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# Exchanging Cultures through School Food: Developing Culturally Relevant Meals for the School Cafeteria

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# Agenda

- Why incorporate cultural diversity into school food?
- Finding recipes
- Converting recipes from family style to recipes ready for the lunch line
- Taste tests!
- Challenges
- Success
- Discussion

# Importance of Cultural Diversity

*"Food can be about your family, your home, where you're from. It can be an adventure! I hope that by having a dish like chicken biryani for lunch, other students will learn to appreciate different cultures like mine."*

-Zaahid, 7th grade



# Words from Wildwood Elementary

(Video to be uploaded)



# Finding Recipes

- Community Engagement Team in Cambridge
- Parent Groups
- School staff
- Ask the students!



## Chicken Biryani

### Ingredients

- 2.5 lbs raw chicken (boneless or with bone)
- ½ cup of yogurt
- 3 cups of raw basmati rice
- 2 onions, processed to paste
- 4 – 5 large onions sliced thin and fried until crisp
- 10 inch long piece fresh ginger, processed to paste
- 10 cloves of garlic, processed to paste
- 6 cinnamon sticks
- 3 teaspoons garam masala
- 6 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons rose water
- 1-2 teaspoons kewra water essence (optional)
- 8 pods of green cardamom
- Salt to taste
- Water as needed
- 4 cups of oil for fried onions and 2 sticks of butter

### How to Prepare

1. First, combine the ginger, garlic, onion paste, yogurt, salt, 3 cinnamon sticks, 4 cardamom crushed, and garam masala in a large non-metal bowl. Stir together and add the chicken. Use a large pot for cooking. Take the chicken from the sauce and cook for 15 minutes. Cook boneless chicken for 8 to 10 minutes, with-bone 15 minutes.
2. Slice the onions thinly and fry in the oil until crispy.
3. Cook the rice part way by putting the rice in a pot with 10 cups of boiling water, 3 cinnamon sticks, 2 tablespoons of olive oil, 4 green cardamom, 2 teaspoons of salt, 1 teaspoon kewra essence (optional). Boil until 75% cooked and drain off the liquid.
4. When the chicken is done cooking get a large oven safe pot with a cover. First put in the chicken and the sauce in the bottom of the pot. Layer the fried onions on top. Add rose water and kewra essence (optional). Put the rice on top. Do not mix. Cover the pot.
5. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. Turn it down to 350 when you put the biryani in the oven. Allow it to cook for 1 1/2 hours and check to see if the chicken is done. Put back in the oven if needed and check every few minutes until the chicken is cooked through. Stir up the layers and serve with salad.

**Serves 12 to 15**

# Selecting Recipes

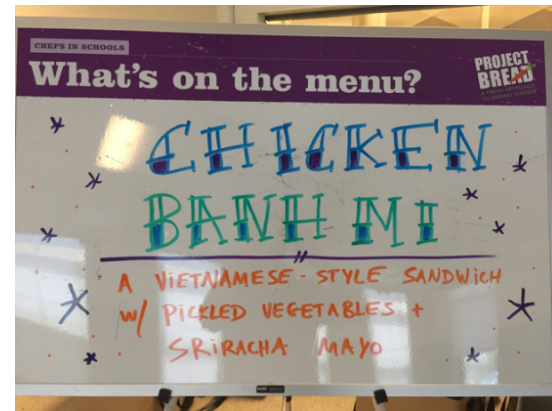
- Are the ingredients available for order?
  - Can the ingredients be found at a store near the schools?
  - Example: Recao leaves at Market Basket
- Can staff be trained to make the recipe?
  - Is the staff time available?
- Is the recipe modifiable without losing authenticity?





# Creating Recipes for the Lunch Line

- Scaling recipes from family size
- Kitchen capacity (equipment, staff, etc.)
- Purchasing ingredients
- Utilizing commodity products
- Creativity and authenticity



# Creating Recipes for the Lunch Line

- Bold flavors
- Variety of textures
- Visual appeal
- Meets NSLP meal pattern requirements (2 oz. M/MA, 2 oz. WG, ¼ cup vegetable)

**Banh Mi Sandwich** (*To be tested in Boston Public Schools, December 2016*)

Makes 100 Sandwiches

**Ingredients:**

12.5# White meat chicken strips

3 cups soy sauce

1# fresh ginger, minced

1# fresh garlic, minced

¼ cup brown sugar

6# Coleslaw mix

3 bunches fresh Cilantro, finely chopped

3 bunches scallions, thinly sliced

1 cup apple cider vinegar

¼ cup white sugar

2 tbsp salt

3 quart mayonnaise

2 cups hot sauce

100 6" Whole wheat sub rolls

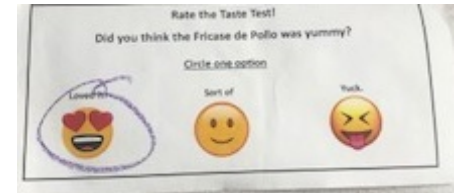
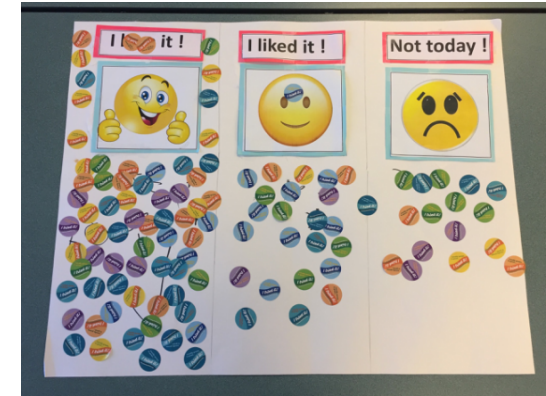
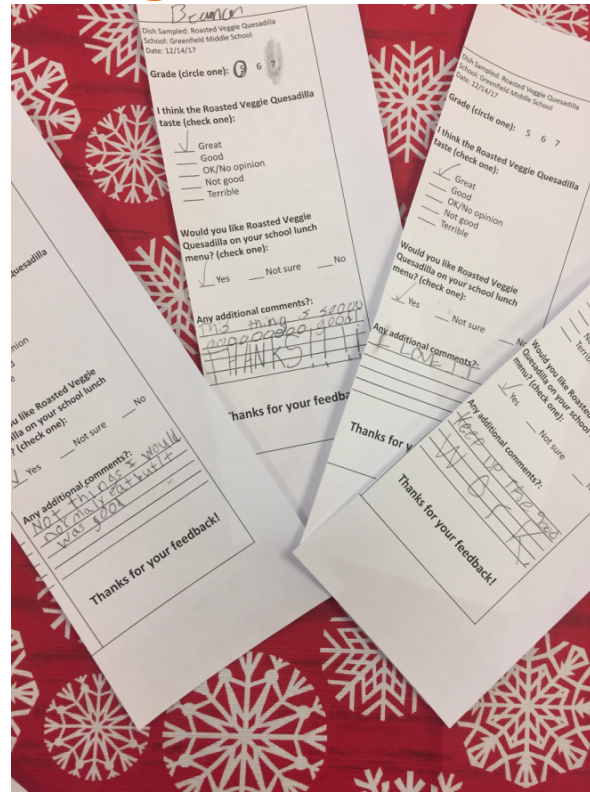
**Directions:**

1. Mix together soy sauce, ginger, garlic and brown sugar until sugar has dissolved. Place chicken in deep hotel pan and cover with marinade. Mix well, cover with food service film and set aside to allow flavors to develop, for at least an hour (This step can be done a day ahead so the chicken marinate overnight. Longer to marinate = more flavor!)
2. Place covered hotel pan with chicken in steamer and cook until heated through. Internal temperature of chicken should be 165 degrees F. Hold hot in warmer.
3. In a large mixing bowl, combine coleslaw mix, cilantro, scallions, apple cider vinegar, sugar and salt.
4. In a separate bowl, mix together mayonnaise and hot sauce to make spicy mayo.
5. Make sandwiches by spreading 1 oz. spicy mayo on sub roll, add 2 oz. of chicken and top with 1/3 cup prepared coleslaw mix.



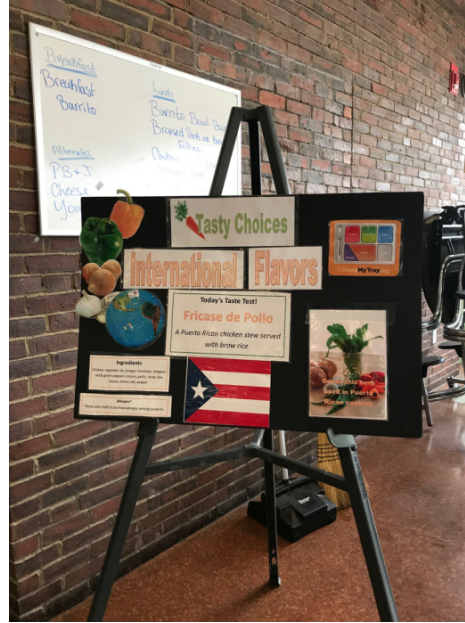
# Taste Tests & Sampling

- Testing the recipe helps the kitchen perfect the dish and exposes students to the new offering.
- Collect feedback and talk with the students.



# Challenges

- Staff pushback
- Costs
- The item isn't selling
  - Loss of popularity over time
- Finding the resources for Taste Tests
  - Testing the recipe across the district



# Successes

- *“This reminds me of my abuela...it tastes just like her chicken she makes me at home”* -1st grader in Cambridge
- Increase in scratch cooking
- Meeting the requests of parents and caregivers





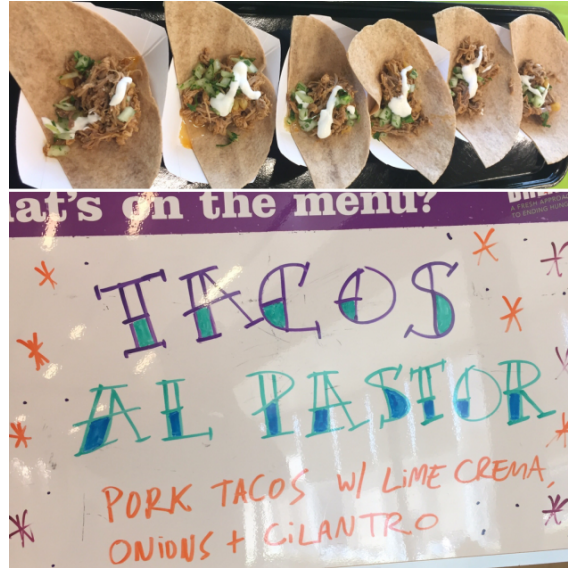
# Discussion

**Welcome the Experts**

**Melissa Honeywood,**  
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**Sasha Palmer,** Amherst-  
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# Thank You!



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