

[Dinner Time is Coming!](#)

By Capt. Cole Ettingoff, Virginia Wing Staff

A lot of meals are served at CAP activities, particularly during the summer season. Now is the time to begin thinking about not just how you are going to serve meals this summer but what you are serving. At many activities, we just serve what we served last year. And that may be just fine. The recipes are tried and true. We know the cadets will eat them and we know we can cook them on time and on budget. But what if we could do better?

We recognize that activities like encampment are learning activities. The goal isn't just to do cool things, but to learn. Could mealtime be a learning moment? We know that the diets of most Americans leave a lot to be desired, but activities like encampments may offer an opportunity to try new foods and role model healthy meals: particularly those rich in vegetables and lean proteins.

You are not alone in trying to plan healthier meals. There are a lot of resources, several decent ones included below, that are worth reviewing or sharing with your members responsible for food services.



Every year the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics celebrates March as [National Nutrition Month](#). You can use our MyHealthfinder [nutrition resources](#) to encourage people to make healthy food choices. Review the [Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020–2025](#) and share the [related consumer](#) and [professional resources](#) with your community and networks.

Additional Resources to consider:

Nutrition for Teens:

<https://www.johnmuirhealth.com/health-education/health-wellness/childrens-health/nutrition-teens.html>

DoD Recipes for Large Groups (including a page specifically for K-12 groups):

<https://www.sub4health.com/dod-recipes-2/>

“Buffet, Serving Line, and Family Style: The Pros and Cons” from the American Camp Association:

<https://www.acacamps.org/article/camping-magazine/buffet-serving-line-family-style-pros-cons>

Take Charge of Your Health: A Guide for Teenagers:

<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/weight-management/take-charge-health-guide-teenagers>