

Guide for Meal Prep for Chrysalis Flight

The purpose of this guide is to give you practical information, guidelines and suggestions for preparing meals for a Chrysalis flight. The role meal prep plays in a Chrysalis weekend is just as important as the role played by any other support area for the weekend. You will be creating a memorable experience for the caterpillars; how you perform your job will determine whether that experience is a positive or negative one.

The Team

Meal prep is not a one-person job and should not be attempted by one individual. Preparing 60 to 100 meals, 9 times, will take a team of dedicated, committed and informed cooks. The team should be limited in size to the space available for meal prep. More cooks in a small space will not get the job done faster. If you are not familiar with the space, take the opportunity to see it or speak with someone who has worked meal prep in the space. It is very important that the team has a leader who can make the final decisions regarding food selection, menus and time management. A wise leader will surround themselves with a team that will be able to give sound advice as to the menu choices, food selection and time management. A good team leader understands that they cannot or should not do everything alone but rely on the experience and expertise of their team. A wise team leader also knows to learn from others. Make the time to speak to others who have worked meal prep. Ask them what has worked and what has not worked. Find out if they would have changed anything or if there was something that they would never do again.

In your team selection, besides using just those who have experience in meal prep, try to incorporate someone new so that the experience can be gained by another generation. Just keep in mind the size of the space you have to work with and that you don't have to do it all. The team should be recruited as soon as possible to allow for scheduling, menu planning and food purchase. If you will also be in charge of meal service please get the handbook for that area as well.

The Menu

For Chrysalis the menu is not as set in stone as it is for an Emmaus walk. This allows you some limited flexibility and creativity in your choices for the weekend. Again, rely on the experiences of those who have done meal prep before. Find out what they prepared that was well received and quantities that were consumed. There is a recommended menu for you to follow but you have the freedom to select from multiple selections, to prepare a specialty or serve a donated item. This permits you the opportunity to choose foods that may be in season or on special at that time of the year. Speak with the Lay director of the flight and find out if they have a theme or a special verse they have selected for the weekend. This may give you an idea for an element at one of the meals, a special dessert or give you a theme for the banquet. If a repeated element of the weekend is "I am the bread of Life" and bread is never served at any of the meals, you are not helping to reinforce the message being given to the caterpillars. Like the other elements of the weekend the menus for the flight should build on each other with complexity and quantity of food. The first meal for the caterpillars, Friday's

breakfast, should be simple and easy to prepare and each meal after that should build on this.

It is important that you attend team meetings. You must find out if there are any food allergies or special dietary requirements for team members and especially any of the caterpillars. This means that you need to have an idea of your menu prior to the first team meeting. If any team members have a special or restrictive diet that they are following or are required to follow, ask them if they can provide their own food and you will prepare it for them. If anyone has food allergies, talk with them about what they can and cannot eat. Avoid the foods that they are allergic to by either preparing a separate entrée or course or removing that item from your menu. If you are unsure of what you may use or not use consult a dietitian for information and most importantly read the labels of the items you select to see what they include.

Food Purchasing

The first thing to do is to get the kitchen inventory from the board rep or the previous meal prep leader. Go over what is available that you can use and what may be needed for the weekend. Keep in mind the number of plates, cups, napkins and utensils you will need for each meal. The kitchen should have enough serving platters, serving bowls and other items; you will need to provide the items the food will be eaten from. When planning on quantities needed remember that you are not only feeding the conference room team but everyone at the camp. This includes you and your team, the prayer chapel (which will need meals sent to them), logistics (which may need a plate saved for them) agape and meal service. This number could be just a hand full to well over 30 people. Tradition tells us that lunch and dinner and Saturdays are the biggest days.

When selecting and purchasing food for the flight keep these hints in mind.

1. You are preparing a lot of meals for a lot of people; buy in bulk, it saves money. However, don't purchase more than you will need, it is wasteful.
2. Prepared items, while more costly than fresh or raw items, may help in preparation time and effort. A hot kitchen in summer is not a pleasant place to be or work.
3. Be flexible. While shopping for one item you may run across another item that may work better. It may be less expensive, easier to prepare or fresher. If this causes you to rework your menu for that meal that's ok, if it requires you to rework your menu for the weekend it is not worth it.
4. Shop around. Warehouse stores may not have the best price on an item and cheaper is not always better. If it doesn't taste good, no one is going to care that you saved ten cents a can.
5. Take someone with you. You will need help pushing the shopping carts and you will appreciate any advice you may get.
6. Read the labels. See what the numbers of servings are and the size of those servings. A package of precooked bacon with 60 servings may sound good but not if there are only one and a half slices per serving. Likewise a can of Baked Beans with only 25 servings may not sound like much but if those servings are ½ a cup each, it may be enough.

7. Watch your cost but don't be too cheap. The suggested cost of a day of meals at the camp is \$10.00 and you will be preparing anywhere from 60 to 100 meals per seating. You should figure to spend between \$1.50 and \$3.00 per person per meal or between \$800.00 and \$1,600.00. Try to get donations whenever possible. It is important to not exceed the amount of money collected for the meals. This cost should include not only food cost but also expenses for plates, napkins, drinks, etc. Set out a collection plate for those who will be eating but have not prepaid. The suggested cost is \$2.50 for breakfast \$3.50 for lunch and \$4.00 for dinner. If they don't pay, don't force them.
8. Don't purchase more perishable food than you can store nor purchase so far in advance as to let it spoil.
9. You may purchase perishable and non-perishable food and take it to the camp kitchen the week of the flight. Get a key from someone and go ahead and store your food in the refrigerators and cabinets. Make sure the refrigerators are working and cool and store perishable food not needing refrigeration away from pest.

When you arrive

Make sure you arrive with enough time on Thursday to do what you will need to do. Most likely you will need to clean up the kitchen and dining area. The building has been closed up and insects and other vermin may have taken up residence. Make sure the refrigerators are working (if you haven't already done so). If possible have logistics early that day check to see if they are on, if not have them turn them on so they will be cool when you arrive. You may decide to bring most or all of your food on Thursday so arrive with enough time to put it away. Go through the boxes that logistics has brought you and familiarize yourself with what is where. You may want to unpack some of these items that you will be using a lot. Make sure you have the items that you were expecting to find from the inventory list. This first night is short and you will have some time to go and purchase anything you find missing, out of date or spoiled. Check with logistics to see if there might be other boxes for meal prep. Make sure you have what will be needed for breakfast like the coffee pot and coffee urn. Double check your menu with your inventory and make a note of items still left to purchase.

Meals

The first meal you will prepare may be on Thursday night for the team (check with the lay director and see if this will be needed). This meal should be simple and inexpensive since no money is collected for this meal. In winter months this may include soup, chili or other warm food. Cold cuts and bread are also easy to prepare. During warmer months salads or sandwiches may be the best choice. Pizza may also serve well either time of the year and since you are feeding a smaller crowd (25-35) may be economical enough. Drinks should be provided as well as ice. Speak to the logistic person and make sure they will be able to provide ice for the weekend. Before you leave, set up coffee for the morning. Also make sure that the tables are set for the next meal.

Friday breakfast- Simple but filling is the rule. Typically biscuits or pastries are served. Sausage patties may be added if desired. Cold cereal should also be on the table or made available. During cold months Oatmeal may also be desired. Remember butter and jelly as well as sweetener and creamer for coffee. Drinks are the usual breakfast variety of coffee, milk, orange juice and apple juice. Water should also be provided at this and every meal. Lately there has been a request for sweeten coffee drinks like cappuccinos. Fruit is a good addition for this meal. Apple or oranges are good as well as bananas for the cereal but not necessary. Don't make this meal too complicated. Re-set for the next meal.

Friday lunch - As the first hearty meal for the weekend, this like the breakfast should be simple and uncomplicated. The idea for this meal is "sack lunch" without the sack. Items like Bar-B-Que sandwiches, Hotdogs, Sloppy Joes or deli sandwiches are fine. Individually packaged chips or bowls of chips on the table are also a good idea. Provide a dessert like cookies, brownies or individually packaged snack cakes like "Little Debbie's" or "Twinkies". Left over fruit from breakfast can also be provided. The drinks are typically Sweetened and unsweetened tea, lemonade or other fruit drink and water. Soft drinks are usually too expensive to provide for every meal unless they have been donated and then will serve you best at Sunday's lunch. Make sure the tables are set for the next meal.

Friday dinner - This meal begins your opportunity to show Agape in food. This meal is more bountiful than the earlier lunch but should not be the most elegant meal of the weekend. This meal should resemble what the caterpillars may find at their own dinner table at home. Remember who you are feeding, teenagers, and build from that. Pot roast fried chicken, spaghetti or lasagna is just a few of the meals that have been served on this night. The dinner should include a starch along with the entrée, except for pasta dishes, a vegetable, bread and/or a salad. A nice dessert should also be served, like a slice of cake or pie or ice cream. The drinks should be the same as those for lunch and every meal after this. Before you leave set up coffee for the morning. Make sure the tables are set for the next meal.

Saturday breakfast - This day begins with bounty. This should be a full breakfast including eggs, bacon or sausage, grits, toast or biscuits as well as the other items for breakfast like cereal or oatmeal. A breakfast casserole could substitute for the egg dish if you like. Whether you use whole eggs or pasteurized liquid whole egg product is up to you. Whole eggs tend to taste better but the egg product is easier to work with, there are no eggs to crack and they won't turn green. Make sure the tables are set for the next meal.

Saturday lunch - This meal may be the biggest in volume that you will prepare. The reason is that typically the meal is grilled hamburgers and you can expect a large turn out from the community. Hamburgers and sometimes hotdogs are served as well as chips or fries. Cole slaw and/or another vegetable and baked beans are typically served. Desserts such as ice cream sandwiches, banana pudding, or cobbler are usual. Try to match the

dessert with the season or the other desserts you are serving so that you are not repeating yourself. If this meal has a theme it would be a cookout. Make sure the tables are set for the next meal.

Saturday dinner – Now is your opportunity to be generous, elegant and creative. This meal is the banquet and by name should be a grand affair. This meal should be more than they would expect to have at home, similar to a wedding reception meal or dinner party. This meal is to be plated and not served family style like the other meals have been, with one exception, a luau. A luau will allow you to have some fun while still presenting a meal that is not experienced everyday. The meal servers should bring the seated caterpillars their plates (or platters of food in a luau) as if they were in a nice restaurant. This meal should include an entrée, a starch, a vegetable, a salad or fruit cup, bread and a dessert. It may include an appetizer or soup or any other element you may desire. Just remember not to plan more than you can realistically do or so much as to be wasteful or expensive. Chicken is typically served because it is economical and lends itself to variety of different preparation methods. Steak has also been served for boy's flights; just keep your budget in mind. At this meal you may want to offer a different drink than what has been served previously. Before you leave set up coffee for the morning. Make sure the tables are set for the next meal. Attend candlelight if possible.

Sunday breakfast – This meal should resemble a special breakfast that might be served on a holiday or for a birthday. Pancakes, waffles, French toast or other special course is fine. Meat such as bacon or sausage should also be served. You may desire or the lay director may request that eggs, and or grits also be included. Keep in mind your budget and that the caterpillars had a lot of food last night. Make sure the tables are set for the next meal.

Sunday lunch – This is the last meal and is important for two reasons. One it is the last impression you will leave on the now Butterflies and two you have no opportunity to serve any leftovers from this meal. For these reasons the meal should be good but not wasteful. Make this meal simple to prepare and easy to clean up. Pizza, Taco salad, chicken fingers, sloppy Joes, hot dogs are just a few of the many lunches that have been served. This meal usually includes an entrée, a side and a dessert. You may want to have soft drinks at this meal to avoid having to make more tea just for this meal. If there are any substantial leftovers from the weekend they may be offered at this meal. If it was an item that was not well received the first time you served it don't repeat this mistake. Just make a note of it and pass it on to the next person.

During and after

During the course of the weekend stay on top of the kitchen, clean as you go and box up items that will not be needed again. Set trash out to be picked up by logistics after every meal. Have any volunteers who work meal prep sign in so that their service is noted. Turn that list in to the board rep for meal prep. Beginning around breakfast Sunday,

begin an inventory of food items (canned goods, condiments, tea, etc), service ware (plates, napkins, forks, etc.) and disposable cooking items (aluminum pans, trash bags, foil, etc.). Also make a note of anything that needs to be replaced or purchased for the next flight. After lunch on Sunday, finalize your inventory, clean up and put away all meal prep items and empty the refrigerators. Any perishable food or leftovers should be given away to team members or to groups or organizations that can use it. When every thing is cleaned and put away you are done. Logistics will collect the boxes unless the next flight takes place soon. Attend closing and then go home and get a good nights rest, you deserve it. Add notes to this booklet about things that worked or didn't work and serving portions and menus that worked well. Also note any contacts that you may have established where item were donated or discounted. Get this information to the board rep along with any money collected.

Additional notes

You may want to hold off buying all the gallons of milk or juice on your menu until you see how they drink them. Three or four gallons of milk plus four gallons of juice take up a lot of space but making a store run every night can also be a bother.

You may need to provide ice for the Thursday meal and/or for lunch on Friday. A typical meal consumes about 30 pounds of ice.

Girls eat more salads than boys. Boys eat more meat than girls. Typically

You never need as much coffee as you think you do. One pound will be fine.