 cups (6 servings)
1/2 cup uncooked quinoa**
1/2 cup uncooked brown basmati rice**
2-1/2 tablespoons minced dried apricots
1/3 cup dried currants
1/3 cup finely diced red onion
1/3 cup sliced scallions
1/2 tablespoon orange juice
1/2 teaspoon rice wine vinegar
Small pinch freshly ground black pepper
1 teaspoon orange zest
Salt, optional

Cook the quinoa and basmati rice separately, following package instructions without adding any salt or butter. When finished, toss with the apricots, currants, onions and scallions. Combine orange juice, rice vinegar, black pepper and orange zest separately. Add the quinoa mixture, salt and more pepper to taste.

Adapted from: The Dr. Dean Ornish Program for Reversing Heart Disease; Dr. Dean Ornish, p. 420

* Soy Food
** Whole-grain food
*** Food made with soy protein

Recipe Sources: Unless otherwise noted, recipes contributed from the Highmark Inc.

More Ideas for Successful Cooking Demonstrations

- Remember the goal of using cooking demonstrations to show participants quick, easy ways to prepare Ornish-friendly foods. Remember…the goal of the cooking demonstrations is to provide participants with experience and knowledge.
- Focus on recipes using whole foods that you may have not previously demonstrated.
- The demonstrations should focus on “new foods” that the participants are having a difficult time implementing into their eating style.
- The recipes should be easy to reproduce at home and be appropriate for individuals with limited cooking skills.
- Provide participants with details where ingredients were purchased, if other than typical grocery stores.
- Soy foods, non-typical whole-grains (i.e. quinoa, bulgur, farro, etc.), no-cook meal ideas and party food ideas are valuable themes for the demonstrations.
- Consider using this demonstration to show ways to prepare meals that require very little food preparation or how to “put together” Ornish-friendly meals without any cooking.
- Demonstrate how to take a typical recipe or meal and make it Ornish-friendly. Outline the substitutions you make.
- Ask participants to bring in their “old” favorite recipes two to three weeks ahead of time. Work with your chef to modify the recipes to be Ornish-friendly.
- Adjust sample sizes appropriately to balance with the program meal being planned. Or, consider demonstrating the same foods that will be served for the day’s cohort meal and taste-test at mealtime.
- Ask participants for suggestions of foods they would like to learn more about or sample.
- Encourage support people to attend the cooking demonstrations, especially the person responsible for food preparation.
- For easy clean-up, it is helpful to have two carts: one for prepped foods and utensils and one for used/dirty foods and utensils.
- Explain each recipe that is being prepared. Be very specific as to what food items are being used in each dish, including where the foods and ingredients may be purchased.