

Illinois Farm to School Network

MIGHTY MINI VIDEO SALAD BARS 101



Slide One: WELCOME!

Hello and welcome to Salad Bar 101 presented by the Illinois Farm to School Network. In this training presentation we will share easy cost monitoring when utilizing a salad bar, USDA rules for salad bars in reimbursable lunches, and creative ideas for fun salad bars in K-12 schools.

My name is Diane Chapeta, and I am your host today. While operating several school districts in Wisconsin, I incorporated self-serve salad bars at every grade level. During the first year we increased consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables from 22% to as much as 66% in two of our locations. After three years, salad bars had become the accepted “norm” for our meal program, and a student favorite!

Let’s review the rules, best practices and tools available to help you create a successful salad bar addition to your meal programs.

Slide Two: NO TWO SALAD BARS ARE ALIKE!

Full Meal Salad Bar with protein and grains



Fruit and Veggie Only Salad Bar



There are many ways to utilize salad bars in a k-12 school setting. When creating plans for salad bars in school it’s easiest to base your bars on age groups. As you set plans for your salad bar consider portion sizes and ease of use in each age group. Salad bars can be served as a complete meal with a grain and a protein/protein alternate option on the bar, or as the daily fruit and vegetable options to complete a meal. Ala cart purchases are also an option for middle and high school students wishing to choose a simple salad of their liking, or those who wish to add a salad to a sack lunch. Themed salad bars add variety and can easily provide a full meal. Mexican taco or fajita salad bars, Middle Eastern bars with humus, or Mediterranean style bars with feta, legumes and nuts can add excitement to a cycle menu. It’s the cultural proteins and grains added to the most commonly used vegetables which can change and elevate a salad bar. Decorating with cultural colors and designs and educating with fun facts of the region or country printed on table tents and posters lends excitement and interest to the bar. Working with teachers to introduce a themed bar corresponding with foreign language or social studies lesson plans can create a student connection to themed bars. Or, just researching different countries and their cuisines is a great first step to create a themed bar.

Slide Three: VEGETABLE SUB-GROUPS FOR SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAMS

Every school food service manager is aware of the vegetable sub-groups required in the National School Lunch Program. Pictured, are the vegetable sub-groups for lunch. Each category has required servings per week, as in the orange/red category and limited servings per week, as in the starchy veg category. Creating a well-planned salad bar helps to meet these weekly and daily requirements.

Vegetable Sub-Groups:

Orange/Red Required

Dark Green Required

Starchy Limited

Beans/Peas (protein substitute or **starchy veg**)

Other

Slide Four: USDA RULES FOR SALAD BAR REIMBURSABLE MEALS

The USDA rules for salad bar reimbursable meals is simple- as stated on this slide, location and items offered are important when counting a reimbursable meal. A simple sign with food components listed as parts of the meal is easy to create and display. Pictorial signs are best for younger students.

Salad bars can be used as a complete reimbursable meal if:

- ✓ A protein and a grain are offered on the bar.
- ✓ The location of the salad bar is prior to Point of Service (POS).

If a school is not able to position the salad bar in a location prior to the POS, State agencies may authorize alternatives to the POS lunch counts, such as stationing staff at the end of the salad bar, to ensure each student leaves with a reimbursable meal.

- ✓ Schools must identify, near or at the beginning of the serving line(s), the food components that constitute the reimbursable school meal(s).



Slide Five: APPROXIMATING DAILY COSTS FOR SALAD BAR ITEMS



There are several methods for costing out your salad bar. Utilizing a fast and accurate method of costing ingredients on your bar, based on serving sizes and number of selections allowed, will keep your budget in the black and provide you with firm numbers when reviewing the usage on your bars.

Sharing your growing usage numbers with faculty, administration and parents provides an opportunity to draw attention to your accomplishments and shine a light on the added nutrition these bars provide. Increasing consumption of fresh, whole fruits and vegetables on the bar is a great way to show others how nutrition focused your program truly is.

Slide Six: EXAMPLE OF ESTIMATING COSTS THROUGH THE CREATION OF PRICE GROUPS

Creating Pricing Groups

This is an explanation of creating pricing groups for fruits and veggies on the bar. By listing the cost of each item and grouping items together in low, medium, and high categories you can develop an average cost per serving. With these pricing groups kitchen personnel can assemble a daily bar that is cost effective. Adding USDA color requirements will help you to meet all USDA daily requirements for fruits and vegetable servings per age group.

<p>The formula for the average cost per serving can be broken into two price groups: low and high. If you prefer, you can set up three price groups; low, medium and high to be more exact in your calculations.</p> <p>To create produce groups, list all produce items that fall in each range with price points. Then you can determine how many items from each group you can add to the salad bar to be cost effective. Please add any labor costs into the price point for items needing extra cutting or handling. Also, consider item popularity and track usage on all salad bar items. Review and make any final adjustments with seasonal pricing, as it occurs. Refine daily selections based on usage, serving size effectiveness and popularity. Color coding vegetable offerings in your list can help you incorporate USDA required color categories in daily/weekly offerings. Once you have a color coded list of allowed daily items, your staff can set up the bar with little direction from you.</p>	<p>EXAMPLE High Price Group .24 per serving List the number of items utilized at, or over, the high price point EXAMPLE: 10 items, 3 price points 4@.24 2@.31 44@.28 Price points: .24+.31+.28= .83 .83 divided by 3 Estimated average cost: 27.6 round up 10 items@ .28 per serving aver. (Actual aver. cost is: .286 per serving) Review final daily costs every week. Once the daily costs on a new salad bar have leveled out, review monthly to be sure you are within your budget limits for the salad bar. EXAMPLE: HIGH Price Group List: aver. .28 per serving (color coded) Broccoli, Artichoke, Spinach, Asparagus, Zucchini, Red Bells, Avocado, Yellow Bells, Sugar Snap Peas, Cherry Tomatoes. Yellow=starchy limited Red=required red/orange group Green= required dark green group Brown= Beans/peas group</p>	<p>EXAMPLE Low Price Group .13 per serving List the number of items at, or between, the low and high price point. EXAMPLE: 12 items, 3 prices 7@.16 44@.20 1@.19 Price Points: .16+.20+.19= .55 .55 divided by 3= Estimated average cost per serving: .183 round down Estimated per serving cost: 12 @ .18 serving (Actual aver. Cost: .175 per serving) Review final daily costs every week. Once the daily costs on a new salad bar have leveled out, review monthly to be sure you are within your budget limits for the salad bar. Low Price Group List: aver. .18 per serving (color coded) Kale, Corn, Lentils, Carrots, Romaine, Green Peas, Cucumbers, Jicama, Beets, Kidney Beans</p>	<p>Item Usage Calculation: Based on my budget of \$_____ per day using ADP figures, and based on popularity of the items, I can afford to utilize 2 items from the High group and 4-10 from the Low group daily, allowing 2 salad bar servings per student, per day. Remember! Salad bar usage can increase and wane depending on lunchtime activities, menus, field trips, weather, etc. Calculating the average waste factor into your costs is an effective way to stay within your budget. Food waste numbers for specific items can be logged over one month's time and then averaged. Apply the average waste cost per serving to the item cost. This will increase item costs, but will also give you a firm cost expectation of a salad bar item.</p>
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Slide Seven: CREATE A CORRESPONDING WEEKLY MASTER PREP LIST

By setting a master prep list you give your staff the tools to build a daily bar with confidence. This method saves time and empowers staff members. Be sure to monitor daily bar selections and waste logs to fine tune your master list. Monitor price updates on seasonal and local items. Make any adjustments weekly during high season, and monthly during slower winter months when pricing evens out.

EXAMPLE: (6-foot bar)

*STAFF NOTES: Staff be sure to prep 2 red/orange and 2 Dark Green items daily. Limit the yellow category (starchy veg) to one serving per week. Follow estimated quantities chart when prepping items, creating back up amounts for the bar, and making side salads.

GROUP 1 HIGH COST

Prep **TWO** items daily:

Broccoli
Artichoke
Spinach
Asparagus
Zucchini
Red Bells
Avocado
Yellow Bells
Sugar Snap Peas
Cherry Tomatoes

GROUP 2 MID COST

Prep **FOUR** to **SIX** items daily:

Green Beans
Butternut Squash
Bean Sprouts
Purple Potatoes
Tomato Juice
Soy Beans
Tofu
Wax Beans
Sweet Potatoes
Brussel Sprouts
Mushrooms

GROUP 3 LOW COST

Prep **SIX** to **TEN** items daily

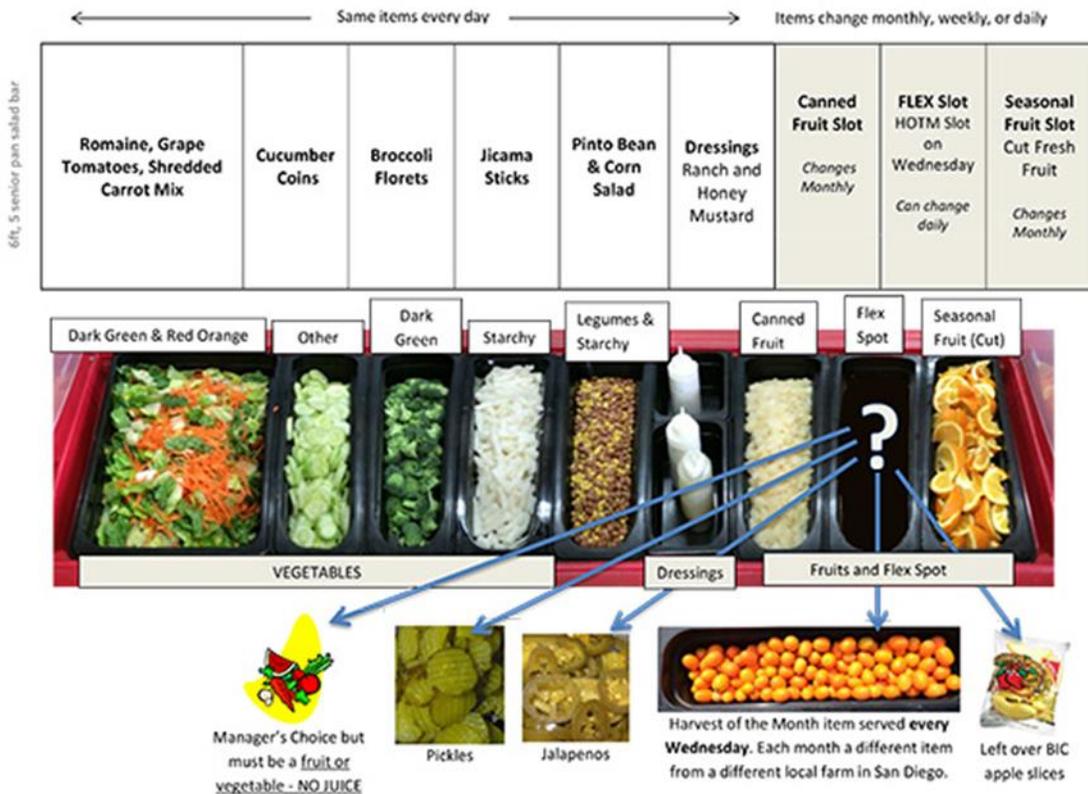
Kale
Corn
Lentil
Carrots
Romaine
Green Peas
Cucumbers
Jicama
Beets
Kidney Beans
Cabbage
Green Bells
Celery
Kohlrabi

Slide Eight: CHOOSING THE RIGHT SELF-SERVICE BAR

Asking the how, where and who questions allows you to plan wisely for each school and age group. Planning where and how the bar will be utilized will help you to be successful. There are many good online tools available to assist your decision making process.

Before purchasing a self-service bar, ask yourself the following questions:

- What type of bar is it?
 1. Is it a salad bar?
 2. Is it a fruit and vegetable bar?
 3. Is it a toppings/fixings bar to finish off sandwiches, tacos, or other entrée choice?
- Where will you put it?
 1. Will it serve all lines?
 2. Is it part of the reimbursable meal and therefore in front of the point of sale?
 3. Will you need to fit it through a door when not serving? If so, is it easy to move?
 4. How much will it hold?
 5. Do you have room for 4, 5, or 6 wells?
 6. Do you need to order dividers so you can use smaller pans?
- Where will you put it? Flow patterns? Ease of access?
- How easy is it to clean?
 1. Do the breath guards/sneeze guards flip up?
 2. Is there a drain?
- Is it refrigerated and/or lighted?
 1. Do you have electrical where you want to place and store the bar?
 2. How long is your food out? Can you use the food safety time and temperature rule?



*Sourcing: A Field Guide to Salad Bars in Schools, MDH

Slide Nine: NEXT STEPS: SETTING UP, MONITORING AND OBSERVING

Monitoring, recording and observing are all important tools to aid you as you build your bars. It is very important to make note of issues, waste factors and item popularity until you have an exact picture of salad bar usage. Paying attention to efficiency of the utensils, observance of salad bar rules, the depth and size of salad bar containers, and usage of back up amounts for salad bar items will give you a road map for prep and service. It's important to know what works and what doesn't so adjustments can be made quickly and efficiently.

Self Service Bar Tips: SETTING UP & MONITORING AND OBSERVING

- Place items on both sides so no student has to reach over.
- Use attractive pans, utensils, and labels.
- Use a ½ size 2-inch deep plastic cold food pans or metal steam table pans so serving utensils do not fall go into the food.
- Use 1/6 or 1/9 size hotel pans for items that are not used in great quantity, such as cilantro.
- Use full size 6-inch deep hotel pans only for items that do not need utensils, such as bananas or a wrapped product.
- Use empty pans or pan covers to cover empty spaces. Empty pans are great for holding tongs. Or you can use the empty space to repeat an item that takes longer to self-serve.
- Change out serving utensil with a clean utensil each lunch period or, if continuous service, every half hour.
- Change out containers as needed. Avoid adding food on the line from a can or a bag.
- When only a little product is left, bring it back to kitchen, place in the smallest container needed and refrigerate. Save in case you need it for the last line.
- Dispose of any cut or peeled fruits and vegetables, including canned, used on serving line at the end of the total serving time. To minimize waste, use smaller containers and replenish as needed to reduce the amount that needs to be discarded.
- Squeeze bottles of salad dressing are easier for children than. They do not need to be placed under the breath guard. Fill only ⅓ to ½ full so you can have more bottles without wasting product. Dispose of product daily.
- Follow the food safety guidelines for commercial bottled sauces or cryovac bags, such as hot sauce, ketchup, or dressings.
- During service, do not use any cleaning sprays. Wipe up only with an approved cleaner or quat.
- During break in service, roll out a cart with fresh product and utensils on top, a bucket for scraps, and cleaning buckets on bottom of cart.
- Immediately remove a container or utensil that has been contaminated. Introduce the subject of the presentation.
- Determine the rules for self-service. How much or how many? Will it be unlimited?
- Give good instructions to students on how to go through the line. Ask cafeteria monitors to assist children as needed.
- Observe the students' use of utensils. Make sure utensils are easy to use. Example: A spaghetti server is great for carrots. When students use tongs, the carrots are likely to spring out and onto the floor. Place items on both sides so no student has to reach over.

*Sourcing: A Field Guide to Salad Bars in Schools, MDH

Slide Ten: ADD LOCAL TO THE BAR!

So, your salad bars are set up and operating within guidelines. What's your next step? Adding local or regional foods to the bar, and advertising the farms and producers, will provide a connection to your community and your region. Inviting a farmer to lunch and showcasing what is grown on their farm can be a great learning tool and an added bonus for your students.



- Incorporating local items will add interest and can be used as the basis for a promotion.
- Seasonal fresh items are available through November. Many local items are available through DOD purchasing.
- Storage crops are available through March.

- Value-added frozen, dried or canned items are also available year-round.
- Incorporating value-added local to salad recipes lowers local product costs.
- Creating a “buzz” over local veggies on the bar can be as easy as posting farm identification above the item.

Slide Eleven: TOOLS AND SYSTEMS THAT WORK!

There are great tools for salad bar set up and prep online. These programs offer assistance and encouragement for salad bar novices, and pros, alike. Investigate and educate!

- A Guide to Salad Bars in Schools-MN
<http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/hpcd/chp/cdrr/nutrition/docsandpdf/guidetosbinschools.pdf>
- The Lunch Box Salad Bar Guide-
http://www.thelunchbox.org/assets/uploads/documents/The_Lunch_Box_Salad_Bars_Guide.pdf
- Whole Kid’s Foundation- Salad Bars <https://www.wholekidsfoundation.org/schools/programs/school-salad-bars>

Slide Twelve: THANK YOU!

If you have questions, please connect with us. Thank you for listening to the Illinois Farm to School Network’s training on Salad Bars 101!

Have a crunchy day!

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