

Let's cook! Station Set-Up and Recipe Script

Station Set-Up: Skillet Mac and Cheese

Station #1		
Equipment	Ingredients	Provide during Let's cook!
1 cutting mat	onion	1 chef's/utility knife
1 small bowl		
1 medium bowl (placed in center of table)		
sealable plastic bags in a variety of sizes (placed in center of table)		

Station #2		
Equipment	Ingredients	Provide during Let's cook!
1 cutting mat	spinach (if using fresh spinach)	1 chef's/utility knife OR spinach (if using thawed frozen spinach)
1 medium bowl		
¼ cup measuring cup (if using thawed frozen spinach) OR a 1 cup measuring cup (if using fresh spinach)		
clean kitchen towel		

Station #3		
Equipment	Ingredients	Provide during Let's cook!
1 cutting mat	none	1 chef's/utility knife
1 grater		block of cheese
1 cup measuring cup		
1 small bowl		

Station #4		
Equipment	Ingredients	Provide during Let's cook!
electric skillet	flour	butter
1 set of measuring spoons		
1 large cooking spoon		
1 butter/table knife		

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Station #5		
Equipment	Ingredients	Provide during Let's cook!
2-quart plastic spill-proof pitcher with a lid filled with water	uncooked macaroni	milk
1 liquid measuring cup		
1 cup measuring cup		
½ cup measuring cup		
kitchen timer		
1 large cooking spoon		

Station #6		
Equipment	Ingredients	Tasting supplies
1 dinner spoon	none	3 ounce cups
1 serving tray		plastic forks
		napkins

Recipe Script for Preparing: Skillet Mac & Cheese Lesson: *Build Strong Bones*

Begin the recipe preparation by inviting all the participants to stand around the food preparation area and reading the list of ingredients from the recipe.

To prepare for today's recipe, we need to chop an onion and the spinach (if using fresh spinach), shred the cheese, and measure the rest of the ingredients. I kept the cheese, butter and milk cold in my cooler with reusable freeze packs to transport and store them.

Ask for volunteers to help with the preparation of the recipe.

I need 5 volunteers to help with the preparation of the recipe. Who would like to help?

Note: Recommended – 5 volunteers. Combine steps (to have fewer volunteers) or divide tasks (to have more volunteers) as you think would work best to involve as many participants in the food activity as possible.

If food preparation stations were set up before class, assign each volunteer a station and add knives and cold food items from the cooler to the appropriate stations. If there wasn't room to set up stations before class, provide volunteers with the appropriate equipment and ingredients listed for each station now.

As each volunteer begins their tasks, use the script to review how to mince, dice or chop their ingredients. Follow up with the participants once they have completed their task to be sure each ingredient was cut to the indicated size (if the food pieces are too large, cooking will take longer). If the food pieces are too large, ask the participant to cut any large pieces in half.

Today we will be preparing Skillet Mac & Cheese as a group. While you may be doing a specific task for the recipe, please listen and watch all the instructions for every task. This will help you be able to complete all of the steps of the recipe at home. Even those of you who are more experienced with cooking may pick up a new tip that could save you valuable time in the kitchen. Please wait to start your task until I give you your instructions.

Station #1:

- **Equipment:** 1 cutting mat, 1 small bowl, 1 medium bowl (placed in center of table), sealable plastic bags in a variety of sizes (placed in center of table)
- **Ingredients:** 1 onion
- **Provide during *Let's Cook!*:** 1 chef's/utility knife

I placed a bowl in the center of the table. As you prepare the ingredient(s), please put any food scraps in this bowl.

At the center of the table, I have also placed a variety of sizes of plastic bags. If you have any leftover ingredients, please put these ingredients in one of these bags. I will collect the leftovers as we are cleaning up and put them in the cooler to keep these items cold.

_____ Name of Volunteer #1, please peel and chop half of the onion. As a reminder, to chop means to cut into ½ inch pieces.

Slice the onion in half vertically, cutting through the root, to create a flat surface. Set one half of the onion aside. Then, with the flat side on the cutting mat, cut the other half of the onion into ½ inch strips. Next, rotate the onion, or the entire cutting mat 90 degrees, and cut ½ inch strips in the other direction. Place the chopped onion in the small bowl, and pass it to

_____ Name of Volunteer #4.

Station #2:

- **Equipment:** 1 cutting mat (if using fresh spinach), 1 medium bowl, a ¼ cup measuring cup (if using thawed frozen spinach) OR a 1 cup measuring cup (if using fresh spinach), clean kitchen towel
- **Ingredients:** spinach (if using fresh spinach)
- **Provide during *Let's Cook!*:** 1 chef's/utility knife OR spinach (if using thawed frozen spinach)

If using fresh spinach: *_____ Name of Volunteer #2, please chop 3 cups of fresh spinach, and place it in the bowl. Pass the bowl of spinach to _____ Name of Volunteer #4.*

I washed the spinach before class, but when you're doing this at home it's important that you wash your spinach thoroughly. I'll walk you through the process now. First, you'll remove any thick long stems from the spinach leaves (tender, thin stems can be left on). Then, you'll fill a large bowl with cold water, and dunk the leaves under water. Swish them around a few times to help loosen the dirt. If the water becomes dirty, pour out the dirty water and refill the bowl with clean water. Swish the leaves again to remove additional dirt. Continue this process until the water in the bowl remains clear. Put the washed leaves in a colander or salad spinner to remove excess water. If you do not have a salad spinner, blot the excess water from the spinach leaves with a paper towel to dry the leaves.

If using frozen spinach: *I thawed the frozen spinach by putting it in the refrigerator overnight. Once thawed, I put the spinach in a clean kitchen towel and squeezed out the remaining liquid over the sink. **Demonstrate wringing motion using a clean kitchen towel (without the spinach).***

*Name of Volunteer #2, measure $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of spinach and place it in the bowl by using the $\frac{1}{4}$ cup measuring cup 3 times. Pass the bowl of spinach to _____
*Name of Volunteer #4.**

Station #3:

- **Equipment:** 1 cutting mat, 1 grater, a 1 cup measuring cup, 1 small bowl
- **Provide during *Let's Cook!*:** 1 chef's/utility knife, block of cheddar cheese

Name of Volunteer #3, use the knife to open the package of cheese and if necessary, cut the block of cheese in half so that it is easy to hold while shredding. Then, use the grater to shred 2 cups of cheese. Be careful, the grater is sharp. Place the shredded cheese in the bowl and pass it to

Name of Volunteer #5.

Station #4:

- **Equipment:** electric skillet, 1 set of measuring spoons, 1 large cooking spoon, 1 butter/table knife
- **Ingredients:** flour
- **Provide during *Let's Cook!*:** butter

Name of Volunteer #4, turn the skillet to low heat and then measure 3 tablespoons of butter. The butter wrapper is marked by tablespoons. While the butter is still in the wrapper, choose one end of the stick of butter and count 3 tablespoons. Then, using the butter/table knife, cut the 3 tablespoons off of the end of the stick of butter and place it in the skillet.

Once the butter is melted, add the chopped onion and cook for 2 minutes or until soft and clear (not white). Next, add the spinach and cook for 2 more minutes or until wilted (if using fresh spinach). Last, measure 2 tablespoons of flour and add it to the skillet. Cook for 1 minute, stirring constantly until the flour is incorporated smoothly into the mixture.

Station #5:

- **Equipment:** a 2-quart plastic spill-proof pitcher with a lid filled with water, 1 liquid measuring cup, a 1 cup measuring cup, a $\frac{1}{2}$ cup measuring cup, kitchen timer, 1 large cooking spoon
- **Ingredients:** uncooked macaroni
- **Provide during *Let's Cook!*:** milk

Name of Volunteer #5, turn the skillet up to medium-low heat. Measure 3 cups of milk and ½ cup of water and add them to the skillet. Stir thoroughly to combine the ingredients and bring the mixture to a simmer with the lid on the skillet. A simmer is a low boil where the bubbles form and gently rise to the surface. You don't want a full boil because that would scald or burn the milk.

Once the mixture is simmering, measure 2½ cups of uncooked macaroni and add it to the skillet. If the macaroni is not completely covered by liquid, add a little more water to bring the level of the liquid just above the macaroni. Turn the skillet to low heat, put the lid back on the skillet and continue to simmer for 8 to 9 minutes, stirring every 2 minutes.

Set a timer for 8 minutes.

I have set the timer for 8 minutes, Name of Volunteer #4, will you please check the skillet every few minutes and stir the ingredients so that the food doesn't burn?

While the macaroni cooks, let's talk a bit about this recipe. Preparing foods from scratch (using basic ingredients, not a prepared mixture of ingredients) instead of purchasing convenience foods like boxed macaroni and cheese or frozen entrees often saves us money and is usually a healthier choice. This recipe is made with real cheese and real milk, providing us nutrients that we would not otherwise get from packaged macaroni and cheese. Also, when we cook foods from scratch, we can control the amount of salt we put in the dish. Convenience foods often contain a lot of salt and other preservatives.

What other kinds of "typical" packaged foods do you buy that you might try making from scratch?

After 8 minutes, taste the macaroni to see if it's done. The pasta is done once it is tender, but not mushy.

If the macaroni is not tender: The macaroni is not tender and needs a couple more minutes to cook. I'll set the timer for 2 more minutes and then will taste it again.

If the macaroni is tender: Name of Volunteer #5, now that the macaroni is done, turn the skillet off. Add the shredded cheese and stir to combine. Then, place the lid back on the skillet. We're going to let this sit for 5 minutes with the skillet off before serving.

Set a timer for 5 minutes.

While we wait, I have a few more tidbits to share with you about this recipe. Today we added spinach to the recipe. I'll bet you will be surprised at how good it is with the spinach added. When you make this at home, you could also try adding other chopped, cooked, or frozen veggies like carrots, broccoli or peas.

Please pass around the empty box from the pasta you used in today's recipe.

If you used whole grain macaroni: *Today we used whole grain macaroni in this recipe, which provides fiber and other nutrients that help keep us healthy.*

If you didn't use whole grain macaroni: *Today we used refined macaroni but when making this at home, you can use whole grain macaroni, which would add fiber and other important nutrients to the dish.*

Station #6:

- **Equipment:** 1 dinner spoon, 1 serving tray
- **Tasting supplies:** 3 ounce cups, plastic forks, napkins

*Now, we are ready to taste the **Skillet Mac & Cheese!** _____ Names of Volunteers #1 and #2, using the serving tray and tasting supplies, please serve everyone a taste of the recipe.*

Ask the participants about the recipe while they are eating.

What do you think of this recipe? Do you think you might try this at home?

When you make this at home, be sure to refrigerate any leftovers within 2 hours and eat them within 3 to 5 days.