



Serving Traditional Hmong Foods in Early Care Meals with the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP): A Recipe Collection





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INTRODUCTION

Our cohort of Hmong early care providers shared feedback¹ to identify challenges and opportunities to participate in the federal Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP, also known as “the Food Program”), which provides reimbursement to participating providers for every meal they serve. To receive reimbursement, providers must serve meals that meet specific meal pattern requirements based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. This collection of recipes incorporates culturally relevant Hmong foods and provides crediting information for providers seeking to include these foods as part of a CACFP-reimbursable meal. In Minnesota, the Department of Education works through sponsoring organizations to provide this reimbursement to in-home early care providers. Sponsors are a great resource for further support, as they are the experts regarding reimbursement through the CACFP.

Sized for in-home family child care providers, this booklet provides straightforward, kid-friendly recipes you can include in your reimbursable early care meals. Information and resources on ingredients are also included to make sharing more vegetables with kids fun and informative!



TOMATOES!

Did you Know?

- Tomatoes come in many different sizes, shapes and colors: yellow, orange, green, brown, purple, striped, and, of course, red!
- There are around 10,000 varieties of tomatoes worldwide. Tomato seedlings have been grown all over the world and even in space!²



PORK WITH TOMATOES, GINGER AND LEMONGRASS

- **CACFP lunch crediting for ages 3–5 years.**
- 1.5 ounces meat, 1/4 cup vegetables, 1/2 ounce equivalent grain
- **Serving size:** 1/2 cup pork and vegetables, 1/4 cup rice.
- **7 servings.**

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 pound ground pork
- 1 large knob of ginger
- 6 pieces lemongrass
- 2 cups tomatoes, diced (2 medium tomatoes)
- 1 cup cilantro, chopped
- 1 cup green onions, chopped
- 1 cup enriched or whole grain rice (*NOTE: Rice must either "whole grain" or "enriched" to be creditable under CACFP.*)

DIRECTIONS:

1. Cook rice.
2. Dice tomatoes, chop green onions and cilantro, and slice ginger into 1/4 inch slices.
3. Heat skillet. Add ground pork, cook until cooked through. Add ginger.
4. Add tomatoes, cook for 3–5 minutes.
5. Add water and lemongrass, simmer 5 minutes.
6. Remove ginger slices and lemongrass pieces, then serve pork and vegetables with rice.

Adapted from **Hmong Recipes** (see References page for link).³



ZUCCHINI!

Did you Know?

- Zucchini seeds like warm soil, so they are usually planted in late May in Minnesota.
- Zucchini plants produce big yellow flowers that, if pollinated, become zucchini.
- Zucchini flowers are also edible.
- Zucchini have a lot of potassium – even more potassium than a banana!

ZUCCHINI FRITTERS

- **CACFP lunch crediting for ages 3–5 years.**
- ¼ cup vegetable
- **Serving size:** ¼ cup cooked zucchini fritters.
- **8 servings.**

INGREDIENTS:

- **2 cups zucchini or summer squash, sliced in ¼ inch rounds** (~1 medium zucchini)
- **¼ cup flour** (tempura or all purpose)
- **1 egg**
- **1 teaspoon salt**
- **Oil**



DIRECTIONS:

1. Slice zucchini into ¼ inch rounds.
2. Heat skillet over medium high heat, add 1 tablespoon oil.
3. Whisk egg and salt together
4. Dip zucchini slices in flour, then egg.
5. Add to hot pan, fry 3–5 minutes. Flip and cook an additional 1–2 minutes.
6. Serve warm on their own, or with a dip – ketchup, ranch, whatever you like!

ALTERNATE: complete steps 1–4, but bake on a baking tray lined with parchment at 400 degrees for 15 minutes.

CONGEE / MOV KUA DIS TSUAG

- CACFP crediting for ages 1-2 and 3-5 years.
- 1/2 ounce equivalent grain
- **Serving size:** ¼ cup cooked congee.
- **13 servings.**

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup enriched long grain white rice (*NOTE: Rice must either “whole grain” or “enriched” to be creditable under CACFP.*)
- 4 cups water
- **Recommended additions:** fish sauce, cilantro, chives, scallions/green onions



DIRECTIONS:

1. Add water and rice to the pot, heat on high.
2. Cook and stir for approximately 10 minutes.
3. Reduce heat to low, cook until very soft.
4. Serve in individual bowls with your selected additions as toppings.



CHIVES!

Did you Know?

- Chives are an allium, meaning they are a relative of onions, leeks and garlic.⁴
- They begin to bloom in May or June in Minnesota,⁵ and the blooms are edible!⁶
- They are high in vitamin C and potassium.
- Chives are thinner and have a more delicate flavor than green onions. Because of their delicate flavor, chives can be a great thing to try as a “sprinkle” for kids!



CABBAGE!

Did you Know?

- Cabbages come in various sizes and colors, including purple and green, and can have smooth or crinkly leaves.
- Cabbage can be consumed raw or cooked – try a taste test to see which the kids you care for like better!
- Cabbage likes cooler fall weather. When cabbages are grown in a bunch together, it is called a cabbage patch.
- Cabbage is high in vitamin C and calcium.⁷

CHICKEN CABBAGE ROLLS

- **CACFP lunch crediting for ages 3–5 years.**
- 1.5 ounces meat/meat alternate, 1/4 cup vegetables
- **Serving size:** 1 cabbage roll.
- **15 servings.**

INGREDIENTS:

- **1 large green cabbage**
- **1/4 of a 10.5 ounce bag mung bean vermicelli** (2 out of 8 nests)
- **1 pound ground chicken**
- **1 cup cilantro, chopped**
- **1 cup green onions, chopped**
- **2 cups carrots, shredded**
- **3 Tablespoons oyster sauce**
- **Hoisin sauce**
- **1/2 teaspoon each: garlic powder, onion powder, black pepper**

DIRECTIONS:

1. Soak vermicelli noodles in water for 10–15 minutes. Drain.
2. Rinse cabbage and pat dry. Remove core, boil until softened. Remove each layer.
3. Rinse cilantro, onions and carrots.
4. Chop cilantro and onions, grate carrots.
5. Combine chicken, noodles, cilantro, green onions, carrots, oyster sauce and spices.
6. Lay out cabbage leaf, add 1/2 cup filling, fold edges in and roll up.
7. Steam on stovetop for 20 minutes or until cooked through. Serve with hoisin sauce or other dipping sauce.

Adapted from Hmong Early Childhood Coalition and University of Minnesota, and **A Petite Mama**.⁸



HERBS!

- Herbs are a great opportunity for little ones to explore and use all their senses — how do herbs feel, smell and taste?⁹
- Herbs have a variety of uses both raw and cooked, so they can easily be incorporated into a variety of recipes and taste tests.
- They are also easy to grow and can sometimes grow indoors in a bright spot. Try rooting a sprig of sage from the grocery store in water, then plant it when roots grow!
- You can often find bundles of “chicken herbs” sold by Hmong farmers at local markets. These bundles contain a variety of different Hmong medicinal herbs and are delicious in this soup!

CHICKEN SOUP WITH HMONG HERBS NQAIJ QAIB HAU XYAW TSHUAJ

- **CACFP lunch crediting for ages 3–5 years.**
- 1.5 ounces meat/meat alternate, 1/2 ounce equivalent grain
- **Serving size:** 1 cup.
- **11 servings.**

INGREDIENTS:

- **1 whole fresh chicken, or equivalent in bone-in chicken pieces**
- **10 cups water**
- **1 stalk lemongrass**
- **1 teaspoon salt**
- **1 teaspoon pepper**
- **Chicken herbs** (if you don't have these, add celery, bitter lettuce and basil)
- **1 cup long-grain enriched rice** (*NOTE: Rice must either “whole grain” or “enriched” to be creditable under CACFP.*)

DIRECTIONS:

1. Cook rice.
2. Chop chicken into pieces.
3. Clean herbs.
4. In a medium pot, bring water to boil with chicken. Add lemongrass, salt and pepper.
5. Add herbs, cook 5 more minutes.
6. Remove lemongrass, and serve 1 cup of soup over 1/4 cup of rice.



Adapted from **Hmong Cooking**.¹⁰



BRUSSELS SPROUTS!

Did you Know?

- Brussels sprouts resemble tiny cabbages – kids can pretend they are giants and eat a whole cabbage (or several!).
- Flavor improves in the cooler weather. In Minnesota, Brussels sprouts are one of the few crops that are often harvested after the snow flies.
- The bulbs grow on a stalk, and large leaves protect them from sun. The large leaves resemble collard greens and can be prepared and consumed in similar ways.¹¹

ROASTED TERIYAKI BRUSSELS SPROUTS

- CACFP lunch crediting for ages 3–5 years.
- 1/4 cup vegetables
- Serving size: 1/4 cup.
- 8 servings.

INGREDIENTS:

- 4 cups Brussels sprouts
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 4 Tablespoons low-sodium soy sauce
- 2 Tablespoons sugar



DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees.
2. Line baking sheet with aluminum foil. Spray with cooking oil.
3. Trim and rinse Brussels sprouts, then cut in half.
4. Mix soy sauce, sugar and garlic powder. Toss Brussels sprouts in this mixture to coat evenly.
5. Arrange in single layer on baking sheet, roast until brown and tender (approximately 15 minutes).

Adapted from Hmong Early Childhood Coalition and University of Minnesota.



POTATOES!

Did you Know?

- Potatoes are grown in all 50 states and over 125 countries.¹²
- A potato is approximately 80% water!¹³
- The part of the potato we eat is called a tuber, and it grows underground.
- Potatoes come in lots of colors, including red, white and purple.



ROASTED BABY POTATOES

- CACFP lunch crediting for ages 3-5 years.
- 1/4 cup vegetables
- Serving size: 1/4 cup.
- 8 servings.

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 cups baby potatoes
- 1 Tablespoon olive oil
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning
- 1/2 teaspoon paprika
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- Fresh rosemary, cilantro, or other herbs (optional)
- Cooking spray

DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
2. Rinse and cut potatoes - quartered or in eighths, to similar size.
3. Coat potatoes in olive oil, add spices.
4. Spray cooking sheet, place potatoes in single layer.
5. Bake for 35-40 minutes, depending on potato size. Flip partway through cooking to ensure even browning.
6. Sprinkle with fresh herbs, like rosemary, cilantro or parsley. Consider letting kids add their own herbs for the smell (and the control).

Adapted from Hmong Early Childhood Coalition and University of Minnesota.



HMONG CHICKEN LAAB

- CACFP lunch crediting for ages 3–5 years.
- 1.5 ounces meat, 1/2 ounce grain equivalent
- **Serving size:** 1/4 cup laab, 1/4 cup rice.
- **12 servings.**

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 pounds ground chicken
- 1/3 cup cilantro, chopped
- 1/4 cup green onion, chopped
- 1/4 cup mint leaves
- 1/4 cup lemongrass, chopped
- 2 Tablespoon fish sauce
- 2 Tablespoon fresh lime juice
- 2 Tablespoon roasted rice powder
- Salt to taste
- 1 cup enriched or whole grain rice (*NOTE: Rice must either “whole grain” or “enriched” to be creditable under CACFP.*)

DIRECTIONS:

1. Cook rice according to package directions.
2. Heat nonstick pan, add ground chicken. Cook over medium heat until fully cooked and no longer pink.
3. Add fish sauce, lime juice and rice powder. (*NOTE: you can make your own by roasting dry rice in a frying pan until brown, then grinding into a fine powder. Many Asian markets sell rice powder.*)
4. Stir in fresh herbs. Add salt to taste.
5. Serve laab with 1/4 cup enriched rice.

LEMONGRASS!

Did you Know?

- Lemongrass has a lemony flavor and aroma.
- It is used in a variety of savory dishes. For an easy way to try lemongrass, simmer some in water, add sugar and sip your lemongrass tea!
- Lemongrass is a perennial grass. You can grow it in Minnesota as an annual, since this tropical plant doesn't like the cold Minnesota winters.



Adapted from **Hmong Can Cook**.¹⁴



KOHLRABI SALAD

- CACFP lunch crediting for ages 3–5 years.
- 1/4 cup vegetables
- **Serving size:** 1/4 cup salad.
- **8 servings.**

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 large kohlrabi, approximately 2 cups
- 1 pint cherry tomatoes, diced
- Cilantro
- Garlic
- Juice from 2 limes
- 3 Tablespoons sugar
- Salt to taste



KOHLRABI!

Did you Know?

- Kohlrabi is a great source of vitamin C.¹⁵
- The outer skin of kohlrabi is very thick and too hard for a vegetable peeler – it should be removed with a sharp knife.
- Like many of its relatives (cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, etc.), kohlrabi can be consumed raw or cooked.
- Kohlrabi likes cool weather and grows best between 65 and 75 degrees.¹⁶

DIRECTIONS:

1. Wash produce, trim and peel outer flesh from Kohlrabi. Grate or slice into small, thin pieces.
2. Dice tomatoes, mince garlic, chop cilantro. Juice limes.
3. Mix sugar and lime juice until sugar is dissolved.
4. Add remaining ingredients, mix. Serve cold.

Recipe adapted slightly from **Renewing the Countryside**.¹⁷



PORK & MUSTARD GREEN (Zaub PAAJ) SOUP

- **CACFP lunch crediting for ages 3–5 years.**
- 1.5 ounces meat, 1/2 ounce grain equivalent, 1/4 cup vegetables
- **Serving size:** 1 cup soup, 1/4 cup rice.
- **8 servings.**

INGREDIENTS:

- **1.5 pounds boneless Boston Butt pork shoulder, chopped**
- **4 cups mustard greens** (or substitute other dark leafy greens)
- **8 cups water**
- **4 inch stalk lemongrass**
- **1 inch knob ginger**
- **1 Tablespoon kosher salt**
- **1 cup enriched long-grain rice** (*NOTE: Rice must either “whole grain” or “enriched” to be creditable under CACFP.*)

DIRECTIONS:

1. Cook rice according to package directions.
2. In a separate pot, bring water to a simmer. Add salt, lemongrass and ginger. Simmer for 5 minutes.
3. Add pork and simmer for 10 minutes.
4. Add greens and simmer for 5 minutes.
5. Serve over rice, or serve rice on the side.



MUSTARD GREENS!

Did you Know?

- Mustard greens are part of the brassica family, which includes kale, collard greens and cabbage.¹⁸
- Mustard greens have a strong bitter, spicy flavor when raw, so they are usually cooked — the recipe here is well loved by all ages at Choua’s early care!



REFERENCES

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This collection of 10 recipes incorporates culturally relevant Hmong foods and provides crediting information for providers seeking to include these foods as part of a CACFP-reimbursable meal. Sized for in-home family child care providers, this booklet provides straightforward, kid-friendly recipes you can include in your reimbursable early care meals. Information and resources on ingredients are also included to make sharing more vegetables with kids fun and informative!



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