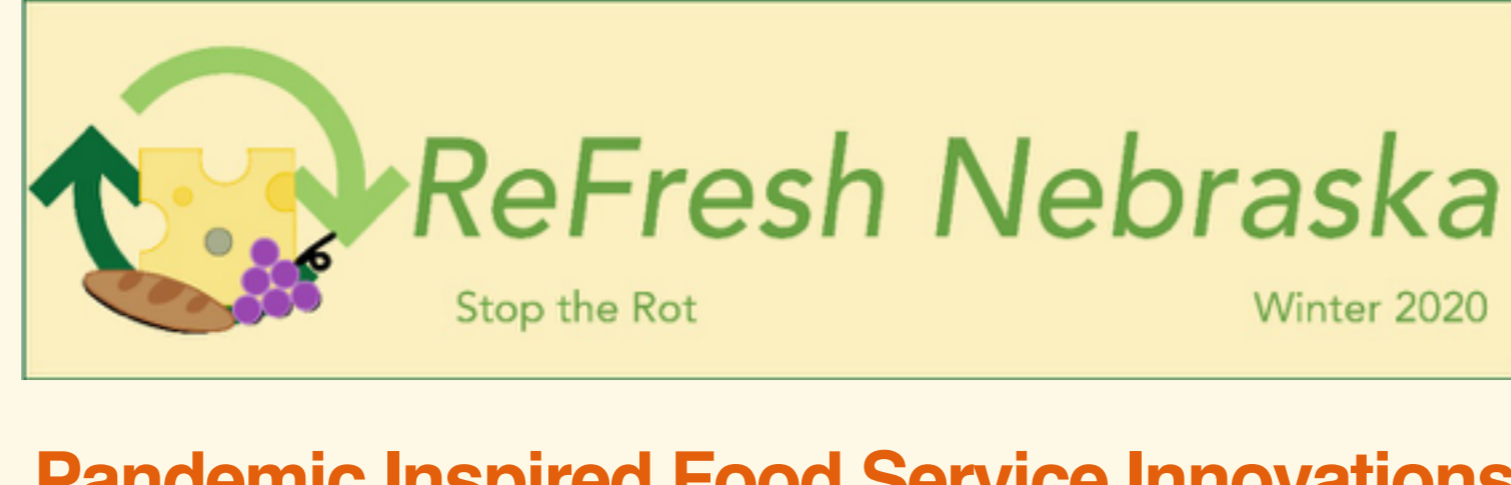


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## Pandemic Inspired Food Service Innovations

*In an effort to reduce food waste, and better serve their clientele during the pandemic, institutional food service operators across the country have developed numerous innovations. Here's what some of them are doing, as compiled by industry newsletter FM Today:*

**Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools**  
Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools in North Carolina began the school year fully online with a meal bundle program called CMS Eats at Home through which families can preorder meal bundles to be delivered once weekly or for pick up at one of 40 CMS sites. The bundles include five breakfasts and five lunches that families will be able to preorder using the district's existing PayPAMS system.

**Wholesome Foodservice**  
A company called Wholesome Foodservice is partnering with a major Colorado public school district on a school meal preordering system that lets students remote-order meals from the school's kitchen for later pickup. The system allows the meals to be customized, something very difficult to do otherwise given the constraints imposed on traditional self-service cafeteria lines by COVID restrictions. Other vendors as well as contract management companies are also developing and introducing their own preorder platforms that can be used by both onsite and remote learning students, a development that promises to bring [K-12 foodservice into the mobile order culture](#) already pervading the commercial restaurant world.

**Prince William County Schools**  
[Prince William County Schools in Virginia](#) is taking a step further in its meal distribution program by handing out grocery bags of ingredients (bread, milk, fresh produce, etc.) that families can use to construct their own meals rather than meals that are already prepared.

**Elior**  
Elior North America's K-12 division is utilizing the Preferred Foods unit to put together [Mealtime Multi Packs of two, three or five weekly meals](#) for remote learning students, depending on how many days they take online classes.

**Auburn University**  
[Auburn University and Aramark are using automated food lockers](#) that customers access with a personal code to receive mobile-ordered meals from campus dining outlets. The strategy keeps students away from service counters while allowing quick service response as the food is usually delivered fresh and hot to the lockers within minutes of ordering.

**Virginia Tech**  
After being forced to limit its highly popular meal plans to resident students only as a COVID-necessitated response, Virginia Tech is augmenting dining service to commuter and off-campus students—and helping the local economy in the process—by [partnering with local restaurants in a program called Blacksburg Delivers](#) that lets students order dishes from participating establishments and have them delivered to designated pickup points on the campus.

**Maryville University**  
Maryville University and management company Fresh Ideas Foodservice have converted the school's [residential dining hall into a six-station ghost kitchen](#) from which students can mobile order meals for either pickup or delivery.

**Stanford University**  
Stanford University has instituted perhaps the [country's most stringent customer safety program](#) by requiring students entering dining venues to wash their hands at mobile hand washing sinks outside the doors and to undergo a quick temperature check. Students whose temperature remains elevated after several checks are not allowed into the facility but can get what they want packaged and brought out. They are also sent to the campus health center for further evaluation.

**Spectrum Health**  
[Spectrum Health Butterworth Hospital in Michigan](#) partnered with two local catering restaurants that were also severely affected by the pandemic to produce full microwaveable meals to go at a reasonable price. The meals were prepared in the restaurant catering kitchens, chilled, brought to the hospital and merchandised as a partnership between Spectrum and the restaurants in order to help strengthen relations with the surrounding business community.

**Beaumont Health**  
Like at most other healthcare facilities, meal service for COVID-positive patients at Beaumont Health in Michigan was delivered by unit nurses rather than foodservice staff, but with its traditional room service model, too much nursing time was taken up with this task, so meal service was modified to have trays delivered at one scheduled time each meal period so that the nurses could focus on that task rather than having to stop what they were doing for individual trays coming up.

**UF Health Shands**  
The issue of delivering meals to COVID-positive patients was dealt with differently at UF Health Shands Florida Hospital in Gainesville, where beginning in August, dining staff started delivering food directly to those patients. The Compass One Healthcare team worked with the Infection Prevention team to train one associate per shift for the COVID unit, who delivered the food directly to the patients wearing all the necessary PPE and practicing all CDC protocols. The associate stayed on the unit throughout the shift while a single designated cart was used to deliver the food and then thoroughly sanitized between each trip.

**ProMedica Hospital**  
At ProMedica Hospital in Toledo, the Sodexo dining team used its already planned [outdoor cookout pop-up events](#) to provide a boost for its retail dining program while giving hospital staff a series of much-appreciated distractions that featured different cuisines and themes ranging from Hawaiian luau and Mexican fiesta to New England clam bake and All-American ballpark favorites.

**Sodexo**  
[Sodexo has developed a dining platform called Modern Recipe](#) that is designed to operate in a COVID and post-COVID environment by offering appealing, diverse and safely prepared and served food choices from multiple serving stations. Already implemented in several major venues in markets like New Orleans and Buffalo, Modern Recipe cafés offer customized meals tailored to local food cultures and preferences.

**Penn State Health**  
At the administrative offices of healthcare firm Penn State Health in Hershey, Pa., the Metz Culinary Management team has developed a [take-home meal program](#) designed to serve various-sized families that not only offers customers a convenient and tasty alternative to home cooking or commercial takeout but also gives the onsite dining program an additional revenue stream that might remain feasible even after the pandemic passes.

**Fifth Third Bank**  
Another corporate dining provider, AVI Foodsystems, is partnering with major financial firm Fifth Third Bank on a daily free meal program for Fifth Third employees who work onsite in the company's support services complex in Madisonville, Ohio, and Grand Rapids, Mich. The free meals are supplemented with purchasable [grab-and-go and custom-prepared choices](#) as well as snacks and beverages from the onsite cafés and micro markets.

**Freshly**  
A potential new revenue stream for dining providers serving businesses was recently piloted by the [home-meal-delivery firm Freshly](#), which is offering contracts for businesses to provide delivered meals to employees working from home as an amenity replacing the workplace café.

**Menno Place**  
Menno Place in Vancouver, Canada, also has socially distanced communal seatings with residents rotating through on a set schedule to ensure everyone gets a chance for a semi-group meal; it also has put on special events such as outdoor barbecues that residents can view (and smell!) if not physically attend, with the [freshly prepared food then delivered by cart to the rooms](#).

**Legacy Retirement Communities**  
Time windows instituted in Legacy Retirement Communities in Nebraska in which seniors seated at properly distanced tables can [enjoy a meal in a congregating dining room](#). The room is thoroughly cleaned and sanitized in between each sitting.

**Presbyterian Communities of South Carolina**  
[A live-streamed cooking show residents](#) can view that is put on by Cura Hospitality Senior Dining Chef Eileen Goos at Presbyterian Communities of South Carolina is an example of the kind of extra engagement service dining programs in senior living facilities can provide in the absence of traditional physical attendance events like dining room cooking demos.



### TART TARTIN

TURN THE PIE WORLD UPSIDE DOWN  
(and save some apples at the same time)

**MAKES:** 6-8 servings      **USES UP:** Apples

**INGREDIENTS:**

*Pastry*  
1 Cup Flour      2 Tbsp Sugar      1 stick cold butter cut into small pieces  
1 Egg Yolk      1/2 tsp Salt      1 Tbsp Ice Water

*Filling*  
1/2-3/4 Cup Sugar, plus 2-3 Tbsp      5-8 Apples peeled, cored & quartered  
4-6 Tbsp Butter cut into tiny pieces      Nutmeg & Cinnamon to taste

**DIRECTIONS:**

- Mix flour & sugar with butter. Add egg yolk & salt. Work butter into the flour & egg mixture very quickly with fingers, a heavy fork, or a mixer with a paddle attachment, breaking up butter & mixing it with the flour until it's the size of small peas.
- Work in water 1 Tbsp at a time if needed, but judge carefully. Dough is ready when it can be pulled into a ball & rolled out without crumbling or breaking apart.
- Pat the ball rather flat on plastic wrap, wrap it up, & chill in fridge for 30 min to 2 hrs.
- Preheat oven to 350°F.
- When ready to make tart, dissolve sugar over medium heat into a heavy-bottomed 8" or 9" skillet. Heat sugar until it turns a delicate brown.
- Arrange apples on top of melted sugar until skillet is filled with a mound up in the center.
- Sprinkle with 2-3 Tbsp sugar & dot with butter. Sprinkle with nutmeg & cinnamon if desired.
- Roll out chilled pastry to a size that fits inside the skillet. Let rest 5-10 min for shrinkage.
- Lay pastry over apples, tucking down inside the skillet. Make 3 holes in top with a skewer or sharp knife.
- Bake 1 - 1 1/2 hrs until crust is brown & firm to the touch & apples bubble up a bit around the edge.
- Remove from oven and let stand 2 min., then run a sharp knife around the edge and invert it onto a plate larger than the skillet.
- Cut into wedges and serve warm. Heavy cream, whipped cream or vanilla ice cream are delicious accompaniments.

**CREDIT:** Recipe courtesy of the James Beard Foundation

## FOOD STORAGE TIPS FROM SAVE THE FOOD.COM

**GINGER**  
REFRIGERATE IT: Yes  
AT FRESHEST: 1 to 2 months  
OPTIMAL STORAGE: Refrigerate, either unwrapped or in an airtight container, in a dark section of the refrigerator.  
FREEZING: Freeze whole in an airtight container and cut off slices as needed. The texture will be slightly mushy, but the flavor is fine for adding to cooked dishes.  
USE IT UP/REVIVAL: Grate fresh or frozen ginger into a mug of boiling water and enjoy as a healthful tea. Ginger does not necessarily need to be peeled before using; if the ginger is young and the skin is very fine and clings to the root, you can skip peeling. The rough and dry spots on ginger are not dangerous; simply cut them away (and use them in tea).

**GREEN BEANS, SNAP PEAS, AND FRESH PEAS**  
REFRIGERATE IT: Yes  
AT FRESHEST: 3 to 5 days  
OPTIMAL STORAGE: Green beans and peas are fragile vegetables; they quickly degrade in quality, even at cold temperatures. Store unwashed peas and beans in the refrigerator in a breathable bag in the high-humidity drawer, but try to eat them as quickly as possible.  
FREEZING: Blanch, immerse in ice water, drain until dry, and then place in an airtight container.  
USE IT UP/REVIVAL: If the pods are too tough to eat (this can happen when beans are over mature and bulging from the pods), peas can still be shelled and eaten or refrigerated in an airtight container and used within 2 days. You can let the shelled peas dry out and save their seeds for planting in your garden. Although often the ends of the beans are cut off before cooking, they need not be—remove only the stem end and enjoy the rest of the bean. Salvage less-than-ideal green beans by removing any that are soft to the touch or slimy. Wash the remainder in cold water. Briefly cooking older green beans can enhance their flavor.

**GREEN ONIONS**  
REFRIGERATE IT: Yes  
AT FRESHEST: 1 to 2 weeks  
OPTIMAL STORAGE: Store in a breathable bag in the high-humidity drawer of the refrigerator.  
FREEZING: Wash, dry, chop (if desired), and seal in zip-top freezer bags. Will lose crispness but retain flavor.  
USE IT UP/REVIVAL: Soak root ends in cold water for an hour to revive wilting green onions. Browning or dried outer layers can often be peeled away, revealing a fresh green onion that is still fine to eat. Grow new green onions from the sliced-off roots.

To download the entire Food Storage Guide, go to:  
[www.savethefood.com/food-storage](http://www.savethefood.com/food-storage)

## Quick Tricks! Brought To You By: INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES NEBRASKA EXTENSION

**QUICK TRICKS**  
Ingredient Substitutes  
Alice Henneman, MS, RDN,  
Extension Educator

*Ever have a missing ingredient ruin a recipe or require an extra trip to the store? Try these food substitutes - it may differ slightly, but will still be acceptable in terms of flavor, texture & appearance.*

Product: 1 small or 1/4 cup fresh onion  
Substitute: 1 Tbsp instant minced onion

Product: 1 tsp pumpkin pie spice  
Substitute: 1/2 tsp cinnamon, 1/8 tsp ground allspice plus 1/8 tsp ground nutmeg

Product: 1 cup confectioners or powdered sugar  
Substitute: 1 cup granulated sugar plus 1 Tbsp cornstarch in food processor with metal blade until powdery

Product: 1 cup tomato juice  
Substitute: 1/2 cup tomato sauce plus 1/2 cup water

Product: Red or white wine (any amount)  
Substitute: Same amount grape or cranberry juice (red), apple or white grape juice (white)

Product: 1 cake compressed yeast  
Substitute: 1 pkg (1/4 oz) active dry yeast

For more useful reducing tips, go to:  
[www.food.unl.edu/cook-it-quick-documents/makeover-your-leftovers.pdf](http://www.food.unl.edu/cook-it-quick-documents/makeover-your-leftovers.pdf)

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