Plating and Presentation

Description
Discussion will focus on the various considerations and techniques that go into creating an attractive plate or platter: colour, height, shapes, textures, symmetry, garnishes, etc. Students will complete a plating exercise that incorporates these factors.

Lesson Objectives
Students will be able to:
• describe plating decisions that must be made for an attractive plate or platter presentation
• summarize the importance of appropriate colour, height, proportion, shapes, and textures in plate presentation, and
• design a well-thought-out plate or platter that includes garnishes.

Assumptions
• The teacher will be familiar with correct plating procedures using appropriate resources.
• The teacher will demonstrate plating concepts and techniques to be followed, and all students will have a resource to reference during the demonstration.
• Teachers will have the flexibility to choose the recipe based on resources, time and physical space.

Terminology
asymmetry: Asymmetry refers to the absence of symmetry.
focal point: In plating, the focal point refers to the main point of interest in a dish’s presentation.
garnish: To garnish is to decorate a plate or dish to make it more visually appealing.
mise en place: Mise en place (Fr.) refers to all of the preparation needed to cook a dish.
symmetry: Symmetry in plating refers to visual balance, where one side of a plate mirrors the other.

Estimated Time
1–2 70-minute classes

Recommended Number of Students
Up to 24
Facilities
Home Economics teaching lab and/or Culinary Arts teaching kitchen

Tools
• blank paper
• scissors
• coloured pencils

Resources


Demonstrating Skills And Knowledge

Procedure

Day 1
The teacher will introduce the class to the ingredients, methods, and techniques needed to thoughtfully create an attractive plate or platter. Emphasis should be placed on plating basics such as:

1. Rim of a plate stays immaculate—no fingerprints, wipe marks, drips, or garnishes.
2. Garnishes are attractive, relevant, and enhance rather than overpower the main idea of the plate.
3. All garnishes should be edible and reflect ingredients that are already being used in the dish.
4. Soup bowl is not over- or under-filled.
5. Main course or salad plate shows portion control, and there is no white or negative space visible.
6. Nutritional guidelines on entrée plate are encouraged using the ratio of 50% assortment of vegetables, 25% starch, 25% protein.
7. Using odd-number focal points (e.g., three cherry tomatoes on a plate rather than four).

Day 2
The teacher may also choose to demonstrate some of these techniques as well as common mistakes using products available in the kitchen or pictures found in textbooks and/or online.

1. Students will be provided with plain white paper, scissors, and coloured pencils and instructed to conceptualize and create a well thought out plate or presentation.
2. Students will label ingredients as well as colour ingredients appropriately to showcase the concept.
3. Creativity is encouraged; students may cut out shapes to showcase plates or food.
4. The completed project may be presented to the class and/or handed in for assessment.

Evaluation Guidelines
Students will receive a formative assessment evaluated on:

- completion of the project
- demonstrated plating criteria are met
- colour and visual appeal
- easily understandable labelling, effective execution of concept, and
- all standards prescribed during teacher demonstration are met in the final product.
Participation and enthusiasm are crucial. Risk taking and exploration should be encouraged; this activity should be fun. Marking should be very objective. Any critique should be based on professional-level criteria.

**Extension Activities**

This activity may be done early in the course module or left until the end. If completed early in the course, plating and presentation may be a continuing outcome for every cooking lab.