Adult Cooking Programs in the Library: Make it Happen

Amber Downs
Maitland Public Library
About Me and MPL
Today we will cover:

- Why libraries should hold cooking programs
- History of cooking at MPL
- How to get approval/facilities
- Legal concerns
- Types of demonstrations to hold
- How to find presenters
- How to facilitate the program day of
- Tips
- Kids programs
- Questions
Why Hold Cooking Demonstrations?

- Engage patrons
- Reach out to community members
- Fulfill library mission:

  The Mission of the Maitland Public Library is to provide materials and services that address the educational, informational, and cultural needs of the residents of Maitland.
History of Cooking at MPL

- In 2008 Ha Roda moved to Florida from California
- Taught MPL staff about library cooking demos
- Ha was our first “Cultural Cooks” chef
- Cooking demos consisted of a folding table and a hot plate.
Our Kitchen

- The Maitland Public Library has a demonstration kitchen in our Community Room.
- This kitchen was paid for by a grant by Health Central Florida. (Thanks!)
- We also received a small grant which was used to stock the kitchen with appliances and supplies.
- Don’t have a kitchen? That is fine!
Getting Approval

- Each library/local government will be different
- Stress that cooking demonstrations are educational
- If funding in an issue, consider reaching out to FOL, Rotary, and other local groups for grant money. A small grant could fund a simple cooking program.
Legal Concerns

- The National Fire Prevention Code - Libraries are Assembly Occupancies
  - Prohibits open flames
  - Requires additional care for grease-laden vapors
  - The Life Safety Code allows small open flames for existing Assembly Occupancies

- Hygiene

  - Florida Statute § 381.0072 defines what institutions are required to be inspected. Libraries are not on the list.
  - Chapter 64E-11.001(1), Food Hygiene - General, of the Florida Administrative Code states “Food operations occurring at facilities or premises other than what is defined in Section 381.0072, F.S., are not regulated by this chapter.”

- Speak to your Fire Marshall

  - Ours said no frying, open flames.
Types of Programs to Hold

- Cultural Cooks
- Special diet
- New electronics (Air Fryer, Instant Pot)
- Healthy Chefs
- Trends
- Kids cooking
How to find presenters

- Ask around!
- Talk to staff to see if they have any special skills/cuisines.
- Contact local restaurants/caterers/bloggers to see if they would like to teach a class.
- Ask your local extension office.

- I don’t require presenters to be experts, but I do expect them to be at least hobbyists or enthusiasts.
How to facilitate the program

- Counter or table space
- Hotplate or other cooking appliances
- Basic kitchen supplies can be provided by the library or the presenter
- Access to a sink
- Work with your presenter to determine a class size. Ideally each participant receives a small sample at the end of the class.
- Have additional help to dish out servings so guests don’t wait around or serve themselves and take too much.
Tips

- Work with your presenter to ensure they will have everything they need
- Agree on compensation for the presenter
- Have a plan for serving. Who will serve? What dishes will be used?
- Assign cleanup
- Print recipes/handouts ahead of time for patrons
- Will you require registration?
Kids Cooking Programs

- Make cooking programs a joint effort with Youth Services
- MPL Youth Services librarian Mary Daniels led a webinar: Youth Cooking 101
  https://floridalibrarywebinars.org/21700-2/
Questions?

Amber Downs
Maitland Public Library
adowns@maitlandpl.org