



WISCONSIN CHILI LUNCH GUIDE

JOIN US NOON ON NATIONAL CHILI DAY IN FEBRUARY
or any time during the month!



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON



Support & Project Details

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Wisconsin Chili Lunch Website:
health.extension.wisc.edu/wi-chili-lunch ➔

Dig into Wisconsin Farm to School:
dpi.wi.gov/school-nutrition/farm-to-school ➔

Learn more about Wisconsin Farm to Early Care and Education:
dpi.wi.gov/community-nutrition/cacfp/farm-2-ece ➔

Download the Wisconsin Chili Lunch logo!

Use the logo to promote the Chili Lunch around your community, on your website, and on social media. Add it to promotional items like posters, blog posts, and social media content.

Download the logo file as a JPG: [here](#) ➔

Download the logo file as a PNG: [here](#) ➔



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What is the Wisconsin Chili Lunch?

The annual Wisconsin Chili Lunch (WCL) supports local food purchasing by encouraging cafeterias to serve a chili dish made with local ingredients. On National Chili Day each February, cafeterias around the state will participate in the WCL by preparing local chili and celebrating Wisconsin farmers. This event provides a fun way to practice local food procurement and promotion.

The goal of the WCL is to create strong connections between Wisconsin farmers and eaters and demonstrates how cafeterias can serve Wisconsin grown - even in winter. This statewide chili lunch event inspires nutritious school meals and supports farm to institution initiatives throughout the state, and encourages year-round purchases of local foods.



Serving locally and regionally grown ingredients in your cafeteria makes quality meals, supports local economies, and connects people to the people and places that grow their food. Thank you for your commitment to local foods in the cafeteria, and joining schools and cafeterias in celebrating the Wisconsin Chili Lunch each February! Learn more about the Wisconsin Chili Lunch at health.extension.wisc.edu/wi-chili-lunch/

Please note: This Guide includes clickable links to additional online resources. Clickable links are **red** and followed by a **red arrow** (➔) like the link for Chili Lunch website above.



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Sources marked with this sun icon are great for ECE sites and others purchasing small volumes. 

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Get Started

🔪 REGISTER YOUR LUNCH!

The first step is to make your Chili Lunch count. Register your Lunch at health.extension.wisc.edu/wi-chili-lunch ➔

🔪 ASSEMBLE A CHILI LUNCH TEAM

Invite teachers, food service staff, administration, parents, and students to participate in the planning process.

🔪 FIND YOUR INGREDIENTS

Review the "Find Your Local Ingredients" section for tips on finding local ingredients for your Chili Lunch.

🔪 CHOOSE YOUR CHILI LUNCH DAY ACTIVITIES

Beyond the bowl, choose educational activities and lessons to celebrate Chili Lunch Day!

🔪 INVITE YOUR COMMUNITY

See "Promote Your Lunch" for tips to spread the word about your Chili Lunch - and build excitement, fundraise, or find volunteers for your event!

🔪 AMPLIFY YOUR CHILI LUNCH

Share the story of your Chili Lunch through photos, social media, TV, newspaper, and radio!

Have you watched the Wisconsin Chili Lunch video yet? Check it out to learn more about the Wisconsin Chili Lunch!

Visit this link to watch!
youtu.be/mLgPE2kQOMI ➔

Showcase your Wisconsin Chili Lunch on social media with these hashtags!

#F2SCHILI
#WICHILILUNCH
#SHOWUSYOURSPONFUL



Purchasing Guidance for Cafeterias



You can always purchase and serve Wisconsin-grown ingredients as part of your daily nutrition programs! There are a variety of ways to purchase your local ingredients to celebrate the Chili Lunch in your cafeteria, see the list below. There are two main ways to buy your WCL ingredients: direct from the farmer or through a distributor or vendor. For early care education (ECE) providers or sites serving a low volume of meals, items with this symbol (★) are good for small-scale batch cooking.

ASK YOUR CURRENT VENDORS

Ask your broadline or produce distributors what local, farm-identified products they have available.

BUY DIRECT FROM LOCAL FARMS

Connect with local farmers to find seasonal ingredients perfect for your Chili Lunch. Find local farms in the "Find Your Local Ingredients" section of this Guide.

ORDER FROM A FOOD HUB

Food hubs and regional produce aggregators may have just what you need. Check out the USDA Local Food Hub Directory. ams.usda.gov/local-food-directories/foodhubs ↗

VISIT THE FARMER'S MARKET ★

At your nearby farmer's market, you'll find a wide variety of produce and goods, meet your farmers, and hand pick the right products, while using your nutrition program dollars, too.

SHOP LOCAL AT A GROCERY STORE OR FOOD CO-OP ★

Look for produce identified as "local" or "Wisconsin-grown" at your local grocery store or food co-op.

STOP AT A FARM STAND ★

Visit a local farm stand or U-pick and get produce from where it is grown!

More Strategies to Purchase Local

For K-12 schools and others participating in the National School Lunch Program, try these strategies to buy Wisconsin-grown through your existing programs and budgets:

USE DoD FRESH

Purchase local ingredients for reimbursable meals through the [USDA DoD Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program](#) ➔ Look for items tagged 'local' in FFAVORS.

MAKE IT A MICRO PURCHASE

The micro-purchase procurement method allows SFAs to make purchases below \$10,000 (or now \$50,000!) without soliciting competitive price quotes as long as the price is “reasonable.” More guidance can be found on the [DPI webpage](#) ➔ Micro-purchases are an effective strategy to purchase local ingredients for your Chili Lunch.

OFFER TASTE TESTS

Test your recipes, get feedback from young eaters, and familiarize kids with a new Chili Lunch menu item! Taste tests fit in the cafeteria or classroom and can be conducted by educators, food service staff, or partner organizations. Purchase local ingredients outside a reimbursable meal using school food service funds (Fund 50 in public schools) and language like 'Ingredients for this Chili Lunch taste test provided by BLANK food service department'.

For ECE sites and others participating in CACFP, check out these resources to connect to local foods

HOW TO SERVE LOCAL FOODS IN ECE

Read the resource *How to Buy, Prepare, and Serve Local Foods* on the [Rooted website](#) ➔ for great tips for Early Child Education sites to buy and prepare local ingredients for Chili Lunch.

The Wisconsin Farm to School Toolkit
for Child Nutrition Directors

foodsystems.extension.wisc.edu/farm-to-school-toolkits/ ➔

The USDA's Guide to Procuring Local Food
for Child Nutrition Programs

theicn.org/icn-resources-a-z/procuring-local-foods-for-child-nutrition-programs/ ➔

Find Wisconsin Foods



FARM FRESH ATLAS

Search this online tool by location or product to find local products near you.

farmfreshatlas.org 

FAIRSHARE CSA COALITION FARM LIST

A farm search tool to find small producers or specific products near you.

csacoalition.org/farm-search 

WISCONSIN FARMERS' MARKET ASSOCIATION

Use this great online tool to find farmers' markets in your area. Do you know we have farmers' markets in the winter too!?

wifarmersmarkets.org/find-a-farmers-market.aspx 

AMERICORPS FARM TO SCHOOL WISCONSIN LOCAL FOODS DATABASE

Explore a map and directory of farmers selling to local schools and engaging with kids in the classroom.

sites.google.com/dpi.wi.gov/wilfd/find-farmers 


SOMETHING SPECIAL FROM WISCONSIN

Browse this listing of farmers and vendors for local ingredients near you. You can now search "farm to institution" to find institutionally focused vendors.

somethingspecialwi.com/map 

USDA ON-FARM MARKET DIRECTORY

A helpful directory to find farm stands and on-farm markets in your area.

ams.usda.gov/local-food-directories/onfarm 

Recipes for K-12 Schools & Institutions



A good recipe is key to make local foods shine in your cafeteria! Check out this list of chili recipes that work well for K-12 schools, institutional food services *and* Wisconsin grown ingredients! You will also find a few delicious side dishes, too! Find even more recipes at healthy.extension.wisc.edu/wi-chili-lunch ➔

OFFICIAL CHILI LUNCH RECIPE (K-12)

The official WCL recipe with crediting for NSLP! Developed in partnership with La Crosse County Health Department. A crowd favorite! View the WCL website for recipes with different yields.

Yields 100 servings

[RECIPE HERE](#) ➔

FRESH APPLE CRISP

A quick, hot, and easy side to feature local apples along with your chili!

Yields 100 Servings

[RECIPE HERE](#) ➔

WHOLE WHEAT CINNAMON ROLLS

Yummy whole wheat cinnamon rolls.

Yields 144 servings

[RECIPE HERE](#) ➔

PORK AND BEANS HOMEMADE CHILI

This pork chili recipe was shared with us by a 2019 Chili Lunch participant because it was so successful in the lunchroom!

Yields 140 servings

[RECIPE HERE](#) ➔

What about local grains?
Consider using local grains like
oats, cornmeal and wheat flour
in your Chili Lunch sides!

CORNBREAD

A tasty standardized cornbread recipe courtesy of Team Nutrition Colorado and Nourish Colorado.

Yields 100 servings

[RECIPE HERE](#) ➔

Recipes for ECE Sites & Home Kitchens



These recipes yield 8-12 servings and are great for small scale batch or family cooking. Some of these recipes even meet CACFP nutrition requirements! The low volume of these recipes makes them perfect for sourcing local items directly from farmers.

OFFICIAL CHILI LUNCH RECIPE (ECE) ✨

The official WI Chili Lunch recipe scaled for ECE sites and home cooks. Developed by Coulee Region Farm2School and suitable for the youngest audiences.

Yields 25 servings

[RECIPE HERE](#) ↗

WISCONSIN WINTER CHILI RECIPE ✨

From the "Celebrating Seasonality" WI Farm to ECE Recipe Guide, this veggie-forward recipe is sure to be a hit.

Yields 8 or 25 servings

[RECIPE in English HERE](#) ↗

[RECIPE in Spanish HERE](#) ↗

WISCONSIN SOLAR OVEN SIMMERED CHILI

This Wisconsin recipe won the Let's Move Healthy Lunchtime Challenge in 2013.

Pumpkin adds a dash of sweet and the recipe can be cooked with a solar oven.

Yields 8 servings

[RECIPE HERE](#) ↗

Wisconsin farmers grow grains like oats, cornmeal and wheat. Include these ingredients to make your Chili Lunch sides as local as the main dish!

SWEET POTATO CHILI LIME CORNBREAD CASSEROLE

This recipe has it all! It's a sweet potato chili with a cornbread topping baked all together in a casserole. Perfect for the adventurous home cook!

Yields 8-12 servings

[RECIPE HERE](#) ↗








CORNBREAD MINI MUFFINS

An easy to serve cornbread muffin. A perfect side dish, consider using Wisconsin-grown cornmeal to keep your whole tray local for this event.






Yields 12 or 24 servings

[RECIPE HERE](#) ↗

Tips for Hosting Chili Lunch Day

-  Ask students to identify all the ingredients in their Chili Lunch bowl. Where do these ingredients come from?
-  Pre-packing your chili? Chili can be cupped with a lid for easy transport to classrooms or satellite sites.
-  Consider sending home a note or recipe for the Chili Lunch and a farm to school inspired activity. (See Connect to Learning section below.)
-  Build excitement by having students take their first bite of chili at the same time. 
-  Don't forget to appoint a parent, teacher, student or community member to act as photographer or videographer and capture all the action of the Wisconsin Chili Lunch!
-  Post photos to Facebook using these hashtags:
 - #WICHiliLunch**
 - #WIF2S**
 - #WIFarmtoECE**
 - #ShowUsYourSpoonful**
 - #F2SChili**

Keep the Chili Lunch Fun Going All Day!

-  Taste test local ingredients in the classroom and vote on your favorite.
-  Invite a local farmer to the classroom or cafeteria to participate in the event!
-  Arrange a virtual field trip to a farm to see where your chili ingredients are grown.
-  Lead a hands-on cooking lesson for students featuring chili or a side dish recipe.
-  Connect your Wisconsin Chili Lunch to the classroom using the learning ideas at the end of this Guide.

Before: Promote Participation

Be sure to share the word far and wide so everyone knows to show up for hot lunch on Wisconsin Chili Lunch Day! Leverage the Chili Lunch to build support for your food service operations, increase participation, and grow excitement for local foods. Here are some promotion and outreach ideas to increase participation on Wisconsin Chili Lunch Day:

Use These Promotional Materials!

[Wisconsin Chili Lunch Save the Date \(PDF\)](#) ↗

[Wisconsin Chili Lunch Video \(YouTube\)](#) ↗

[Wisconsin Chili Lunch Page \(Facebook\)](#) ↗

[Wisconsin Chili Lunch Website](#) ↗

Announce Your Event

Announce the event in your newsletter, email system, bulletin boards, or during drop off and pick up. Use this opportunity to ask for student, staff, and community volunteers to lead classroom or cafeteria Chili Lunch activities. Do a "Chili Lunch Countdown" over morning announcements for ten days before the Lunch!

Promote with the Wisconsin Chili Lunch Logo

Add the Wisconsin Chili Lunch information and logo to your menus, website, newsletters, and social media to highlight the specific day you'll serve this great meal and encourage participation! [WCL Logo as JPEG](#) ↗ [WCL Logo as PNG](#) ↗

Share on Social Media

Promote the event through social media using the hashtags #WICHiliLunch, #WIF2S, #WIFarmtoECE, #ShowUsYourSpoonful, #F2SChili. On Facebook, repost the "[We Registered](#)" [badge](#) ↗ and share the Chili Lunch Countdown posts.

Customize Materials for Success

Create flyers with the Chili Lunch logo to post around your campus, classroom or community. Host a contest for students or children to design a poster to promote your Chili Day!

Highlight Your Farmers

Include information about the farms and farmers that raised your Chili Lunch ingredients! Highlight farmers on your menu, newsletter, or have them visit on Chili Lunch Day!

Chili Lunch Day: Amplify Success!

Use these strategies to share out your Wisconsin Chili Lunch successes, photos and all the great highlights about your food service operations.

Reminder: Make sure you have the appropriate photo releases for youth featured in your Chili Lunch photos!

Inform your local news!

Send a WCL press release or invitation to your media outlets including local newspapers, television stations and radio stations. Encourage them to join your event, or to highlight it later. You can use this [template press release](#) ↗ to send out news before your WCL event. Use this celebration as a way to share more about your farm to school activities, food service operations or to highlight your farmer partners!

Tag Wisconsin Chili Lunch On Social Media

Get out your camera and take photos to #ShowUsYourSpoonful through social media. Additional hashtags include #WIChiliLunch, #WIF2S, and #F2SChili to share your images on Facebook and social media.

Connect on Facebook!

Share your event widely through your own Facebook page and the [WI Chili Lunch Facebook Page](#) ↗



Connect to Learning

Early Care & Education

[Wisconsin Farm to ECE Interest Areas For Young Children](#)

Mix and match these developmentally appropriate activities to fit your program's needs. Explore sample activities, songs, and other resources.

Rooted

[Taste and Tales](#)

Designed to promote early childhood literacy, teach children about vegetables and fruits, and encourage parent engagement. In “Taste and Tales” activities teachers and parents partner to read a book and offer a related taste test to children. The outline can easily be adapted to teacher and parent interests and skills.


Growing Minds

[Colorful Plate Spinner](#)

Students learn to identify new fruits and vegetables. Students associate vegetables and fruits with a positive experience making a fun art project.

Growing Minds

[Chili Lunch Coloring Pages](#)

All of your favorite coloring page activities tailored to the Wisconsin Chili Lunch! [Also in Spanish](#) . Print out mazes, spot the difference, puzzles, and more!

Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems

[Farm to School Kid Literature](#)

Search Growing Mind's growing farm to ECE bookshelf for recommendations of books about gardening, cooking, farms, or food. Use this list to find literature for the classroom, home, or even to start your own farm to ECE library.

Growing Minds Farm to School

Connect to Learning, Continued

Kindergarten & Elementary

[Interview an Elder](#) ➔

Is there a food that reminds you of a memory from when you were younger? Can you think of recipes or flavors passed down in your family for generations? In this activity students interview an elder about a favorite recipe and why that recipe is meaningful.

The Edible Schoolyard Project

[Inch by Inch, Row by Row](#) ➔

Students determine the space needed to grow the vegetables for a soup recipe. Students can then make the soup using seasonal ingredients from a local farm as an optional extension activity.

Growing Minds Farm to School

[Food As Art & Nutrition](#) ➔

“Play with your food” by creating food can introduce new foods in a fun and interactive way during snack times. What is food art? Think rainbow fruit trays, balloons made of grapes, or encouraging students to draw a snack before they eat it! It’s a delicious way to encourage kids try new foods.

Action for Healthy Kids

[ABC's and 123's of Agriculture](#) ➔

Explore numbers and letters through food and agriculture! Each letter of the alphabet features facts and images about Wisconsin agriculture! Learn the numbers 1-26 while highlight facts and trivia about where food comes from.

Wisconsin Agriculture in the Classroom

[Farm to School Kid Literature](#) ➔

Search Growing Mind's ever-growing Farm to School bookshelf to find recommendations; which books are perfect for teaching about gardening, cooking, farms, or food. Use this list to find literature for the classroom, home, or even to start your own farm to school book collection.

Growing Minds Farm to School

Connect to Learning, Continued

The Wisconsin Chili Lunch can be extended to local food-based learning activities for a creative way to meet learning requirements for language, math, science and more! Check out the resources below for local food themed learning activities geared to different ages.

High School

F2S Youth Leadership Curriculum

The Farm to School Youth Leadership Curriculum is designed to empower youth, teach about local food systems, and engage in meaningful, hands-on learning activities that strengthen school farm to school programs.

[Institute for Ag and Trade Policy](#) ↗

Nourish Curriculum Guide

“What’s the story of your food?” Through interviews with food experts and a variety of youth voices, the video encourages students to create a better food system for themselves, other people, and the environment.

[Nourish](#) ↗

What is Organic?

Many of us are familiar with the term organic, even if we understand what the definition is! This lesson explores what the word "organic" represents. In this lesson, you will explore and discuss your understanding of what organic is and what it represents to you.

[The Edible Schoolyard Project](#) ↗

Middle School

#AgCensus and MyPlate Maps

Where was the food on your plate grown? Do you know in which state the apple in your lunchbox was most likely harvested? Use maps to display learnings from the most recent Census of Agriculture results, connected to USDA’s MyPlate.

[U.S. Department of Agriculture](#) ↗

Growing From Food Scraps

Did you know that a lot of the produce in your kitchen will sprout new growth just by putting it in water or soil? This activity explores growing food from the ends and scraps of produce in your kitchen.

[The Edible Schoolyard Project](#) ↗

Using Local and Raw Meats

Purchasing and cooking local meats, especially raw meat, might be new to your operations and kitchen staff. But it's a great way to support your local farmers and local meat is available right now. Here are resources and guidance to explore this fresh new approach to meal prep.

USDA Local Meat in Schools

This brief document is a great starting point to learn about the many ways to buy local meat. "Communities across the nation are proving that getting local meat in school cafeterias is not only possible, but practical and feasible as well."

fns.usda.gov/f2s/local-meat-schools ↗

USDA HACCP Guidance

It's important that your food safety plan includes SOPs that discuss handling raw meats. This USDA presents sample SOPs in this guide that can help you to include raw meat in your own HACCP planning. fsis.usda.gov/guidelines/2020-0008 ↗

Food Safety with Local Meat

Here are some short fact sheet resources that discuss safe food storage and preparation:

[DATCP Cooking Time and Temperature Sheet](#) ↗

[DATCP Refrigerator Storage Chart](#) ↗

[ICN Food Safety Fact Sheet - Cooking Foods](#) ↗

[ICN Food Safety Fact Sheet - Preventing Contamination During Food Preparation](#) ↗

[ICN Food Safety Fact Sheet - Preventing Cross Contamination During Food Storage](#) ↗






Reminder! Make sure your food safety plan includes SOPs that discuss handling raw meats.

Explore Local Grains and Beans

The midwest is known as the Grain Basket of the US. Have you ever considered buying local grains as part of your Farm to School procurement?

Grains are essential components of menus, required in federally funded nutrition programs, and popular with eaters. Here are some ways you can incorporate local grains in your Wisconsin Chili Lunch!

-  Tell your current F2S vendors you're interested in buying local grains and beans. Ask what products they have available.
-  Make your chili with local, dry beans. Check out [these tips](#) ↗ for cooking with dry beans.
-  Incorporate some local grains into WI Chili Lunch sides like:
 - [Cornbread](#) ↗
 - [Whole Wheat Cinnamon Rolls](#) ↗
 - [Apple Crisp](#) ↗

Grains to Trays

UW-Madison partnered with Artisan Grain Collaborative to launch the Grains to Trays project, which supports local grain procurement in Wisconsin cafeterias. [Visit the website to learn more!](#) ↗


Interested learning more? Looking for support to get local grains into your cafeterias? Contact Cathryn Herlihey, Farm to Institution Specialist at UW-Madison Division of Extension cathryn.herlihey@wisc.edu




Celebrating Seasonality


Visit www.RootedWI.org/Recipes 


Learn more and download resources for free by visiting the Celebrating Seasonality website.

-  Celebrating Seasonality: Wisconsin-Grown Recipes for the Early Childhood Setting is a collection of twelve child-friendly recipes for the ECE setting that feature seasonal fruits and vegetables.



-  Winter recipes, including a chili recipe, show that ECE sites can keep eating local all year long - even in Wisconsin.

-  Recipes are scaled for 8 and 25 servings and include serving sizes for different ages groups and CACFP crediting information.

-  Celebrating Seasonality also includes information to help you find more local foods, a seasonality chart of Wisconsin crops, interviews with Wisconsin farmers, and stories from Wisconsin ECE sites serving local foods.



-  Harvest of the Month is a statewide campaign encouraging children and families to eat more Wisconsin-grown fruits and vegetables.
-  HoM provides free resources featuring 20 Wisconsin fruits and vegetables for schools, including many chili ingredients!
-  Monthly promotional materials include posters, menu and Facebook graphics, activity guides, newsletter inserts, and postcards.
-  Check out HoM activities to explore ingredients such as carrots or sweet potatoes that you use in your Wisconsin Chili Lunch.
-  Visit the website to learn more and download your free materials: [Harvest of the Month](#) 

