

OSPI CNS Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Reference Sheet

Grain-Based Desserts

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) updated the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) meal patterns to align with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. These guidelines recommend limiting the consumption of added sugars and solid fats as part of a healthy eating pattern and identify grain-based desserts as sources of added sugars and saturated fats. As a result, under the updated CACFP meal patterns, grain-based desserts cannot count towards the grain requirement at any meal or snack.

Requirements

Homemade and store-bought grain-based desserts cannot count towards the grain component for meals and snacks in the CACFP.

When trying to determine if the item is a grain-based dessert, answer these questions:

- Is the food commonly thought of as a dessert or treat?
- Does the food appear to be a cookie or a bar – even if it is not called so on the label?
- Is this a sweet version of this item, as opposed to a savory version?
 - Examples: a caramel rice cake vs. a cheese rice cake?
 - Sweet rice pudding vs. rice pudding with herbs and cheese?
- Is the item flavored with chocolate, caramel, toffee, or contain jam, fruit puree, or custard?
- Is sugar listed as the first ingredient on the label?

If the answer is yes to any of these questions, then it is a grain-based dessert.

NOTE: Quick breads, plain animal crackers and graham crackers are not considered grain-based desserts.

Items considered grain-based desserts

- Bars (cereal, breakfast, granola)
- Cakes (cake, coffee cake, cupcake, brownies)
- Cookies (wafer, sandwich, bar)
- Doughnuts
- Fig or Fruit Filled Rolls (sandwich, cookies)
- Gingerbread
- Ice Cream Cones
- Marshmallow Cereal Treats
- Pastries (sweet rolls, cinnamon rolls, toaster pastries, sweet scones, churros)



- Pie Crusts (dessert pies, cobblers, and turnovers)
- Puddings (including sweet rice puddings and bread puddings)
- Snack mix with sweetened cereal, crackers or candy pieces
- Sweet Biscotti
- Sweet Croissants
- Sweet Pita Chips and Sweet Rice Cakes
- Sweet Popcorn and Popcorn Cakes

Reference:

- [Exhibit A](#)
- [CACFP 16-2017](#)
- [CACFP 09-2018](#)
- [7 CFR 226.20\(a\)\(4\)\(iii\)](#)

Resources:

- [USDA Team Nutrition Webpage](#)
- [Team Nutrition Grain-Based Desserts Reference Sheet](#)

Acronym Reference:

- CNS – Child Nutrition Services
- CACFP – Child and Adult Care Food Program
- OSPI – Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
- USDA – United States Department of Agriculture