

Meatless Monday: Grades K-12 School Cafeteria Foodservice Program Guide



MEATLESS MONDAY Good for You.
Good for the Planet.





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Meatless Monday: The Right Menu for Right Now

Meatless Monday is a global movement that enables people to make positive changes in their diet — and their lives — simply by choosing not to eat meat one day a week.

Founded in 2003, Meatless Monday is now implemented by thousands of foodservice operations in over 40 countries. We're ready to serve as your partner. And we're 100% committed to your success.

This new guide gives you full instructions and the tools to start a Meatless Monday program in your school or school district. This revised edition has been composed using feedback from foodservice professionals. In addition, the content has been supplemented by research from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health's Center for a Livable Future.

There is never any charge for these materials or services. Meatless Monday is part of The Monday Campaigns, a nonprofit health initiative dedicated to reducing chronic preventable diseases.

Inside, you'll find:

- A step-by-step implementation guide.
- A list of Meatless Monday benefits.
- The Meatless Monday school food e-cookbook.
- Marketing, Culinary and Operational Mini-Guides.
- Additional talking points to educate your culinary staff.
- Evaluation criteria to assess how well Meatless Monday performs.

Questions or would you like more help? [Get in touch.](#)

By implementing Meatless Monday, you'll be educating your school community on healthy eating habits that can last a lifetime. This initiative also shows your commitment to food source sustainability and the health of the planet.



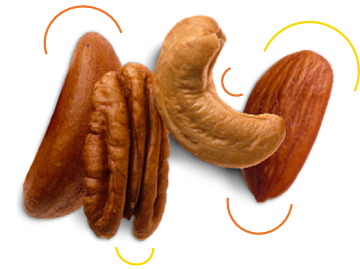
Benefits of Adding Meatless Monday to Your School Foodservice Operation

There are many compelling reasons to add a Meatless Monday menu to your school cafeterias. Use these talking points to build enthusiasm and strong support. Meatless Monday:

- 1 Demonstrates commitment to your students' health.** By providing more plant-based choices on your menu, you're helping members of your school community live healthier lives.
- 2 Promotes healthy eating habits.** Choosing not to eat meat on Monday can lead to making healthier decisions throughout the week, according to a [research study](#). Also, helping growing children establish healthy eating habits now could lead to a lifetime of healthy eating.
- 3 Reduces environmental impact.** Decreasing meat consumption just one day a week results in a significant reduction of your operation's [carbon](#)

[footprint](#). This also provides an excellent foundation for your students to take part in helping to protect the environment.

- 4 Projects a leadership role.** Meatless Monday places both your school district and your foodservice operation at the forefront of promoting a healthier, more sustainable food system.
- 5 Meets growing demand for plant-based dishes.** Look at the [national trends](#) and you'll see that more people are now seeking meatless meals more often.
- 6 Encourages your school community to expand its palate.** Many meatless meals showcase the unique cuisines and flavors of other cultures. This helps your school community appreciate new and delicious meals each Monday
- 7 Provides greater choice for greater diner satisfaction.** Meatless Monday is all about offering meatless options. You can



continue to serve meat on Mondays, if it works for your operation. Let the students choose for themselves.

- 8 Saves money.** [Recent reports](#) indicate the price of plant-based foods is more predictable than meat. And in many cases, plant-based foods may cost less.
- 9 Easy to implement.** Meatless Monday is currently in thousands of foodservice cafeterias across the U.S., making it the most successful weekly meat reduction program in America.
- 10 Fosters collaboration** between teachers, students and foodservice staff. The campaign provides real-life dietary and environmental issues for classroom discussion and enables students to take an active role in improving their health — as well as the health of the planet.

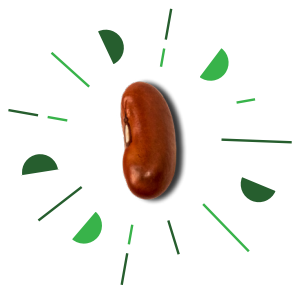
Getting Started:

6 Steps to a Successful Introduction

Meatless Monday is credited with helping millions of people eat healthier each week by reducing their meat consumption. And getting a program started in your school cafeterias couldn't be easier. Just feature some vegetarian or vegan dishes on Mondays – while continuing to serve some meat options, if your operation allows. Here are six steps to get started.

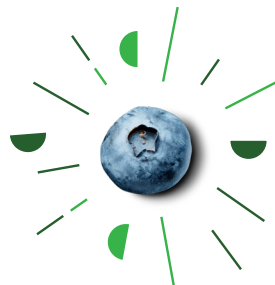
1 Commit to Meatless Monday.

Educate your key stakeholders on the health, environmental and business benefits. Meet with your staff and the school administrators. Use this [sample letter](#) and [talking points](#) to gain support. Be sure to inform parents about your participation in the campaign, too, and be responsive to their concerns and suggestions.



2 Set goals. Determine your criteria for success and how to measure it. Use the [worksheet](#) in this guide to establish key performance indicators, develop culinary strategies and set a baseline before you begin.

3 Organize your crew. Set your start date and create a things-to-do timeline leading up to it. Define your menu. For inspiration, explore the [Meatless Monday K-12 Cookbook](#). Train your foodservice team on the new recipes. Make sure your crew understands the advantages of a Meatless Monday program. To help them prepare, use our [Tips for Training Your Staff](#) worksheet that appears in the back of this guide.

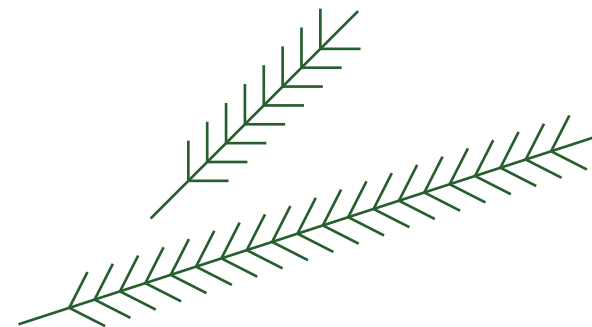


4 Go! Announce your Meatless Monday launch on the school website and email database. Place the [posters and promotional materials](#) in your dining areas. Let your school community know that Meatless Monday will be a weekly feature on your school's menus.

5 Promote Meatless Monday regularly. Feature your weekly plant-based specials. Use our [Marketing Strategies Mini-Guide](#) for ideas.

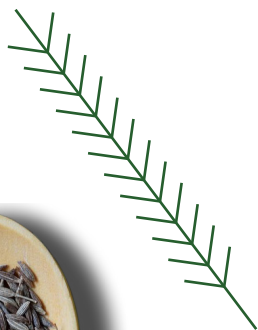
6 Share your progress. Join the Meatless Monday community. Follow us on [Facebook](#). Trade best practices with other foodservice organizations. If you'd like to know more, get in touch at info@meatlessmonday.com. Also, please take a moment to fill out our online [evaluation survey](#).





Let's Get Specific

We've included some additional information to help get you up and running. Here you'll find Mini-Guides that cover [Culinary](#), [Marketing](#) and [Operational](#). Take a look at the topics that interest you.



Culinary Strategies

Fresh Ideas for Your Meatless Monday Menu

The thinking behind a Meatless Monday menu is simple. Just develop and highlight vegetarian and vegan options for your students each Monday. Here are some recommended suggestions based on successful practices in the field.

- **Remember that the National School Lunch Program** allows for many foods to serve as meat alternatives. The following foods count as a 1 oz. equivalent of the meat alternate portion of the meal.
 - 1/4 cup beans or lentils
 - 1/2 cup dairy or soy yogurt
 - 2.2 oz. or 1/4 cup tofu
 - 2 tablespoons sunflower seed butter
 - 1 egg

View the [Meat/Meat Alternate section of the Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs](#) and the [USDA's memorandum on crediting tofu and soy yogurt](#) for more information.

- **Make Meatless Monday your featured choice.** Let your students know these are special dishes to try *today*. (Remember, you can also offer meat dishes on Monday.)
- **Change offerings weekly or monthly.** Keep things fresh and entice with seasonal recipes. Consider:
 - Meatless swaps
 - New ingredients
 - Intriguing global cuisine



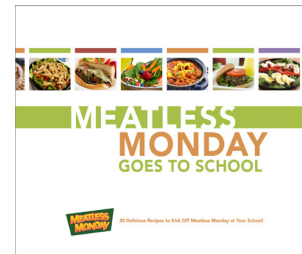
Culinary Strategies

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- **Highlight newest dishes.** Use posters and fun names to promote the meatless dishes to students. Give them a reason to try the dish, like including a fun fact about plant-based protein.
- **Set up a sampling and cooking demo-station.** Make Monday a special event to attract attention. Let students sample the dishes they'll find on the cafeteria line. Better yet, involve students by having them suggest meatless dishes or vote on upcoming Meatless Monday options.



- **Meatless Monday K-12 Cookbook, “Meatless Monday Goes to School.”** Be sure to [download our free, printable e-cookbook for school foodservice operations](#). This innovative cookbook contains 30 meatless recipes with cuisines that range from popular American burgers and pasta to Mediterranean classics like paninis and flatbreads, not to mention Latin favorites like tacos, burritos and enchiladas. This Meatless Monday K-12 Cookbook has been reviewed by experienced registered dietitians. Each recipe lists the elements that meet the National School Lunch Program’s meal pattern. Also, each recipe contains at least one ounce of the NSLP’s meat alternate requirement per serving.



- **Make your meatless dishes stand out.** Research from the [Cornell Food and Brand Lab](#) shows that giving school cafeteria dishes fun, enticing names can significantly increase the number of students who choose to purchase and consume them. Many of the dishes in the Meatless Monday K-12 Cookbook have fun names, such as:
 - Bistro Egg Sandwich
 - Shanghai Sweet and Spicy Spaghetti
 - Tuscan Herbed Flatbread
 - Harvest Lasagna
 - Taco-the-Town
 - The Whole Enchilada
 - Power Salad

You can also involve your students and staff by asking for name suggestions or even holding a naming contest. Visit [The Smarter Lunchrooms Movement](#) for more information about adding creative names to your dishes.



What's Hot - New Food Trends

Stay on top of the increased appetite for delicious meatless meals. Check out this [trend report](#) from the National Restaurant Association. Among the items to follow:

- Healthful kids' meals
- Protein-rich grains/seeds
- Natural ingredients/clean menus
- Environmental sustainability
- Authentic ethnic cuisines



Marketing Strategies

Get the Message Out and the Students and Staff on Board

More people are health-conscious these days. Parents especially want to be assured that the food their children receive at school is healthy and nourishing. That's why Meatless Monday makes such great sense. By choosing not to eat meat just one day a week, students, teachers and administrators reduce their risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes, obesity and cancer.

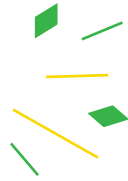
Promote this program with a full suite of ready-to-use collateral materials, such as [posters](#), [table tents and other merchandising items](#). Or feel free to adapt these items to work with your existing marketing materials. Actively promote Meatless Monday to keep it top of mind.

Here are a few ideas:

- **Capitalize on school communications.** Use your school's bulletin boards, website, intranet, morning announcements and other communication channels.
- **Enlist the administrators and teachers** to find creative ways to publicize. For example, have an art class make Meatless Monday environmental posters.
- **Recruit ambassadors** who are passionate about sustainable food and the environment as advocates.
- **Maximize social media.** Use platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and Snapchat to broaden your reach and attract new users. Promote your plant-based dishes with a delicious photo and a special price.
- **Encourage staff to engage the students.** Have them talk up the unique flavors and health benefits of Meatless Monday dishes.
- **Promote Meatless Monday in your cafeterias.** Display the appetizing [posters](#), [table tents and other merchandising materials](#) that are ready for download. Feel free to customize them for your specific needs.

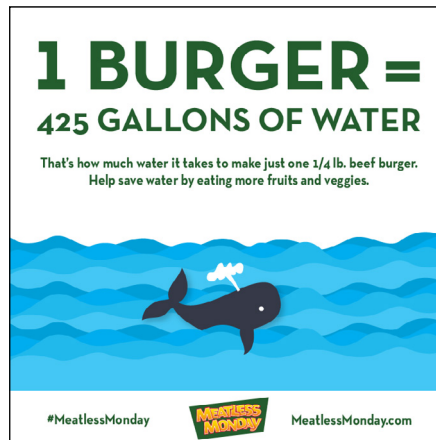


Fun Facts for Your Meatless Meals



Your school community will be interested to know the positive difference they're making when they choose to go meatless. Consider adding these free promotional posters to your marketing materials — or use the fun facts in the headlines to create your own posters.

As you can see, producing even a single serving of meat requires a lot of the planet's resources. These posters are based on recent global fact sheets from the Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future. Download them to add to your classroom discussion: [environment](#), [food safety](#) and [health and wellness](#).



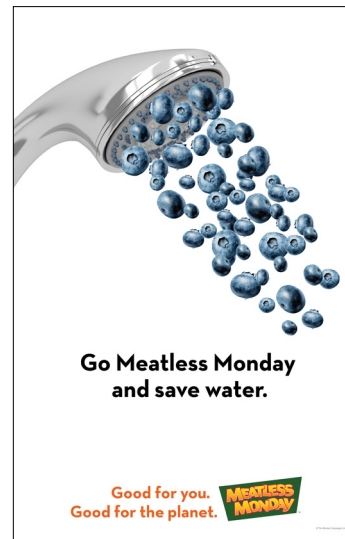
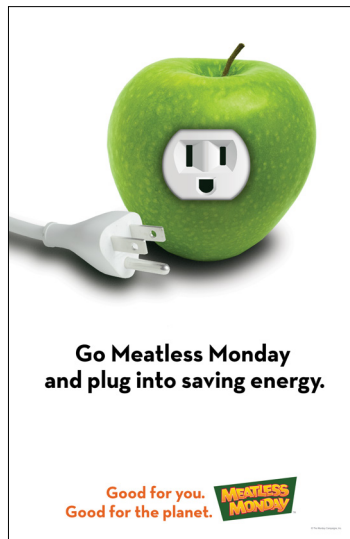
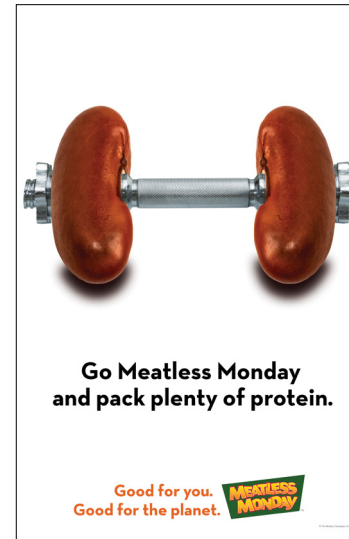


New Promotional Campaign

We gathered feedback from organizations that have implemented Meatless Monday and learned that customers respond well when they realize the many health and environmental benefits of going Meatless Monday.

From your desktop or laptop, download the [ZIP](#) file to access the full promotional kit – posters, signs, table tents and graphics.

Want more Meatless Monday tools or have questions? Email us at: info@MeatlessMonday.com

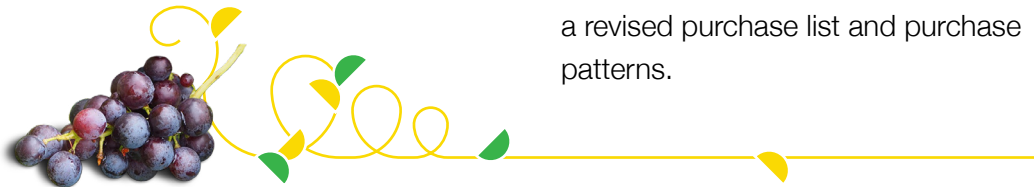




Operational Guidelines

Setting Up for Launch

Adding a Meatless Monday program is remarkably easy from an operational standpoint. You can still use your approved purveyors and order from their product lists. If you expand beyond your usual vendors, here are a few tips to consider:



- **Work with your culinary team to set a schedule.** Determine your Meatless Monday launch date and the dining areas that will offer this menu — both student and employee locations are recommended.
- **Place your order earlier than usual.** Allow yourself extra time to get used to a revised purchase list and purchase patterns.
- **Accommodate a wider assortment of plant-based ingredients.** Keep beans, grains, fruits, vegetables, nuts and other plant-based foods on hand. Ask your suppliers about new items they could offer for your ongoing menu.
- **Identify specialized foodservice distributors in your area.** Look for sources of fresh, locally grown produce. Perhaps use produce from your school garden. Highlight these items on your menu.

Culinary

- Set your Meatless Monday menu and plant-based ingredient list.
- Train your prep and line work staff on the new recipes.
- Train your service staff on [Meatless Monday talking points](#) to discuss with diners.

Marketing

- Use the [Meatless Monday promotional materials](#) to help educate the school staff and students on the health benefits of choosing not to eat meat one day a week.
- Publicize your Meatless Monday introduction internally and on social media using the [Meatless Monday promotional materials](#).
- Design customized POS collateral for your school using the [Meatless Monday promotional materials](#).
- Distribute a press release on the program's launch to inform the surrounding community.

Operational

- Work with your distributors to check pricing and availability of your purchase orders.
- Determine any adjustments you'll need to make in the kitchen to handle prepping more plant-based ingredients.
- Post a schedule for staff to change the point-of-sale materials during the week.

Sample Letter or Email to Your Colleagues



Dear Colleague,

I'd like your help to start a Meatless Monday program for our school foodservice operation. This effort will enable our school staff and students to make healthier choices when eating – as well as improve the health of the planet.

Meatless Monday is a science-based public health initiative associated with Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health. Its goal is to reduce chronic preventable diseases by encouraging less consumption of meat. By adopting Meatless Monday, we can:

Demonstrate industry leadership. We'll join hundreds of other forward-thinking foodservice operations that are guiding the U.S. towards a healthier, more sustainable food system.

Promote healthy habits. Choosing not to eat meat on Monday can lead to making healthier food decisions throughout the week, according to a [study](#). Furthermore, helping students establish a nutritious diet now is a healthy habit that could last a lifetime.

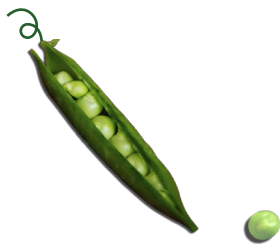
Reduce environmental impact. Decreasing meat consumption just one day a week results in a significant reduction of our [carbon footprint](#).

In short, Meatless Monday features dishes made without meat each Monday. To be clear, dishes with meat would still be served on Mondays. We're simply providing healthier meatless options.

I hope you'll support me in this effort. Let me know if you'd like to meet to discuss this topic in detail. I'll be happy to answer any questions you may have. Many thanks for your kind interest and consideration.

Sincerely yours,

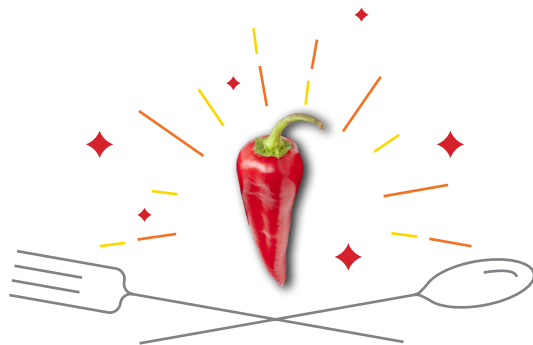
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Foodservice Goal Setting Worksheet

After committing to start a Meatless Monday program, it's important to align on your goals. This way you'll be able to measure your success and the value of your service. Establish a baseline before you begin.

Here are some suggested goals that apply to your foodservice operation, diners' health and the health of our planet.



Diner Satisfaction

- Did diner satisfaction scores improve after launching Meatless Monday or at least stay the same?
- Did diner traffic increase or at least stay the same on Mondays after launching Meatless Monday?
- Did guest traffic increase or at least stay the same each week after launching Meatless Monday?
- Did staff traffic increase or at least stay the same each week after launching Meatless Monday?
- Are the new vegetarian and vegan dishes featured on Monday at least as popular as the other dishes that were previously offered?

Foodservice Operations

- Did food costs stay the same or go down after launching Meatless Monday?
- Did labor costs stay the same or go down after launching Meatless Monday?
- Did sales stay the same or go up after launching Meatless Monday?

Cost Analysis

- Did the amount of meat purchased each week go down after launching Meatless Monday? And by how much?
- Was the cost of fruits, vegetables, and beans purchased each week less than the price of preparing comparable meat dishes?

Online Survey

- Once your site has been implementing Meatless Monday for a few months, please help us evaluate the success of the program by filling out this [brief survey](#).



Tips for Training Your Staff



Your diners are likely to have questions about your Meatless Monday program. Here are some tips on how to prepare your service staff:

- Hold a pre-shift meeting each Monday to go over which dishes are being offered that day. Key talking points are indicated on the right.
- Place educational materials in the breakroom, including posters, table tents and brochures.
- Host a staff training session before launching your program with kitchen and service employees.
- Send out an employee email containing links on the Meatless Monday program for future reference.
- Keep Meatless Monday educational brochures in your dining hall for employees to refer to or hand out when asked questions.
- Integrate information on Meatless Monday into your new employee training program.

Key Talking Points for Staff Training

- Meatless Monday is a global movement with a simple message: choose not to eat meat, one day a week.
- Meatless Monday's goal is to reduce meat consumption by 15% for our personal health and the health of the planet.
- Why Monday? It's the fresh start of the week — an ideal day to make healthier choices.
- There are significant health benefits to eating less meat, such as decreased risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes, obesity and cancer.
- There are significant environmental benefits to eating less meat, even just once a week, such as reducing our carbon footprint, our water footprint and decreasing greenhouse gas emissions.
- Each Monday we feature vegetarian dishes to help reduce the overall consumption of meat.
- Even though we feature vegetarian dishes on Monday, we'll still have a variety of meat dishes to choose from.

Online Resources

In addition to the new Meatless Monday promotional campaign, we have other creative materials to get students and staff excited about the Meatless Monday movement. Click [here](#) to access posters, web graphics and more.

Contact Info

Or get in touch with us at:
info@meatlessmonday.com

