

Salad Bar

Salad bars can be an effective way to increase fruit and vegetable consumption, increase student participation in schools meals, and decrease plate waste. They are a great way to add excitement to your school lunch program. Here are some tips and tricks to setting up a successful salad bar.

Setup

- Protect food on display with sneeze guards or food shields that meet the local health standards. Keep them clean. Always check what the correct height is for children.
- Use at least one long-handled serving utensil for each food item. Long handles prevent the utensil from slipping into the food items.
- Serving utensils should match their use. For items such as lettuce, use tongs; for items that need to be drained, such as beans and beets, use slotted measuring-serving spoons.
- Set up the salad bar close to meal service time to prevent perishables from sitting out longer than necessary.
- Keep foods cold by not filling to the brim and storing to a depth of the ice.
- Discourage tasting or grazing in the service line by identifying all foods on display. Label containers, post clear signs on the food shield, and write the names of salad dressings on the ladle handles or on dressing containers or dispensers.
- Keep dry condiments away from moist foods.



Chicotah High School, Chicotah, OK

Garnishing

Customers eat with their eyes. Food in school cafeterias should be fresh and colorful, be presented attractively, and taste good. This will encourage students to try it.



Some suggestions for garnishing the salad bar:

- Fresh kale – This is popular because of its deep green color and durability. This can be used to trim the salad bar and fill up empty spaces. It can be washed and reused, and will last about 1 week.
- Leaf lettuce, parsley, red or Napa cabbage – While these items are not as durable as kale, they can be used to trim the salad bar while offering color and eye appeal
- Baskets or arrangements of fresh fruits and vegetables enhance any salad bar.

Salad Bar

The Salad Bar Layout

Utilizing a salad bar grid layout is a great tool for ensuring consistent costs and compliance at the site level for the planned ingredient combinations. The salad bar layout examples are just a few of a multitude of salad bar configurations that could be offered.

The layouts shown here can be offered daily as part of the reimbursable meal. Using a consistent plan for ingredients offered helps you determine approximate food costs. Salad bar layouts can be customized to respond to the location and resources of the school site. If the district has a bar with one-sided access, selection of items will be smaller. In some districts, a mirrored approach works best for the flow of the line. Secondary schools will often support more complex choices with mirroring.

In addition, the district may shift the combination of items offered to align with menu themes or to create seasonally driven selections. The salad bar is extremely flexible in that regard.

