



## Salad Bars in Missouri Schools

# Success Story

Years of Wisdom: Kirksville R-III School District

In Kirksville R-III School District, salad bars are a tried and true method for feeding children. The district first added variety to their lunch line up with a salad bar about 15 years ago. To help other schools plan for salad bar success, Sue Barrett, Director of Food Services for the district shares some of their experiences

### What's On Offer?

Students can take salad as their main meal or as a side. Students get their protein in the form of ham, turkey, or shredded or cottage cheese if making salad their entrée. To stock the salad bar Kirksville R-III receives their produce from the vendor Kohl Wholesale. Barrett is also working on adding local fruits and vegetables to the mix.

Kirksville's schools add variety to their bars by reusing menu ingredients. "It is a good way to use leftovers. We can make corn salad if we have corn left. If it is bananas we can make banana pudding," Barrett said.

### Time Crunch

Over the years, their use of salad bars has ebbed and flowed. Currently, a salad bar is offered during lunch in the middle and high schools. Grades kindergarten through six used to have this as a lunch option two days a week but no longer do. One of the biggest challenges encountered was an increase in the time it took their elementary students to get through the serving line when using the salad bar.

### Proper Portions Reduce Waste

Helping the children visualize proper salad portions helps to minimize waste. Barrett uses a physical reminder of appropriate portion sizes. Students take a four ounce container if making salad a side dish or a larger cardboard container if they want a chef salad.

To preserve the items on the salad bar Kirksville R-III uses a sanitary monitor. Barrett notes "We have someone who tries to monitor the salad bar and we have tongs or spoons in every dish. If something is damaged they refill it."



### Kirksville R-III Stats Enrollment

~2,600 students

### Free & Reduced Meal Eligibility

42.8%



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### Know Your Customers

Similar to the increase in pumpkin sales at Thanksgiving, salad bar sales have certain peak periods throughout the school year. The salad bar is usually popular at the start of the school year, because of the many varieties of fresh and vibrant produce available. Barrett has observed that it increases in popularity again around February as prom for the high schoolers quickly approaches.

Knowing the fluctuation of sales helps in planning for the right amount of food and reducing waste. The district finds that even with the variety available in leftover items, the classic salad is the most popular choice, with ranch dressing coming in a close second.

### Words of Wisdom

With 15 years of experience under their belt, Barrett shares these words of encouragement for other schools pondering the addition of a salad bar:

“It is not something to be afraid of. Once you know how much to prepare everyday it is pretty easy.”

For more information about adding a salad bar to your nutrition program, visit [www.saladbars2schools.org](http://www.saladbars2schools.org)

### Speed It Up!

#### Tips for helping children get through the salad bar quickly:

- Assign a salad bar monitor to help children move quickly
- Give a lesson on salad bar etiquette in the classroom at the beginning of the year or after long breaks
- Take a traveling salad bar from class to class for children to practice using the salad bar
- Pre-portion some items, such as meat or cheeses for grab and go
- Have a line on each side of the bar
- Offer fewer choices until the children get the hang of it
- Create a video of how to use the salad bar to watch in the classroom



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