

NASA HUNCH Culinary Timeline (2026-2027): UPDATED

August/September: Every STUDENT and TEACHER will need to fill out the **Registration form** online. **If you are a new school to the program please also submit the Statement of Work.** – (Registration button on home page). Please let me know if you have any questions about any of this! [Registration / Forms](#)

August- September: Research using links from JSC Food Lab on Food Processing and how Microgravity affects the nutritional requirements for the astronauts. **Look at the Culinary Challenge Document 2026-2027.**

September 28, 2026: This is the **commitment date** for the program. You must email me at Allison.r.westover@nasa.gov and let me know you are participating.

October 12, 2026: Due date for short paper (4-5 questions) describing what your class learned about food processing and the body in microgravity from the links and youtube videos (This is not your final paper. This is just a short paper showing that you have done your research) There is a template for the initial research paper that can be found under the resources. Click on this link and you will find the initial research paper template. [2026-2027 Theme: Mediterranean Dish](#) . Email this to me at allison.r.westover@nasa.gov

October: Come up with 2 different entrees that your school may want to develop using the nutritional guidelines (please see [culinary challenge document 2026-2027](#)) ***(You are only allowed two entrée submissions PER SCHOOL, therefore if you have multiple classes you will have to have an internal review to determine what entrée should be submitted.***

By October 26, 2026: Turn in your 2 entrée recipes (**per the template** on this page [2026-2027 Theme: Mediterranean Dish](#)) including the nutritional information of calories, fat, saturated fat, sodium and fiber of your recipe to the NASA HUNCH to Division Manager(Alli Westover: Allison.r.westover@nasa.gov) . **YOUR RECIPES MUST MEET THE NUTRITIONAL GUIDELINES** (use the recipe analyzers or calculate per labels [2026-2027 Theme: Mediterranean Dish](#)). The JSC Food Lab will review your entrée and critique which entrée may be best suited for processing for space. (PLEASE send **only** a PDF document or Word document. Do **NOT** send google documents)

October- November: Training for Food Safety and Sanitization ACF course

Training for Food Safety and Handling: If you have NOT received information on going through a certification training with the ACF please contact me. You have to have this training complete prior to handling food. This is to make sure that nobody should get sick from food -born illness.

By November 30, 2026: You will receive the recommended recipe to move forward with and will begin fine tuning your recipe for the preliminary competition in your school or regionally depending on location of your school. (Fine tuning means adding any spices, herbs that do not change your sodium or fat contents.) **If you are wanting to fine tune by replacing with something else that may change the nutritional content you have to get permission from me first**

December- end of January: Schools are working to fine tune their chosen recipes, final papers, 2 minute videos, and food safety and handling training (see **culinary Challenge Document 2026-2027**). All information about the rubric for the paper and the video can be found in the **Culinary Challenge information document** that is under the resources on this page [2026-2027 Theme: Mediterranean Dish](#)

Mid January- February 27h: Preliminary competitions will be taking place. (No preliminary competitions are allowed after **February 27** (without Alli Westover's approval) You MUST have your food safety and handling certifications and you must make sure your students are practicing safe handling and sanitization according to the scoring sheet [Sanitization and Food Safety Cert](#)

March 8, 2026: TOP 10 FINALISTS are Chosen and INVITED to come to Space Center Houston.

March 31, 2027: ALL TEAMS TURN IN FINAL PAPER (see Template and Rubric on Culinary Challenge document)

March 31, 2027: ALL TEAMS TURN IN 2 MINUTE VIDEO (see Video Rubric on Culinary Challenge Document). ***Please put your video on youtube and share the link at Allison.r.westover@nasa.gov.***

May 4th: Final selectees (top 10) will attend the JSC Final Culinary Challenge with the astronaut and ISS program office review as well as guest chefs.

Winner will be announced at the final EVENT. Winner will have their food processed for space flight. Winning teams will receive various scholarships. Please see the scholarship part of website regarding the scholarships.