

KITCHEN REFERENCE GUIDE (revised 2026)

In every culture, many great things happen around the table. Relationships grow, conversations are had, and bodies are nurtured. We desire for this same blessing around the lunch tables at Summer Camp and the Kitchen Serving Space is essential to making this happen. The Kitchen is also likely the most difficult task for every ministry team at Čanjkú Wašté Ranch, but even more so for Camp. During the summer months while away from their local school, some of our campers will not get to experience consistent daily meals. It is imperative that we do our best to nourish the young people in our care with good food and plenty of it. This is a huge responsibility for you to fill with us and one that we understand requires a lot of planning and budgeting to bring together. We are so thankful for your thoughtfulness and intentionality to provide meals that nourish our campers, staff, and volunteers.

In this document you will find an overall look at what it takes to plan, shop, and provide meals for campers and your team, as well as tips from our seasoned cooks!

KITCHEN TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES THROUGHOUT THE WEEK:

- Plans & prepares **BREAKFAST & SUPPER** for your team daily
 - *Exception:* Saturday evening meal is provided & prepared by CWR
 - CWR staff (10-13 people) attend Mon. & Thurs. suppers
 - 8 Summer Disciples will be included in all of your team meals (CWR will provide financial support to your team to offset this expense as needed/requested)
- Plans & prepares **LUNCHES**
 - Saturday - travel/arrival day - on your own
 - Sunday - your team only
 - M-Th - your team, campers, and CWR staff - estimate of 150 per lunch - including enough for at least seconds, potentially thirds for some campers
 - To clarify, that is an estimate of 300+ meals for each day's lunch
 - Friday - Team sightseeing and/or travel home day
- Plans & prepares camper **TAKE HOME BAGS** (best practice: your whole team packs these the night before based on avg. daily count, est. 125+ per day)

CAMPER ARRIVAL & AFTERNOON SNACKS:

- **CWR** will provide and distribute a juice & breakfast bar upon arrival each morning for all of the campers
- **CWR** will provide and distribute a light snack each afternoon for campers as well as your team

TAKE HOME SNACK BAGS:

These are for campers to have a little something extra to eat or heat up on their own for a snack or dinner when they get home. Take home bags are packed for each route and distributed to campers as they get off the bus each afternoon. You will be given the bus route breakdown by 10AM in order to confirm and organize the bags in each route box. Pre-packing these the night before based on the average daily count is a great time saver and way to get ahead, and also allows the rest of your group to support the Kitchen Team. (If this is something your team IS NOT financially able to do, please let us know so we can plan on fulfilling the Take Home Snack Bags.)

Some suggested items: PB&J (or Uncrustables), Ramen or Cup of Noodles, Raviolis, fruit or fruit cups, pudding, chips, Slim Jims, peanut butter crackers, etc.

Please avoid excess candy and items that need to be refrigerated to avoid spoiling before being consumed. Please do not distribute items past the expiration date.

LUNCH ROTATION:

We have 3 lunch times to accommodate 4 age groups, the 2 younger groups eat at the same time while the 2 older groups have their own lunch times. The tables are set up the same way throughout the summer, including where each group sits in order to keep this predictable for our campers. Routine creates stability and security. Please do not adjust the tables or chairs for this reason. The two rows of tables closest to the craft shelves are designated for crafts and should not be used for camper's lunch.

Our buses arrive by 9:00 AM each morning at which time our staff completes the Daily Count. These will be broken down by AGE GROUP for lunch and also by ROUTE for Take

Home bags. Our goal is to have these numbers to the Kitchen Team as early as possible, but **NLT 10:00 AM**. The Daily Count can be smooth and quick one day, and a bit more complicated the next depending on any shifting on the bus routes, campers being dropped off late, etc. Please know our goal is to get this information to the Kitchen Team as quickly as possible so you know what to expect. There are times that these numbers will adjust throughout the day if campers go home early, are dropped off late, there's a change to the route they're riding home on, etc. We do our best to notify your team as quickly as possible of any edits. This is where the Daily Count document will be a great resource for your Kitchen crew prior to arrival.

The Stock & Assist Team will be an integral part of the lunch duties. They will prepare the drinks, set out plates for the 2 younger age groups, provide condiments as needed, deliver desserts if plated separately, bring drink refills and food seconds as needed and help clean up between age groups. They will also assist with trash disposal, dish bins if real plates/dinnerware are used, and wiping up tables as needed between each lunch. Feel free to get creative with your team also, maybe one or two of them help with plating so that a couple of you from the Kitchen can be out helping the campers with seconds, refills, cleaning up, etc.

5-7 AND 8-9 LUNCH 10:55-11:25

- **Plates need to be plated and placed with drinks at each seat by 10:55 AM** so the younger groups can sit down and begin eating right away. They take a bit longer to get through their meal so they need as much time as possible
- The 5-7 year olds will dismiss from Arts & Crafts in the Cafeteria to be seated by 10:55 AM at the tables closest to the Kitchen serving window
- The 8-9 year olds will come in the side door at 10:55 AM and fill in the remaining seats by the 5-7 group, continuing at the adjoining tables
- The two groups will dismiss as soon as they are all done eating, but NLT 11:25, staggering their dismissal with the youngest group leaving first

10-12 LUNCH 11:30-12:00

- The 10-12 group will arrive through the Chapel door by the women's restroom as soon as the younger groups have left, but NLT 11:30 AM
- 10-12 year olds will line up at the Kitchen window from the Coffee Station side

- Plates need to be plated for pick up **at the Kitchen window by 11:30 AM**
- Poured drinks will be picked up from the Drink Station on the way to their seats
- 10-12 year olds will sit at the tables closest to the Kitchen serving window
- This group will dismiss as soon as they are all done eating, but NLT 12:00 PM, exiting through the side door

13-17 LUNCH 12:05-12:35

- The 13-17 group will arrive through the back door of the Cafeteria by 12:05 PM
- 13-17 year olds will line up at the Kitchen window from the Coffee Station side
- Plates need to be plated for pick up **at the Kitchen window by 12:00 PM**
- Poured drinks will be picked up from the Drink Station on the way to their seats
- 13-17 year olds will sit at the tables closest to the Kitchen serving window
- This group will dismiss as soon as they are all done eating, but NLT 12:35 PM, exiting through the side door for the Bathhouse
- Their next stop will be Arts & Crafts in the Cafeteria so some of them may just shift over after lunch is done

FAQ:

Why do we include Summer Disciples in all of your meals?

We will have 6-8 Summer Disciples with us each Camp season, including them in your breakfast and dinner meals allows time for fellowship and community. They are away from home to serve for 2+ months so connecting with your team is a great morale boost. It also helps to alleviate the responsibility of them planning and purchasing their meals while they are navigating all the summer requires of them. Breaking bread with your team also affords a great time of networking for them with fellow believers from all over the country.

Will CWR staff eat with us for breakfast and supper?

We love connecting with your team, however our full time staff will be available to join you for dinners on Monday and Thursday evenings. As a staff, we have learned that during this exceptionally busy season, healthy margin is vital for us to be able to give the Lord, your team, and our community our best. One way we do this is by prioritizing small windows of our regular routines, such as meals together at home.

What are some things to remember as we plan our meals?

As you probably know, you aren't going to make everyone happy with every meal; our campers will be the same. Some of them love fresh vegetables and fruit, some only like the quick and easy stuff. Plan meals according to what is comfortable and efficient for your kitchen staff, keeping in mind that we ultimately want to provide a filling lunch for them. We do ask that you include some kind of fruit and vegetable to your lunches each day, and of course, desserts are always good for the soul!

How do we plan effectively when the numbers change each day?

This is the hardest part of planning for sure. Our campers register once for the whole summer and come as they are able. Each day is a surprise as we find out once kids arrive how many we have in attendance. It has been the thing that keeps us on our toes the most for sure! We use the Daily Count to determine averages, which your team will have access to before you even arrive. **The numbers are updated by 10 AM MST each day** and will show the trend of attendance to help as you get closer to your week of camp. We have previously averaged 110 kids a day throughout the summer, having higher numbers in June, and slightly lower numbers in July.

Is a Safe Serve Certification required to work on the Kitchen Team?

We do not require Safe Serve Certification to serve in the Kitchen at this time.

Where is the nearest grocery store?

The nearest grocery store is about 1 hour away. There is a Sam's and Walmart!

What does the weekly food budget look like?

This varies from team to team, depending on the size of your group, what kind of foods you are comfortable cooking, and the week you are serving. Estimated numbers range from \$2,500—\$3,500 weekly. There are more budget friendly meals you can plan, but some choose to include lots of fresh veggies and fruits for both lunches and evening meals. This will all depend on your team and your budget. We are happy to help give some ideas on meals, but there is usually one person at your church that may thrive and welcome the challenge.

Why does the camp not provide funds for purchasing food?

Great question! As an organization, we do not charge teams for lodging, disposables, or building use. However, there are growing costs in maintaining the buildings, utilities, camp supplies, fuel, insurance, among many other little things that add up. In not charging for lodging or utilities, it does hopefully serve both our organization and your team in providing the opportunity to adjust your budget to your team when it comes to meals. **(as noted, we are happy to provide a financial gift to your church as needed to cover the cost of our team being included in meals if that would be helpful)**

Why does the Camp not have a set cook for the summer?

This has been a thought every summer. It can be difficult to find committed help throughout the summer, and we have not been in a position to fund that at this time. We have also asked our returning teams for their thoughts and the consensus is that it gives other members on their team an opportunity to serve in a capacity they are more comfortable with. Some may prefer the Kitchen over the Camp setting all day. If this is a difficult role to fill within your church, please let us know as soon as possible so we can pursue help for the week you are serving.

What does the Ranch provide?

Čanjkú Wašté Ranch will provide all paper products and disposables as well as basic condiments. **We will have plastic ware, cups, plates, napkins, toilet paper, and paper towels on hand. We will provide all cleaning supplies and make sure the kitchen is stocked with general needed items.** We do have about 100-120 reusable plates if you prefer that option. **CWR will also provide condiments such as ketchup, mustard, mayonnaise, and ranch dressing.** This eliminates the cost for your team to incur so you have more in your budget for the good stuff! There is also typically an excess of these leftover each week and we can only give away so much mustard!

Do we need to buy seasonings/spices? This will be dependent on what your meals are, however keep in mind the amount you will actually use for what you are preparing. Many groups purchase the bulk size seasonings/spices but will only need a small amount for their recipes resulting in an excess of partially used, but pretty expensive ingredients. **Buying the regular size from Walmart instead of Sam's for example could be one way to help reduce your food cost. We will have salt & pepper shakers on hand as well as flour and sugar.**

Are there campers, Summer Disciples, or staff that have food allergies we need to plan for? We will have some campers with food allergies or sensitivities which will be communicated with you as campers register. Most know what they have to stay away from, but if there is an allergy that is a larger issue we will make you aware. A list of campers' allergies will be posted on the refrigerator and updated as needed. We will also communicate any allergies for our Summer Disciples and staff as those arise.

What is available in the Kitchen?

- Two Commercial Refrigerators & Chest Freezer
- Commercial Dishwasher & Sinks
- Commercial Gas Oven & Grill
- Commercial Ice Maker
- Large Pots, Pans, & Mixing Bowls
- Thirty-Cup Coffee Maker & Bunn Commercial Coffee Maker
- Movie Theater Style Popcorn Maker (Please provide the popcorn)
- Snow Cone Maker (Please provide the syrups)
- Cotton Candy Maker (Please provide the floss sugar & cones)
- Serving Tables
- Serving Utensils
- Two Roasters
- Salad Bar
- Cafeteria Style Plates & Cups

What you DON'T need to purchase!

- Paper Plates, Plasticware, Napkins, Papertowels
- Ketchup, Mustard, Ranch & Italian Dressing, Mayonnaise
- Salt & Pepper
- Flour, Sugar
- Toilet Paper
- Cleaning Supplies

A few tips from the Pros!!

- Don't try to fix anything you haven't fixed before.
- Simplify one or two things in the meal and focus on one good item for the kids. For instance, if I have a side dish that takes a lot of prep and work, I fix an easy meat with it.
- Use your down time well, prep anything you can the day or morning before, be very organized ahead of time for those helping you, make lists of what needs to be done and when. It is so easy to get into the rush of everything and forget what is next or what goes where and when.
- I like to have something for each meal that you can take out to the kids. Being in the kitchen you don't always get the opportunity to love on the kids, if you fix a dessert that is easy to serve you can walk around and talk to each child while giving them a treat. I mean what kid doesn't love sugar; it is a great way to meet some great kids! (This is where being creative with your Stock & Assist Team's abilities will help!)
- Shopping is a whole different beast but looking at your labels is key. You need to look at how much food there is in a serving. For instance, a bag of fries says it feeds 50, but the serving is only 4 or 5 fries, so one bag really only feeds 25 people. While other food packages may reflect a serving size as way more than what you would actually give. Again, lists are very important here, I probably fill a notebook up before I get my grocery order together. It is easy to leave things out like condiments or seasonings. Prepping this is something you want to make sure you do before you leave, it can take longer than you think to get so many meals broken down into ingredients.
- When trying to plan a lunch with numbers that change daily and the grocery store not being close by, the best thing to do is take the average numbers for the week shown on the Daily Count sheet and fix for that on the heavy side. I always have things for our team to eat if we run low, like sandwich meat and tuna.



