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CADETTE/SENIOR GIRL SCOUTS “CREATIVE COOKING” CAKE WORKSHOP

Overview:

Cakes Unlimited, Inc., a small woman-owned business, is pleased to work with the Girl Scouts organization to develop and execute appropriate activities for the Cadette and Senior Girl Scouts to earn their “Creative Cooking” Patch.

We have designed a workshop for the girls to learn about the culinary arts (including nutrition, meal planning, careers, etc.) as well as to have hands-on activities (using our frozen cake kits), to fill and decorate their own “special” cake. In addition, the Culinary Department and Kitchens of the Somerset County Vocational Technical Institute (and others) have granted permissions to Cakes Unlimited, Inc., the use of their facilities. If desired, this will allow the girls to see a large industrial kitchen, tools of trade and utilize it to create their cakes and decorations. But, the troop can decide the choice of location.

The requirements for the patch are outlined below per the 2004 *Interest Projects for Cadette and Senior Girl Scouts* handbook. It is followed by the workshop agenda.

****It is important to note that the workshop can be customized per each troop – this document just outlines the basic workshop.**

Creative Cooking Badge:

For the Cadette/Senior Girl Scout’s “Creative Cooking” patch, the girls have to pick two (2) Skill Builders, one (1) Technology, one (1) Service Projects, one (1) Career Exploration, and two (2) others of their choice from any category for a total of seven (7) activities to earn the patch.

Skill Builders:

1. Become familiar with United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Food Pyramid or Vegetarian Food Pyramid. You can write to the USDA in Washington, D.C., or find this information in a nutrition textbook. See also pages 60-62 in the *Cadette Girl Scout Handbook*. Compare your own daily diet to the dietary recommendations of the USDA models. Is your diet lacking in some nutrients? If so, what changes would you make?
2. Learn how to select the freshest and most healthful foods at the store - fruits, vegetables, meats, dairy, eggs, prepared foods, etc. Check the labels to find food that is low in salt, low in fat and low in chemical additives. Look for color and firmness in fruits and vegetables.



3. Find a food, canned or fresh, that is *not* native to your area. Find out what region of the U.S. or other country it is from and where and how it is produced. Use this food as an ingredient in the preparation of two different recipes.
4. Go to the cookware section of a store and familiarize yourself with the tools of the trade. When would you use such items as a mortar and pestle, peelers and choppers, mashers and ricers, spatulas and other “flippers”, knives, food processors, juicers, bread makers, pressure cookers and various pots and pans? What is the difference in cost of items designed to do the same thing (knives, chippers and food processors, for example)? Is the extra cost worth it?
5. Choose a recipe that can be easily prepared while camping or hiking. Review the information on this topic in *Outdoor Education in Girl Scouting*. Test that recipe while hiking or camping.
6. Pick a cuisine (Mexican, Caribbean, Indian, vegetarian, etc.) and prepare two meals using recipes that include appetizers, entrees and desserts. Familiarize yourself with the basic ingredients and seasonings of the cuisine you choose.
7. Adapt a standard recipe for someone with special dietary needs: low fat, low salt, low sugar, lactose intolerant, vegetarian, etc.

Technology:

1. Look at the technology used in cooking. Examine the advantages and disadvantages of different heat sources: electric or gas stoves, microwave ovens, pressure cookers, grills, crock-pots. Name two foods that cook best in each of these.
2. There is a lot of chemistry behind many cooking tips and recipe directions. Questions to consider:
 - What items serve as thickeners in a recipe? As leveling?
 - What would happen when baking a cake if you left out or changed an ingredient?For instance, lemon juice will curdle milk. Take a recipe and substitute similar ingredients such as currants instead of raisins or walnuts instead of almonds. Does the substitution improve the recipe or not? How about the texture?
3. Visit the Web site of a cooking school or food company. Compare the recipes that you find with those that appear in older cookbooks. What has changed? How do the changes reflect the eating and health habits of today's consumers?
4. New scientific discoveries have brought a lot of change to cooking, from how we create and store food to how we cook it. Investigate a new procedure that affects food in some way such as irradiated food, genetically engineered food, plants grown by hydroponics or freeze-drying. Describe the advantages and disadvantages of two such foods to your troop or group.

Service projects:

1. Volunteer at a soup kitchen for at least two weeks for several hours a week. Find out how food is prepared and served for a large number of people.



2. Organize a basic cooking class for a community center or homeless shelter with some friends.
3. Organize a food drive for a local shelter. Consult the proper nutritional guidelines or a professional dietitian for a list of recommended foods.
4. Work with a local service that helps provide nutritious meals to people who cannot leave home. Help prepare at least three different meals. Make sure your meal meets the dietary needs of these homebound people.
5. Using the Food Pyramid or other guidelines, evaluate the food service in a local facility you use (school, camp or activity center). Discuss your evaluation with personnel in charge. Offer alternative food suggestions and your reasons for them.
6. Plan a menu for a full, festive meal. Cook and serve it to a group as a celebration of cultural heritage, a holiday or other event.

Career Exploration:

1. Interview a food critic at your local newspaper. Ask about his or her experience, education and work history. Or read several newspaper restaurant reviews. Then write two reviews of popular restaurants in your area.
2. Find out how institutional cooking differs from restaurant cuisine or home cooked food. Take a poll in your school cafeteria asking what people like/don't like about school lunches. See if you can come up with one or two suggestions based on the poll to improve the choices or quality of the school lunches. Share them with school personnel.
3. Visit a local cooking class or culinary school. Talk to an administrator or instructor about the types of jobs that their students are prepared for.
4. Arrange to job-shadow a chef, baker, caterer, pizza maker, etc. Write down skills and techniques that you've observed, as well as lifestyle pros and cons. For example: flexible hours, night hours, etc.
5. Get a part-time job in a restaurant or working for a caterer.

Cakes Unlimited Workshop Agenda:**

****Again, it is important to note that the workshop can be customized per each troop – this document just outlines the basic workshop.**

The workshop will be divided into 3 distinct pieces in order to satisfy the requirements for the badge:

1. Kitchen tour/discussion



2. Food/nutritional lesson
3. Cake decorating

The kitchen tour/lecture will consist of the following topics:

1. Tour of the culinary arts kitchen.
2. Discuss/explain many of the appliances/technologies used in an industrial kitchen (large conventional and convection ovens, stovetops/burners – electrical versus gas, microwave ovens, mixers, pressure cookers, large freezers, crock pots, etc.).
3. Discuss culinary careers – from pastry chefs to gourmet chefs.
4. Explain the differences between doing industrial cooking and cooking at home or in a restaurant (magnitude, tips/tricks, etc.).

The food/nutrition lesson will consist of the following topics:

1. Discuss various dairy products. In regard to cake decorating, differences between homemade butter cream (how it's made, the ingredients, etc.) and the cans of frosting/icing purchased in the stores will be examined.
2. Understand why many store brands use extracts versus butter for storage, etc.
3. Learn how to interpret food labels, the various items, percentages, etc. for many products. (There will be an array of products to examine)
4. Review the USDA Food Pyramid.
5. Compare fresh fruit to frozen fruit (specifically strawberries) in terms of nutrition, color, etc. Discuss how a fruit can go through varying stages from solids to liquids using techniques like heating, freezing, thickening agents, etc.
6. Study the nutritional aspects of using various types of filling in a cake – chocolate mousse versus strawberries versus pudding.
7. Discuss the evolution of the cake industry – from when people had to make their own cakes with raw ingredients to the cakes mixes, frozen cakes and our cake kit.

The cake creation portion will consist of the following tasks:

1. The Cakes Unlimited representative will review and explain the contents of the cake kit – from pastry bags to tips.
2. The girls will make a filling for their cakes using a strawberry mousse recipe (or equivalent if strawberries are not available or desired). This activity will be done in the kitchen using the equipment/technology required (mixers, stove, etc.). The recipe demonstrates how to use items as a thickening agent, specifically, heavy cream. A small lecture on other thickening/leveling agents will be given during this process. In addition, this task helps to demonstrate what happens to fresh/frozen food products once they have been cooked down from a solid to a liquid state.
3. The girls will build a buttercream dam, fill and assemble the cake using the before-mentioned filling. Additional filling types (chocolate, vanilla, etc.) can also be purchased to fill the cakes, if the troop decides to do so.
4. Next, the girls will learn how to ice their cakes using a cake comb. Each girl will be supervised and aided during the process.



5. The girls will learn various techniques to create borders for their cakes. These will include the star, basic and reverse shell, and ruffle borders using the star and rose tips. In addition, the girls will be instructed on making stars and some flowers such as roses and rose buds as well as leaves.
6. (add-on idea) If desired, the girls can also add other decorations to the top of their cake – for instance, melted chocolate drizzled over cookies, fruit, etc. (if the troop negotiates this with Cakes Unlimited before the workshop).
7. The girls will also learn how to use the writing tip to create a message on their cake – anything from their name to “Happy Birthday”.
8. The girls can add additional creative decorations to their cake for that “special touch”.
9. Finally, the girls will then box their cake to take home and enjoy with their family and friends for that special meal/occasion.

Based upon the stated requirements, this workshop satisfies the following for the “Creative Cooking” patch:

- Skill Builders – 1, 2, 4
- Technology – 1, 2, 4
- Service Projects – 6 (partly)
- Career Exploration – 2, 3

The only requirement that is not met 100% is in the Service Projects section as these are typically activities which involve volunteer or community work. Some troops have actually donated the cakes from the workshop to a local shelter, food bank or senior center and have also purchased additional cake kits and made the cakes for donations as well. This activity can act as a part of the Service Project, but this is just an idea/suggestion. Now, the decorated cake can be a portion of a special meal (Item #6) but the girl might be asked to do other tasks to satisfy this category/requirement (unless it is otherwise determined by the Girl Scouts that they meet the requirements with the workshop tasks).

Cakes Unlimited hopes to create a fun and educational event for both the Girl Scout troops and for leaders!