

# How to celebrate within a whole school food approach

## TIPS FOR HEALTHIER CELEBRATIONS

Supporting the  
food in schools  
programme.



It is true that the occasional treat won't do us any harm, but when an occasional treat become a regular occurrence it can undo the best of intentions to implement a whole school food policy. It's a good idea to think about ways of incorporating celebrations into your food policy if you haven't already done so. This will help you to promote consistent messages about healthier eating as part of a whole school food approach.

We all acknowledge that celebrating special occasions goes hand in hand with food. However, food provided for special occasions, particularly for children, is very often based around sweets, cakes and biscuits. There is nothing wrong with having an occasional treat but where there are large numbers of children in a school setting the number of birthdays and special occasions can soon become part of everyday events. This situation can compromise a whole school food approach and very often give mixed messages to children as well as undo all the good work being done in school.



### Guidelines for primary schools

Birthdays and other events for younger children can be made special by:

- Decorating a dummy cake and use candles to allow the ritual of blowing out the candles making the child feel special.
- Instead of bringing sweets to school for birthdays suggest that parents might like to send non edible treats such as pencils. Make this part of your food policy so that parents know from the outset what is expected.
- Get the children to plan a special menu that includes healthier options and serve it in interesting ways. Such as pineapple shells filled with fruit, sandwiches cut into different shapes.
- Encourage the children to make table decorations to add the finishing touches.
- Think about different ways to incorporate foods from other cultures to broaden all of the children's experiences.
- Hold a disco or some other activity so that the children can be active and burn up some of the calories they will be eating.
- Think about portion sizes, use mini portion sizes children will be more likely to try something new and won't over do it.
- Consider the time when you plan to hold your party, is it straight after lunch? Can you ask your kitchen staff to help in the preparation so that you have more control over what the chil-

# Recipe ideas for healthy party food



## Colourful fruit skewers

- 12 wooden skewers
- 1 large ripe mango, peeled
- 2 large oranges, peeled
- 2 large bananas, peeled
- 250g small strawberries, hulled
- 1 cup vanilla yoghurt



Soak skewers in cold water for 20-30 minutes. Cut mango and oranges into 3cm chunks. Cut bananas into 3cm slices. Thread fruit onto skewers, alternating the varieties and serve. Alternatively cook skewers on a lightly greased barbecue or grill plate until warm. Cool and serve with yoghurt.

**Makes 12.**

## Other ideas

Use wraps with healthy fillings such as tuna, lean meat, chicken or cheese and cut into small bite sized pieces as an alternative to sausage rolls.

Make healthy dips and serve with a variety of vegetables and plain breadsticks.

Offer healthier cake options such as fruit scones or banana cake

Make fruit smoothies and serve with slices of fruit on an umbrella cocktail stick.

Use plain popcorn instead of crisps.

Make a fruit punch add fresh fruit or freeze fruit in ice cube trays and add just before serving.

Instead of sandwiches spread low fat soft cheese on to bread, roll the bread and cut into circles. Use brown and white bread for contrasting colours.

## Tofu Hummus Dip

- 1lb. soft tofu
- 1 cup tahini (this is a healthy alternative to margarines and butters and is also a key ingredient in Humous. It is available in most supermarkets.
- 3/4 cup lemon juice
- 2 tsp. salt
- 2 cloves garlic



### Method:

Mix in a blender until smooth Use a spatula to keep the mixture in the blades if necessary.

Refrigerate for several hours before serving.

Serve garnished with chopped fresh parsley and a selection of raw vegetables cut into strips.

## Why not hold— a make your own pizza party

The children can decorate the classroom with items that symbolise Italy.

You will need:

Bread rolls cut in half

Tomato sauce such as Dolmio

A variety of vegetables cut into small pieces, such as tomatoes, onions, mushrooms, peppers and pineapple.

Cheese

Fresh herbs such as basil or oregano.

1. spread some of the tomato sauce over the base of the bread roll
2. choose some vegetables to put on top (The children might want to make faces)
3. sprinkle with a few herbs
4. sprinkle with cheese
5. Put pizza under the grill for a few minutes and serve warm.

If you wish the children can make a bowl of salad to eat with the pizza making a really healthy treat.

