

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



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 4 National Taco Day

Oct 8 National Pierogi Day

Oct 12 Columbus Day

Oct 12 Indigeneous Peoples' Day

Oct 12-16 National School Lunch Week

Oct 17 National Pasta Day

Oct 20 National Chicken & Waffles Day

Oct 20 International Chefs Day

Oct 21 National Apple Day

Oct 29 National Oatmeal Day

Oct 31 Halloween

HEALTHY HALLOWEEN: Smarter Treat Choices

Halloween is all about spooky fun, creativity, and, of course, delicious treats! While enjoying seasonal favorites is part of the celebration, choosing a variety of nutritious foods can help keep energy levels steady throughout the day.



This Halloween, try balancing sweet treats with better-for-you options such as air-popped popcorn, homemade trail mix, fresh fruit, or a creamy yogurt parfait. These tasty choices can add a little festive fun while providing important nutrients.

Our cafeterias will also feature special Halloween-themed offerings that bring the spirit of the season to the school lunch experience. Let's celebrate Halloween with delicious choices that keep students energized, nourished, and ready for all the fun ahead!

