



# MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL NUTRITION & CULINARY CURRICULUM



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*Youth Development Through Culinary &  
Nutrition Education*

*Created by*



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## **New York, NY**

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## TEEN IRON CHEF Seven Session Outline



Dear Educator,

You and the youth in your program are about to engage in a very empowering activity designed for teens aged 13-17 years:

### TEEN IRON CHEF

This **FamilyCook Productions (FCP)** program and curriculum involves youth working in teams to 'battle' their peers as they prepare delicious, multi-ethnic meals using fresh, healthful ingredients and sophisticated culinary techniques. **The program is designed to capitalize on adolescents' growing self-confidence, independence and desire to test their ability to impact and engage in the 'adult world,' while building a firm foundation in basic nutrition and healthful meal planning and preparation.**

Embedded within the program concept—borrowed from Japanese TV and The Food Network's "Iron Chef" program -- are the following program goals for youth participants:

1. Learn and practice basic cooking skills using fresh, healthful ingredients
2. Absorb nutrition fundamentals that are fun and easy to understand
3. Develop an adventurous nature about trying new foods with friends and family;
4. Practice teamwork towards a common goal
5. Practice cultural awareness and tolerance
6. Develop confidence in meal preparation and planning.
7. Practice public speaking and presentation skills
8. Experience conviviality sharing a meal with friends and family
9. Inspire youth to become leaders in the Good Food Movement!

The program construct and recipes have been field-tested for over 10 years with youth across the U.S. in teen cooking workshops and summer camps. That knowledge has been harnessed into a 7-session program that works best when scheduled once per week. The program is not entirely cumulative because teens tend to be hard to pin down from one week to the next. By offering this program in 7 week session cycles, and adapting recipes as you go along to accommodate the interests of the youth who participate, teens can remain engaged for an entire semester of after school or weekend fun and learning.

**Kids gain confidence after repeated sessions, yet the program is designed for minimal instruction; the 'lessons' are all learned through participation and practice.** Instructors role is primarily facilitation & supervision: food ordering and inventory, supervising set up and providing technical support – e.g. to explain new recipe techniques and make sure all participants have fundamental knife skills. Further, the team collaborative approach offers crucial development of key life skills: cooperation, following directions, compromise, sharing responsibility while offering adolescents an opportunity to explore their own strengths and weaknesses, likes and dislikes, and above all, creativity.

Through your participation in the program, you join a growing legion of professionals in the education, food and nutrition communities who are committed to teaching the next generation about food and healthful eating. Given these goals, parent involvement is essential – so be sure to schedule a 'Teen Iron Chef Final Battle' for the youth to show off their skills to their parents!

Support for this curriculum is available from FamilyCook Productions via email by contacting [Support@FamilyCookProductions.com](mailto:Support@FamilyCookProductions.com). We wish you great success with your program as you empower students to take charge of their life and enjoy a new, healthier relationship with food.

Cordially, Lynn Fredericks, Founder





Here is a week-by-week overview of the 7-week **TEEN IRON CHEF** curriculum.

The goals of each session are:

1. **Learn and practice basic cooking skills** using fresh, healthful ingredients
2. **Absorb nutrition fundamentals** that are fun and easy to understand
3. **Develop an adventurous nature about trying new foods** with friends and family
4. **Practice teamwork** towards a common goal
5. **Practice cultural awareness** and tolerance
6. **Develop confidence in meal preparation** and planning
7. **Practice public speaking** and presentation skills
8. **Experience conviviality sharing a meal** with friends and family

#### **Session One: Program Orientation & Basic Culinary/Sanitation**

*Description: Introduction to the Teen Iron Chef program concept and the underpinnings of: 1) using professional knife techniques; 2) other basic culinary skills; and 3) organizing a safe and sanitary food preparation station. Beginning mastery of these skills makes the forthcoming sessions go smoothly and productively. Behavior and overall program standards and expectations are presented and students are divided into their teams as they begin learning.*

#### **Session Two: Battle Plan One: “Asian Stir Fry vs. Mediterranean Pasta”**

*Description: Learn and practice two diverse but popular culinary concepts: Stir Fry and Pasta. The former uses chicken and tofu for the protein, a variety of vegetables, and rice for the grain. By contrast, the Mediterranean recipe using chicken broth and mussels for protein, fennel, herbs and garlic and pasta for the starch. Some interesting nutritional facts are revealed. Students learn to vary ingredients to take advantage of seasonal produce availability.*

#### **Session Three: Battle Plan Two: “Mexican Quesadillas and Guacamole vs. Vietnamese Spring Rolls”**

*Description: Learn and practice two diverse ‘wrap-type’ meal concepts: Vietnamese Spring Rolls and Mexican Quesadillas. While the technique and tastes between these two recipe concepts could not be more different, there are inherent similarities: both recipes can make use of ‘left-overs’ and result in a delicious ‘package’ which begs the diner to identify the contents if they did not*





*assemble it themselves. Youth can use the recipe guidelines to get comfortable in the genre and then use their creativity to demonstrate infinite variations.*

**Session Four: Battle Plan Three: “Creole Jambalaya vs. Thai Soup”**

*Description: Learn and practice two excellent one-pot dishes, that each benefit from a bit of ‘heat’ from use of chili peppers or other spicy seasonings. Each recipe involves very different but interesting techniques for flavor blending, seasoning and adjusting degree of ‘heat’ from the chilies or spicy sausages. Students become skilled at creating right seasoning blend and degree of heat to suit their palate.*

**Session Five: Battle Plan Four: “Salade Nicoise vs. Risotto” & Health Challenge**

*Description: Mediterranean cultures are well known for their cold platters brimming with pickled, fresh and cured delicacies. Students explore traditional groupings of ingredients, balancing taste, textures, and nutrients (e.g. protein from plant and animal sources) with fresh and preserved vegetables, etc. Their artistic sides are additionally explored as they battle to arrange their platters with the most visually arresting and creative presentation! Students also learn why it is necessary to follow recipes precisely for dishes that require a sophisticated culinary technique. Six health subjects are presented and students can select one or two ‘challenges’ to focus on their own over the final two weeks. Short diaries for the 2-week period are distributed for recording their progress and to facilitate sharing experiences over the final two weeks.*

**Session Six: Final Battle Preparation & Nutrition Challenge Check-In**

*Description: The Final Battle is called Chef’s Choice, where each team of Iron Chefs present a recipe they researched from a culture of their choice and present it with the cultural background and nutritional relevance from their own internet, cookbook and or library research. This session leads the students through planning their recipe and presentation, organizing their ‘grocery’ list and planning how to make their presentation entertaining and interesting. Invitations are sent to family and other ‘dignitaries’ in their school world (principal, other teachers, school food service manager, etc.). Students also check in and share their Nutrition Challenge progress, and plan how they will present what they have learned about nutrition and how cooking has changed their lives in some way*





*since beginning Iron Chef. These reflections can be presented via handouts and verbally at “The Final Battle.”*

**Session Seven: “The Final Battle – Iron Chefs’ Choice”**

*Description: After previous sessions practicing with various techniques, students in the final battle now come up with their own variations on one of the program recipes or to look up a recipe in a cookbook or the Internet that they would like to try out. This must be done as a group! Conversely, instructors can simply set up a variety of ingredients for each team and let the students decide what they will make given all they have learned up to that point. This is a fun class to have the kids write invitations for and invite parents and friends to see them battle with their new skills and confidence!*

