



# FAMILY LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Skirt Steak with  
Summer Vegetables  
August 9, 2020



## COOKING TECHNIQUES FOR KIDS

How can kids help in the kitchen?

If you're cooking with kids, you know best what they're ready for based on their level of maturity and motor control. The National Association for the Education of Young Children recommends the following:

Ages 2-3 might be ready for stirring, shaking, spreading, tearing, dipping, kneading and using basic kitchen implements like whisks, spatulas, strainers, or cookie cutters. Kids age 3-4 might be ready for more complex tasks like pouring, rolling or measuring, and with supervision they might try using small non-electric appliances. Kids older than five can do just about anything with supervision -- grating, mashing, peeling, even cutting with a knife.

## SAFETY FIRST!

- Supervision is key! Don't leave little ones unattended while cooking.
- Keep potentially dangerous equipment stored until you're ready to use it.
- Sharp knives are safer because they are easier to control -- keep your knives sharp, but out of reach until needed and supervise carefully!
- Make sure you have plenty of potholders around; keep them dry and away from burners.
- Be careful with electric appliances, cords, and electrical outlets
- In case of a stove top fire, use a fire extinguisher or baking soda, NOT WATER as it can spread a grease fire quickly. You can also use a lid to smother flames.
- Make sure your helpers know what's hot -- lids, handles, and utensils all heat up when the stove is in use, and releasing steam can cause severe burns.
- Prevent food-borne illness: wash hands frequently, keep hot food hot and cold food cold; wash fruits and vegetable thoroughly, and cook meat, poultry, eggs and fish to the appropriate temperature.

# LET'S TALK ABOUT FOOD!

## FIVE SENSES OF FOOD

A way to explore new foods with picky eaters! Prepare and sample a new food and describe it using your five senses.

This activity works with individual foods, or two-three foods at a time to make comparisons, like:

- Different foods from the same food group, like three nuts or three fruits
- Things that look similar but taste different, like papaya and sweet potato
- The same vegetable, served raw and cooked in different ways, like roasted, steamed, or sauteed

**Sight:** What color is it? Is big or small? Does it look different after you cook it? How so? Is there something about the way it looks that makes you want to eat it? Does it look like other foods that you've tried?

**Sound:** What does it sound like when you cut it? When you cook it? When you chew it?

**Smell:** What does it smell like? Does it smell like it tastes? Does it smell like other foods that you've tried?

**Touch:** What does it feel like when you touch it? Is it dry or greasy or slimy? Rough or smooth? What does it feel like in your mouth? Is it squishy or crunchy? Does it stick to the roof of your mouth or get stuck in your teeth?

**Taste:** Does it taste like you expected? Is it sweet? Spicy? Sour? Salty? Does the flavor remind you of something else?

## COOKING CONVERSATIONS

Ask open-ended questions about what's happening in the kitchen:

Make comparisons between ingredients: *"Dried basil and dried oregano look the same, but how are they different?"*

Apply past knowledge: *"What happened when we boiled noodles? Will the same happen with rice?"*

Make predictions: *"What will happen to the cheese when we put it in the microwave?"*

Look for creative solutions: *"What can we do with this leftover sauce?"*

Solve problems: *"How can we pour this without spilling?"*

## COOKING JOURNAL

**For each stop on the Circle Food Tour, we'll give you a few things to write or talk about for each dish.**

### WHILE YOU'RE COOKING

- Taste a little bit of each of the spices separately before you add them. Once they're all mixed together, taste again - how do the flavors change? Can you taste the individual spices?
- The instructions say to let the dry rub sit on the meat for 30 minutes. What do you think that does?
- Before you cook: use your camerphone to take a picture of the vegetables before you seal them in the foil.
- Predict: What do you think will happen inside the foil packet while the vegetables cook?
- When the vegetables are done, look back at your picture before you open them. Once the packet is open, describe what happened during the cooking process.

### WHAT'S A DRY RUB?

A dry rub is a combination of spices and flavorings that work at the surface of your meat to give it more flavor while it cooks -- kind of like a marinade, but *dry* instead of wet.



### WHY DOES MEAT NEED TO REST?

If you cut your steak right after cooking, you may notice that it releases a LOT of its juices. But chefs want those juices to stay in the meat so that it's not too dry -- so they let it rest before slicing or serving.

When meat cooks, the fibers and proteins squeeze up, and ring out the moisture that makes meat juicy. By resting after cooking, the meat can soak the juices back up again.

### WHILE YOU'RE EATING

- How does it look? Is it pretty? What colors do you see? Does the way it looks make you want to eat it, or not?
- How does it smell? Does the way it smells make you want to eat it, or not?
- Now take a bite. What individual ingredients can you identify by smell or taste? What do you like or not like like about the way it tastes?
- How's the texture? Is it smooth? Creamy? Crunchy? Soft? What do you like or not like about the way it feels in your mouth?

# MEASURING CUP FRACTIONS CHALLENGE

**Use water to practice with measuring cups and learn about fractions!**

Fill a dish tub or bucket with water, and try to create the amounts given below using your measuring cups at home. Have kids measure various amounts using different combinations of their measuring cups. They can keep track of their work by writing fraction addition equations in the space below each question.

Fill a clear liquid measuring cup like the one shown below to see your progress!  
Suggestion: Have kids record their solutions on a piece of paper.



## MEASURING CUP CHALLENGE: QUESTIONS

1. How could you make 1 cup using the  $\frac{1}{4}$  and  $\frac{1}{2}$  measuring cups?
2. How could you make 1 cup using the  $\frac{1}{3}$  and  $\frac{1}{2}$  measuring cups?
3. How could you make 1 cup using the  $\frac{1}{4}$  and  $\frac{1}{3}$  measuring cups?
4. How could you make 2 cups using any of the other measuring cups?  
Find as many ways as possible.
5. Find two ways of making  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup.
6. Bonus challenge: How is the  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup measure different from the others?

# MEASURING CUP FRACTIONS CHALLENGE

## ANSWERS

**1. How could you make 1 cup using the 1/4 and 1/2 measuring cups?**

$$1/2 + 1/2 = 1 \text{ cup}$$

$$1/2 + 1/4 + 1/4 = 1 \text{ cup}$$

$$1/4 + 1/4 + 1/4 + 1/4 = 1 \text{ cup}$$

**2. How could you make 1 cup using the 1/3 and 1/2 measuring cups?**

$$1/2 + 1/2 = 1 \text{ cup}$$

$$1/3 + 1/3 + 1/3 = 1 \text{ cup}$$

**3. How could you make 1 cup using the 1/4 and 1/3 measuring cups?**

$$1/4 + 1/4 + 1/4 + 1/4 = 1 \text{ cup}$$

$$1/2 + 1/4 + 1/4 = 1 \text{ cup}$$

**4. How could you make 2 cups using any of the other measuring cups? Find as many ways as possible.**

$$1 + 1 = 2 \text{ cups}$$

$$1 + 1/2 + 1/2 = 2 \text{ cups}$$

$$1 + 1/2 + 1/4 + 1/4 = 2 \text{ cups}$$

$$1/2 + 1/4 + 1/4 + 1/4 + 1/4 + 1/4 + 1/4 = 2 \text{ cups}$$

$$1/4 + 1/4 + 1/4 + 1/4 + 1/4 + 1/4 + 1/4 + 1/4 = 2 \text{ cups}$$

$$1/3 + 1/3 + 1/3 + 1/3 + 1/3 + 1/3 = 2 \text{ cups}$$

**5. Challenge: Find two ways of making 3/4 cup.**

$$1/2 + 1/4 = 3/4 \text{ cup}$$

$$1/4 + 1/4 + 1/4 = 3/4 \text{ cup}$$

# WHAT IS MYPLATE?

MyPlate, from the US Department of Agriculture, is a way to find your healthy eating style and build it throughout your lifetime.

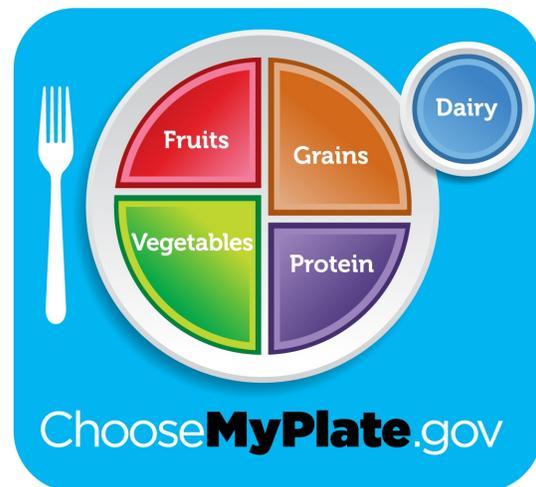
Everything you eat and drink matters. The right mix can help you be healthier now and in the future. This means:

- Focus on variety, amount, and nutrition.
- Choose foods and beverages with less saturated fat, sodium, and added sugars.
- Start with small changes to build healthier eating styles.
- Support healthy eating for everyone.

Eating healthy is a journey shaped by many factors, including our stage of life, situations, preferences, access to food, culture, traditions, and the personal decisions we make over time. All your food and beverage choices count. MyPlate offers ideas and tips to help you create a healthier eating style that meets your individual needs and improves your health. Go to [choosemyplate.gov](http://choosemyplate.gov) for more information, activities and worksheets on healthy eating.

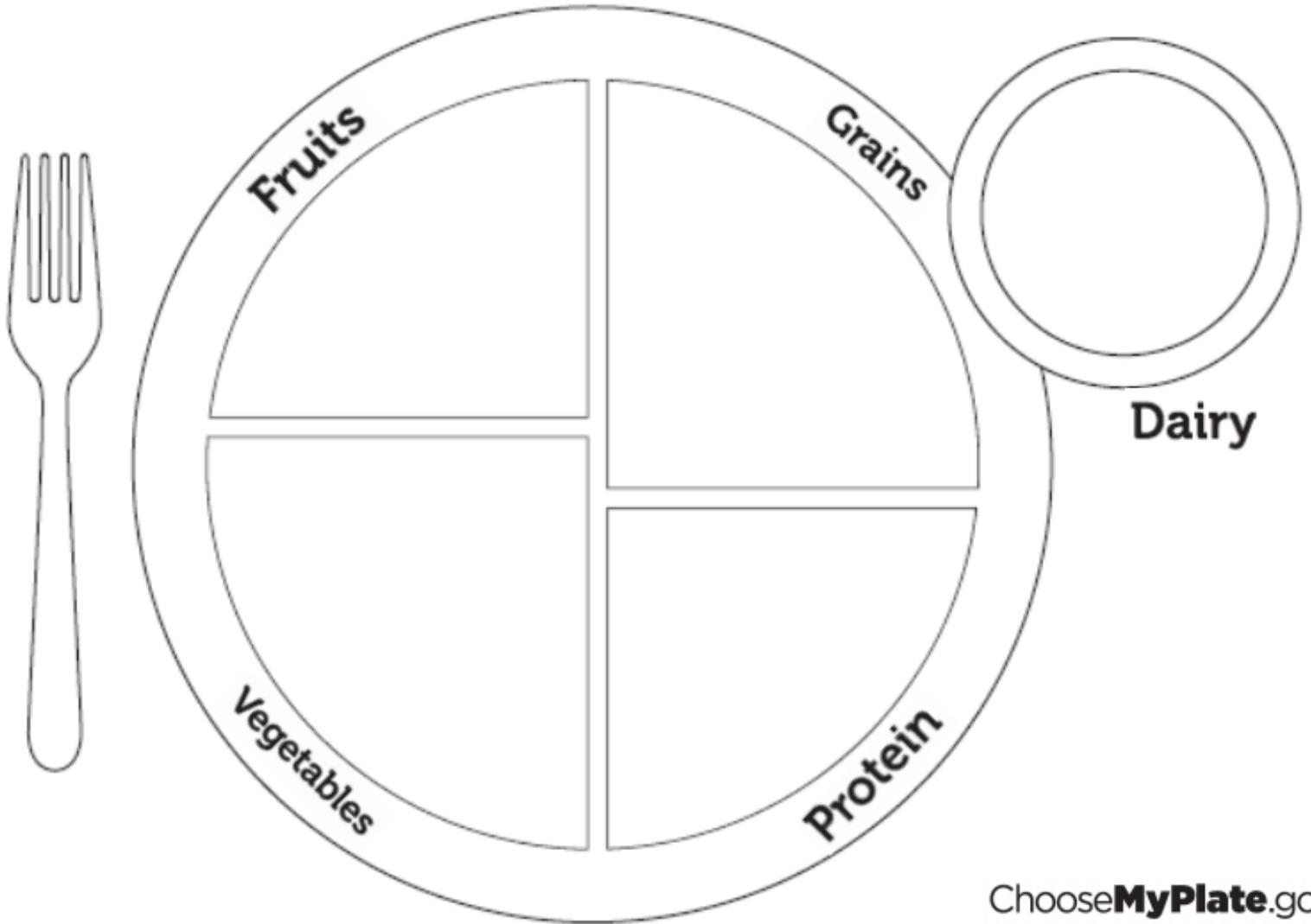
## WHAT'S ON MYPLATE?

- Any fruit or 100% fruit juice counts as part of the Fruit Group. Fruits may be fresh, canned, frozen, or dried, and may be whole, cut-up, or pureed.
- Any vegetable or 100% vegetable juice counts as a member of the Vegetable Group. Vegetables may be raw or cooked; fresh, frozen, canned, or dried/dehydrated; and may be whole, cut-up, or mashed.
- Any food made from wheat, rice, oats, cornmeal, barley or another cereal grain is a grain product. Bread, pasta, oatmeal, breakfast cereals, tortillas, and grits are examples of grain products. Grains are divided into 2 subgroups, Whole Grains and Refined Grains.
- All fluid milk products and many foods made from milk are considered part of this food group. Foods made from milk that retain their calcium content (like cheese and yogurt) are part of the group. Foods made from milk that have little to no calcium, such as cream cheese, cream, and butter, are not. Calcium-fortified soymilk (soy beverage) is also part of the Dairy Group.
- All foods made from meat, poultry, seafood, beans and peas, eggs, processed soy products, nuts, and seeds are considered part of the Protein Foods Group.



# WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE PLATE?

Use the space below to draw your favorites from each of the MyPlate groups!



Choose **MyPlate**.gov

# ALL ABOUT THE FLAVOR: SPICES FROM FLOWERS

Many spices in both baharat and garam masala come from the seeds of flowers that grow all over the world.



## CUMIN

The earthy, pungent flavor of cumin is prominent in Indian cuisine, and gives American chili its signature flavor.

## CARDAMOM

Sweet and floral, cardamom is the dominant flavor in a chai-style tea. Fun fact: the cardamom flower comes from the same family as both ginger and turmeric, whose roots are dried and ground.



## CORIANDER

Lemony and fragrant, coriander is often paired with cumin because they compliment each other. Fun fact: we eat the leaves of the coriander plant as well, but that is usually called *cilantro*.

## BAHARAT and GARAM MASALA

***Baharat* comes from the Arabic word for *spices*, but is used to describe a blend of spices used in Middle Eastern cuisine. You might be familiar with *garam masala*- it's also a blend and you'll find the spices below in both blends. Feel free to taste, but be careful - a little goes a long way, and spices on their own are often hot or bitter.**

Make your own baharat seasoning using this recipe from Israeli chef Yotam Ottolenghi at <https://tinyurl.com/baharat>. You'll find a recipe for homemade garam masala here from Epicurious. <https://tinyurl.com/garam-masala>

# ALL ABOUT THE FLAVOR: SPICES FROM TREES

Many spices in both baharat and garam masala come from parts of trees that grow in countries around the Indian Ocean.



## CLOVES



Cloves are the dried bud from the flower of the clove tree. They have a strong flavor and aroma that's a little peppery and a little sweet.



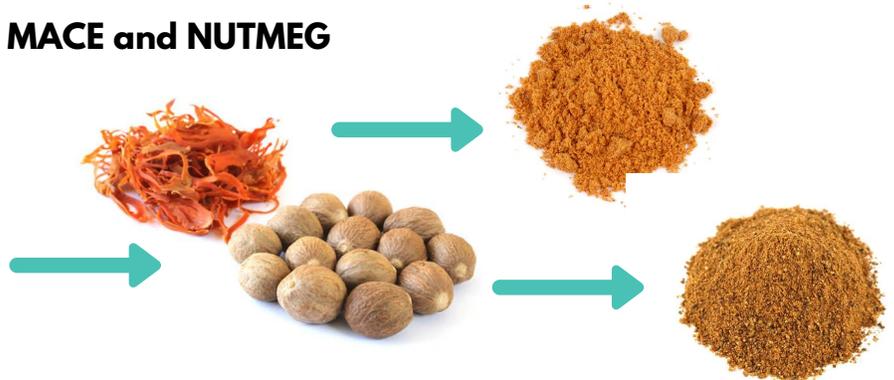
## CINNAMON



You're probably familiar with cinnamon, but did you know that it comes from the inner bark of the cinnamon tree?



## MACE and NUTMEG



Mace and nutmeg are two spices that come from the fruit of the same tree. Mace is the lacy red outer covering of the nutmeg seed, which is dried and ground, and nutmeg is the ground seed itself.

Nutmeg has a sweeter, more delicate flavor and is used in baked goods, and nutmeg is more robust.

Learn more about nutmeg and mace in this video: <https://tinyurl.com/mace-nutmeg>