

# Celebration ideas for the school canteen

Schools

Use theme days to promote fun and nourishing options in the canteen. Here are some ideas for fun food themes.

## Top tips for success

- Plan a calendar of promotions at the start of each year or term
- Plan well in advance and promote extensively to ensure their success
- Link in with the curriculum to reinforce nutrition messages taught in the classroom
- Don't underestimate the amount of food and extra hands you'll need
- Get an estimate of food required by taking pre-orders
- Decorate the canteen to get everyone excited



## Food themed days

Your calendar of promotions could include weekly activities or one-off events, such as:

### Fruitilicious Fridays

Offer additional fruit snacks and drinks



# Celebration ideas for the school canteen

## Veggie or Veg Out Wednesdays

Trial a different vegetable recipe each week, such as stuffed eggplants or pumpkin pie

## Wrap It Up! Day

Trial a new wrap or roll filling, such as chicken satay and salad wrap

## Super Smoothie Day

Trial making smoothies one day a week, using fresh or frozen fruits – a popular combination is fresh strawberries with half a banana, a dollop of reduced fat natural yoghurt, a drizzle of honey and reduced fat dairy or soy milk. You can experiment with adding vegetables such as zucchini or spinach too!



## Cultural themes



### Explore the Orient

(e.g. for Chinese New Year in February)

- Stir-fried noodles with vegetables, served in a noodle box with chopsticks
- Chicken and corn soup
- Steamed vegetable spring rolls, sushi/nori rolls or Vietnamese rice paper rolls



### A 'Taste of Italy' day

- Pizzas made from pita bread, tomato pasta sauce and nutritious toppings, such as plenty of vegetables, lean meat and reduced fat cheese
- Vegetarian wholemeal pasta served with a bean bolognese sauce and sprinkled with a reduced fat cheese (ricotta or cheddar)
- Garlic bread fingers: bread lightly brushed with olive oil, with crushed garlic and then toasted



### Mexican Fiesta

- Make burritos with Mexican style lean beef mince, salsa, avocado and a squeeze of lime
- Mexicana toasted sandwiches with salsa, black beans and grated reduced fat cheese
- Taco boats that use an iceberg lettuce leaf for the taco shell, served with guacamole and toasted tortilla triangles
- Ask everyone to bring Mexican hats

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### Greek day

- Offer a Greek salad of cucumber, tomato, reduced fat feta, pitted olives and dressing
- Dip and focaccia pack: featuring a small piece of focaccia with hummus and tzatziki dips on a paper plate
- Souvlaki wraps: made from lean chicken, mince patties, sliced steak or lamb with salad and tzatziki served in pita bread



### 'Bon Appetite' day

A celebration of French cuisine

- Baguettes filled with cheese and salad, or meat and salad
- Vegetable quiche (pastry free)
- Ratatouille served with couscous
- Crepes with fresh fruit and yoghurt, or a drizzle of honey



### Multicultural day

- Cruising around the world
- Offer a variety of different multicultural foods and link with the curriculum, i.e. include food studied in history class.

## Sporting events



### AFL

#### Finals Fever

Name menu items such as a lean beef salad burger after the winning AFL team or player (e.g. Buddy Burger after Sydney Swans player Buddy Franklin or Hawka Hamburger, named after the Hawthorn mascot)



### Olympic Games or Commonwealth Games

#### A 'Green and Gold' food day:

- Olympic Pizza or G'day Mate Pizza, with green and gold toppings, such as spinach, capsicum (yellow and green), pineapple and reduced fat cheese
- Canned fruits in natural juice set in yellow sugar-free jelly, or green grapes in green sugar-free jelly
- Pineapple pieces in natural juice with low fat custard
- Banana smoothies made with low fat milk

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### Aussie Supporters' Pack

Lean beef salad burger with a 100% juice

### Gimmicky names

Such as High Jump Ham Sandwich or Shot Put Salad

### The Sullivan Roll

After swimmer Eamon Sullivan: chicken, lettuce and avocado

## Calendar events



### FEBRUARY

#### Valentine's Day

- Red or pink food and drinks: offer strawberry smoothies, red grapes, watermelon slices, red sugar-free jelly with diced strawberries, raspberry wholemeal mini muffins.
- Watermelon Whizzes: puree seedless watermelon in a blender. Pour into small plastic cups and freeze. Serve with a small spoon.
- Be My Valentine: thread strawberries (minus husk) onto an icy pole stick, dip in plain or strawberry reduced fat yoghurt and roll in desiccated coconut (see picture). Great fresh or frozen.
- Valentine's Meal Deal: package a ham and salad roll, with strawberry halves and low fat yoghurt served in a cup or square ice cream cone, and a strawberry smoothie, served with a pretty red flower.
- Gimmicky names: e.g. Heart Warming Hamburger.



#### Chinese New Year

Dates vary, from late January to early March. Check calendar for dates.

- Stir-fried noodles with vegetables, served in a noodle box with chopsticks.
- Chinese chicken and corn soup.
- Egg rolls, steamed vegetable spring rolls or steamed dumplings.

#### Shrove Tuesday

Hold a special pancake breakfast or offer nutritious sweet or savoury hot pancakes for lunch, e.g. wholemeal pancakes with sliced banana or mixed berries with yoghurt, or chicken, tomato and reduced fat cheese.



### MARCH

#### School Clean Up Day

(Friday before Clean Up Australia Day in March)

- Reduce packaging waste and promote recycling in your canteen on this day.
- Link in with environmental lessons in the classroom.
- Encourage all students to use recycling bins to dispose of their recyclable litter.
- Serve more over-the-counter snacks using paper napkins as plates.
- Use edible packaging to serve snacks e.g. square ice cream cones to serve fresh fruit or veggie sticks with dip.
- Use paper patty cases instead of plastic bags to serve snacks like popcorn or dried fruit.
- Ask students to bring their own cup for soup.



## Celebration ideas for the school canteen

### Calendar events (c'ued)



#### St Patrick's Day (17 March)

- Serve food and drinks that are green in colour – green grapes in green sugar-free jelly, canteen made garlic bread with parsley, green apple mini muffins, pesto pasta, dip and sticks using cucumber, green capsicum, celery and snow peas as the veggie sticks.
- Decorate the canteen with a green theme – cut outs of four-leaf clovers, green streamers or green balloons. Get the students involved by advertising for volunteers to help decorate the canteen.

#### Harmony Day (21 March)

A day to celebrate all Australians, regardless of heritage or cultural background.

- On this day, decorate the canteen with flags from around the world.
- To celebrate in the canteen, you could design a special Harmony Day menu.
- Try these inexpensive, student-friendly recipes to celebrate Australia's cultural diversity:
  - kangaroo burgers (Australian)
  - spaghetti and meatballs (Italian)
  - mango lassi (Indian)
  - pork rice paper rolls (Vietnamese)
  - vegetable fried rice (Chinese).



### APRIL

#### Easter

Dates vary from March to April. Check calendar for dates.

- Decorated eggs: sell hard boiled eggs as snacks, their shells decorated with food dye.
- Bunny Buns: mini hot cross buns, with reduced fat cream cheese, sliced banana and honey.
- Hot cross buns: select wholemeal varieties or mini sized hot cross buns. Serve with a thin spread of margarine or ricotta mixed with a splash of vanilla essence.

#### Anzac Day (25 April)

Serve food and drinks that are green and yellow in colour. See St Patrick's Day in March section for green food ideas, or try the following gold and green ideas:

- Golden corn on a cob
- Juicy green grapes set in yellow sugar-free jelly
- Gold and green mini muffins, using reduced fat cheese, green capsicum and tomato
- Freshly diced green apple or pear served with golden custard



### MAY

#### National Health Week

Visit [www.heartfoundation.org.au](http://www.heartfoundation.org.au) for further information.

- Red food and drinks: offer special foods that are red in colour (refer to Valentine's Day in February section).
- Healthy Heart Burger: fish fillet, mashed avocado and salad in a toasted wholemeal bun.
- Food for the heart: salmon and mixed vegetable frittata, tuna and sweet potato patties or warming minestrone soup.

## Celebration ideas for the school canteen



### JUNE

#### Start of winter

- Winter Warmer Day: launch new winter menu items such as canteen made lasagne, chunky veggie and pasta soup, stewed apple with reduced fat custard.
- BYO Soup Mug Day: soups could include pumpkin, minestrone, or chicken and corn.

#### Red Nose Day (last Friday in June)

- Red food and drinks: refer to Valentine's Day in February section.
- Red Nose Pizzas: garnish pizza faces with cherry tomato halves as 'red noses'

#### Eid al-Adha (dates vary - check calendar for dates)

Eid al-Adha is a significant annual Islamic observance for Muslim communities. Red meat meals are traditionally served, and families come together for three days of celebration. The Eid al-Adha festival has a special atmosphere of peace, respect, giving and receiving.

- Serve foods made with lean lamb, beef or goat.
- Meat and vegetable curries or spiced minced meat kebabs are healthy options to sell for this event. For curries that use coconut milk, swap to coconut flavoured evaporated milk to reduce the overall fat content of the meal.

### AUGUST

#### Healthy Bones Week

Visit [www.healthybones.com.au](http://www.healthybones.com.au) for further information.

Offer dairy-based snacks, foods and drinks, such as:

- Reduced fat cheese cubes or slices.
- Ants on a Log: celery sticks filled with reduced fat cream cheese and sultanas across the top.
- Smoothies e.g. Building Bones Bananarama Smoothie, Super Strong Strawberry Smoothie.
- Reduced fat yoghurts with 100% fruit coulis.

### SEPTEMBER

#### Jewish New Year – Rosh Hashanah

To celebrate Jewish New Year, serve sliced apples with a dollop of honey. This sweet treat symbolises the wish for a sweet new year.

### OCTOBER

#### National Nutrition Week

Visit [www.nutritionaustralia.org](http://www.nutritionaustralia.org) for further information.

Check out what Nutrition Australia is doing and get involved by choosing some healthy themed recipes for the school canteen.

#### Halloween (31 October)

- Decorate the canteen with pretend cobwebs and bat cut-outs (buy cobwebs from a costume shop and make bats using black A4 paper and a stencil).
- Serve pumpkin-based recipes and 'scary titled' foods, such as:
  - Spooky Pumpkin Soup
  - Pumpkin Pita Bread Pizzas with mozzarella, rosemary and pine nuts.
  - Eye Popping Soup: button mushrooms floating in tomato soup.
  - Scary Eyeball Jelly: sugar-free jelly with purple grapes.
  - Mandarin lanterns: mandarins with celery through the middle, like a mini pumpkin
  - Banana ghosts: bananas halved and served on a paddle-pop stick with sultana eyes

## Celebration ideas for the school canteen



### DECEMBER

#### Start of Summer

Hold a 'Cool Summer' or a 'Groovy Smoothie' day and offer different smoothie mixes:

- Bananarama: banana and strawberries.
- A Day in the Orchards: peaches, plums and pears.
- Life's a Beach: coconut and mango.

#### Christmas

- Christmas Lovers' sandwich: lean ham or turkey, roast vegetables, cranberry sauce.
- Plum muffins: using canned plums instead of the traditional plum pudding.

#### Top tips for success

- Promote the theme days at least two weeks in advance.
- Promote through the student notices, school newsletter and on A4 posters, or on the notice boards at the school canteen.
- Ask teachers to assist with the promotion by reminding students in the classroom and at assembly.

