

Start Small With Scratch Cooking



By Margo Gusman & Maribel Alchin



Margo Gusman

- Central Kitchen Manager,
Marquardt School District 15
- Level 4 Certified, SNA
- 22 Years in School Nutrition



Maribel Alchin, MBA, RDN, LDN

- *Assistant Director of Food & Nutrition Services, Marquardt School District 15*
- 24 years in field of nutrition
 - Bilingual Registered Dietitian (Spanish)
 - Personal Chef
- 4 years in School Nutrition

Today's Goals

Change the
common mindset
surrounding
scratch-cooking

Identify basic
equipment
to start
scratch-cooking

Identify baby
steps to move
towards
scratch-cooking

Why Is Scratch Cooking So Scary?

- A focus on what they **don't have**
- The misconception it is always more work
- Lack of confidence & feeling overwhelmed
- All-or-nothing mindset
- Unrealistic expectations

Focus on What You DO Have

- Center your recipes around the equipment and staff you have:
 - Amount of labor
 - Skillset of staff
 - Small equipment vs big equipment



Basic Equipment to Strive For

Small Equipment

- Robot Coupe
- Immersion Blender
- Electric Can Opener for #10 cans



Large Equipment

- Combi Oven
- Tilt Skillet



Scratch vs Speed-Scratch

Scratch: Entire recipe is made “in-house”

Speed-Scratch: Components of the recipe are already prepared.

The Pros of Moving Towards Scratch

Greater control over:

- Ingredients
- Allergens
- Cost
- Sodium
- Where your food is sourced (ie: local)
- Repurposing leftovers



Step #1

Pick the Easiest Recipe To Make Scratch

- Examples:
 - Salsa/Pico
 - Spice Blend
 - Dressings
 - Granola
 - Croutons



Step #2

Don't Reinvent The Wheel

- Websites to Find CN Recipes:
 - www.healthyschoolrecipes.com
 - www.theicn.org/cnr/
 - Facebook: TIPS for School Meals That Rock
 - Ask your colleagues!

Step #3

Test the Recipe First

- Don't plan to test a new scratch recipe on a high-production day (ie: pick pizza day)
- Start small and scale up
- Have multiple people taste
- Try to give as many people as possible the opportunity to work with the recipe
- Ask for feedback



Step #4

Choose Your Timing Wisely

Tips:

- Take pre-orders
- Designate staff to focus on prep
- 25 portions per hotel pan



Baked Penne Pasta



Step #5

Don't Be Afraid to Use RAW Product

Scratch: Cook ground beef

Speed-scratch: Use precooked beef

Equipment: Steam Jacketed Kettle or Tilt Skillet

MARQUARDT MADE
MANAGER SPECIAL:

Beef Chili
& Cornbread



Step #6

Maximize Your Recipe for Marketing



Homemade Buffalo Wings

- Served during Superbowl & March Madness
- **Scratch:** Build-in defrost & prep time with raw product
- **Speed-scratch:** premade wings & make your own sauce

Step #7

If At First You Don't Succeed...



Asian Chicken Bowl

Challenges:

- Cooking rice; Should be 1:1 ratio for cooking in combi oven
- Adjusted spice blend



Grilled Cheese Sandwich

Tips for Crispy crust:

- Don't line sheet pan with parchment paper
- Spray both sides of bread slices with garlic/butter spray
- Can make in tilt skillet, combi or convection oven

“Dream big, start small,
but most of all, **START**”

-Simon Sinek

Questions? Let's Connect!

Margo Gusman

mgusman@d15.us

Maribel Alchin

malchin@d15.us