

Cafeteria Connection

OCTOBER 2026

NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH WEEK: Eat Well, Learn Well

October 12-16, 2026

Eating well helps us learn well! A balanced meal provides the nutrients our bodies and brains need to stay energized, focused, and ready to take on the day.

During National School Lunch Week, October 12-16, we're celebrating the important role school meals play in nourishing students and supporting their success in the classroom. It's also a great opportunity to explore the variety of delicious and nutritious choices available in the school cafeteria.

Encourage students to build a well-rounded meal featuring lean protein, whole grains, colorful fruits, and vegetables. Every bite is an opportunity to make a healthy choice—and small choices can add up to big benefits.

Let's fuel our bodies, nourish our minds, and celebrate school lunch all week long!

Dietitians Pick **JERSEY FRESH**
Farm to School



Apple Cinnamon Oatmeal

Start your morning off right with fiber packed apple cinnamon oatmeal! Apples are a great source of vitamin C which helps boost our immune system to keep us healthy. Oatmeal is a great source of fiber helping regulate digestive support & protein which helps keep us feeling fuller for longer! A perfect nutritious breakfast to start your morning off right to help provide your body and brain with the energy needed to take on the day!

Apple Cinnamon Oatmeal **SERVES 4**

INGREDIENTS:

2 cups Low-fat (1%) Milk
3/4 cup Water
1 Tbsp (approx. 1/2 oz) Margarine or Butter
2 Tbsp + 1 tsp Brown Sugar (packed)
A small pinch Ground Cinnamon (approx. 1/10 tsp)
A small pinch Ground Nutmeg (approx. 1/10 tsp)

1/4 tsp Salt
2 cups (approx. 6 oz) Dry Rolled Oats
3/4 cup (approx. 2.3 oz) Fresh Apple, finely diced (about 1/2 of a medium apple)
1/2 cup (approx. 2 oz) Dried Cranberries



INSTRUCTIONS:

- 1. BOIL THE LIQUIDS AND FLAVORS:** In a medium saucepan, combine the milk, water, margarine, brown sugar, cinnamon, nutmeg, and salt. Bring the mixture to a gentle boil over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally to make sure the sugar dissolves.
- 2. ADD THE OATS AND FRUIT:** Stir in the rolled oats, diced apples, and dried cranberries. Turn the heat down to medium-low to maintain a gentle simmer.
- 3. SIMMER UNTIL THICK 5-7 MINS:** Cook uncovered for 5 to 7 minutes, stirring frequently to prevent the bottom from scorching. The oatmeal is ready when the oats have absorbed most of the liquid and are nice and creamy, and the apples are slightly softened.
- 4. REST AND SERVE:** Remove the saucepan from the heat. Let it sit for 2 minutes to thicken up slightly before spooning it into 4 bowls. Top with an extra splash of milk or a sprinkle of brown sugar if desired!

OCTOBER HOLIDAYS

Farm to School Month
Vegetarian Month
National Chili Month
National Pizza Month



Oct 1	World Vegetarian Day
Oct 1	Feast of St. Therese of Lisieux
Oct 2	Feast of the Guardian Angels
Oct 4	Feast of St. Francis of Assisi
Oct 4	National Taco Day
Oct 5	Feast of Saint Faustina
Oct 7	Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary
Oct 8	National Pierogi Day
Oct 12	Columbus Day
Oct 12	Indigenous Peoples' Day
Oct 12-16	National School Lunch Week
Oct 13	Columbus Day
Oct 13	Indigenous People's Day
Oct 15	Feast of Saint Teresa of Avila
Oct 17	National Pasta Day
Oct 20	National Chicken & Waffles Day
Oct 20	International Chef's Day
Oct 21	National Apple Day
Oct 22	Feast of Saint Pope John Paul II
Oct 29	National Oatmeal Day

NATIONAL PASTA DAY: A Meal Made for Sharing

October 17



There's something special about gathering around a table and sharing a delicious meal—and pasta has a wonderful way of bringing people together. From classic spaghetti and meatballs to baked ziti, ravioli, and comforting pasta dishes filled with vegetables, there's a pasta favorite for everyone!

National Pasta Day on October 17 is a fun opportunity to celebrate one of the world's most beloved foods while remembering that mealtime is about more than what's on our plate. Sharing a meal gives us a chance to slow down, connect with one another, and express gratitude for the food we enjoy and the people who help bring it to our tables.

At Maschio's Food Services, we love creating meals that bring students and school communities together. Pasta can be a delicious source of energy when paired with nutritious ingredients such as vegetables, lean proteins, and whole grains.

This National Pasta Day, let's celebrate the simple joy of a good meal and the importance of coming together, sharing with others, and being grateful for the blessings around us. Good food tastes even better when it's shared!