

Level Up with School Lunch



Are you ready to win your students' tastebuds and add nutrition XP to their health? Check out the chart below for creative ways to "level up" common school menu items. Each level has ideas on how to change/utilize food items to make your menu and NSLW celebration a "game-changing" event!

LEVEL 1: basic/original form

LEVEL 2: Food item plus additional seasonings/flavors/elements

LEVEL 3: Food item presented in an innovative recipe or creative way

LEVEL 1

GALA APPLE

LEVEL 2

- Cut into slices or fun shapes
- Purchase from Texas/local producer
- Sprinkle slices of apples or canned applesauce with cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves or pumpkin pie spice

LEVEL 3

- Try Beta Bake (Batatas and Apple) Recipe from pg. 33 of the [NSLW Recipe Book](#). Serve this on the line or have a taste test event.
- Conduct a taste test on Gala apple varieties to celebrate Harvest of the Month for October and NSLW (see [NSLW Taste Test Toolkit](#) for guidance).



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LEVEL 1

FRESH WATERMELON

- Serve watermelon slices with tajin seasoning as a condiment
- Cut the watermelon into fun shapes with cookie cutters
- Serve fresh local watermelon for Texas Harvest of the Month in September and through NSLW!

LEVEL 2

LEVEL 3

- What-a-Game Watermelon! Check out the Watermelon Pizza or Sweet & Savory Watermelon Salad recipes (pg. 24 and pg. 22), respectively of the [Farm Fresh Cooking for the Seasons book](#) for fun ways to level up this juicy fruit!

LEVEL 1

GREEN BEANS

- Switch out canned green beans for fresh or frozen; local Texas variety is even better!
- Sprinkle with some shredded Parmesan and dried herbs (thyme, dill, or parsley).

LEVEL 2

LEVEL 3

- Add onions and garlic to make these tasty Garlic Parmesan Green Beans (pg. 24 of NSLW Recipe Book)



Level [↑]Up with School Lunch

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LEVEL 1

FROZEN CORN

LEVEL 2

- Season the corn with garlic, margarine, and dried parsley before roasting or cooking over stove top for a boost of flavor XP!
- Try a spicy southern profile by adding Cajun seasoning mix.

LEVEL 3

- Try a local favorite twist on corn with the Street Corn HP recipe (pg. 41 [NSLW Recipe Book](#)).
- Utilize the USDA Foods Corn and Edamame Blend for this Asian-Inspired [Recipe](#)

LEVEL 1

CANNED CHICKPEAS

LEVEL 2

- Add a blend of chili powder, garlic, onion, paprika, cumin for a Southwest kick.

LEVEL 3

- Level up your USDA Foods with this Southwest Chickpea Salad recipe (pg. 29 [NSLW Recipe Book](#)).

LEVEL 1

FRESH CAULIFLOWER

LEVEL 2

- Serve raw florets with ranch dressing, honey mustard, or student favorite dip.

LEVEL 3

- Need some Italian inspired flavors? Check out the Roasted Cauliflower on pg.6 of the [NSLW Recipe Book](#).



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LEVEL 1

RAW CARROTS

LEVEL 2

- Cut into "Carrot Coins" or fun shapes to garnish student interest.
- Roasted carrots with cumin spice; it will make them taste nice!
- Procure local Texas Carrots for your menu

LEVEL 3

- Try this Asian-inspired side: Sesame Glazed Carrots (pg. 19 [NSLW Recipe Book](#)) as the perfect pairing for your main dish.

LEVEL 1

CANNED BLACK BEANS

LEVEL 2

- Slow cook with cumin and chili powder to add XP

LEVEL 3

- Get your Chili game on with Pork Green Chili (pg.15 [NSLW Recipe Book](#))
- Spice things up with Spicy Black Beans recipe (pg. 11 [NSLW Recipe Book](#)).

LEVEL 1

BEEF TACO

LEVEL 2

- Dress up your taco: add USDA Foods Pepper and Onions Mix to your favorite recipe for extra veggies and flavor.

LEVEL 3

- Make Argentinian-style "Level Up Your Tastebuds" Tacos (pg. 34 [NSLW Recipe Book](#)) - these tasty tacos guarantee student satisfaction!



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LEVEL 1

SWEET POTATOES

LEVEL 2

- Roast with cinnamon & nutmeg to level up the sweetness.

LEVEL 3

- Boost the flavor and the Vitamin A with sweet potatoes from the Cheesy Vegetable Enchiladas (pg.10 [NSLW Recipe Book](#))!
- Try NSLW featured taste test recipe: Beta Bake (Batatas and Apple) from pg.33 [NSLW Recipe Book](#).

LEVEL 1

CHICKEN FAJITAS

LEVEL 2

- Serve with avocado slices or guacamole and sour cream on the side.
- Season the chicken with taco seasoning mix or marinate the night before.

LEVEL 3

- Substitute chicken for some local Texas mushrooms. Your students are sure to "power up" with the mushrooms in the Power Up Veggie Fajita Bowl (pg. 39 [NSLW Recipe Book](#))!

Have some other winning ways to level up your recipes? We'd love to hear about them!
Post your ideas on social media with #NSLW23 #TXNSLW or #TxAgMatters



Level Up with School Lunch

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LEVEL 1

LONG-GRAIN BROWN RICE

LEVEL 2

- Purchase from Texas/local producer
- Add Taco seasoning mix (cumin, chili powder, paprika, garlic powder, onion powder)
- Add turmeric, garlic powder and onion powder to level up your rice to an Indian cuisine flavor!

LEVEL 3

- You're sure to "win" students over with the Cilantro Lime Rice recipe (pg. 40 [NSLW Recipe Book](#)). This recipe pairs well with many of the flavors our students love! (pg.33 [NSLW Recipe Book](#)).
- Try making this Paella recipe - it will be sure to level up your students' tastebuds! (pg. 21 [NSLW Recipe Book](#))

LEVEL 1

MACARONI & CHEESE

LEVEL 2

- Mix it up with 2 different cheeses - add Parmesan, white cheddar, or Monterey Jack cheese for a blast of umami.
- Add something green! Try green chilies for spice, green bell peppers, peas, or green onions for a nice garnish and boost of flavor XP!

LEVEL 3

- Want to triple your score? Try the [Turkey and Beef Macaroni USDA Recipe](#)