

## **4-H Ethnic Foods Contest**

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Through the state 4-H Foods and Nutrition Committee, we offered guidelines, score sheets, and support for implementing an Ethnic Foods Contest on the county and state level. The original intent of the contest was to invite youth of diverse populations to participate in 4-H. We thought that a foods project, relating to familiar foods of the family and/or culture, would be a comfortable way to get involved with 4-H. We also hoped to educate youth and adults about various ethnic foods and customs by way of their involvement as presenters and audience members of these presentations.

The first year of the contest we had eight participants on the state level, and over 60 participants in county events. Types of ethnic foods presented by youth ranged widely from Japanese Noodle Toss, Japanese Curry, Pad Thai, Pina Colada, Hawaiian Chicken, Wontons, Spaghetti, Enchiladas, German Pancake Tacos, Focaccia Bread, Zwiebelkuchen (Onion Pie), Schwarzwald Rinderbraten (Black Forest Beef Roast), Jamaican Jerk Chicken, Empanadas, Guasacaca, Aloha bread, and crepes. One county found it helpful to use the ethnic foods concept as a fun family evening for 4-H/YFP. It provided them some exposure to various ethnic foods and was a fun activity for families to enjoy together.

The foundation of this endeavor involved the work of a resourceful team willing to embrace the concept, and to develop guidelines and a base of enthusiasm for promoting the contest. An integral component to the success of the idea was a creative staff member who took the lead in developing attractive promotional pieces. Posters and tablets of informational tear off sheets were developed and distributed to each county office in the state. We provided a cover letter with basic information about the contest, and suggested locations for placing the promotional items. The seed of this idea came from a comment made at a staff meeting, and was then shared with a group of individuals who care about youth and wanted to provide them with fun, educational activities to help them grow and discover new things about themselves.