

toolkit

celebrating our NSLW Ambassador:

We're proud to recognize our National School Lunch Week Ambassador, **IPS Rebates**, for their incredible partnership and dedication to celebrating school meals.

This year's Ambassador has helped us shine a spotlight on the power of school lunch, fueling students with nutrition, energy, and inspiration every single day. Through their support, we've been able to share new resources, reach more schools, and make this celebration bigger and brighter than ever.

Their leadership reminds us that school meals are about community, care, and opportunity. We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to IPS Rebates for being a champion of school nutrition and for standing alongside school nutrition professionals across the country.

Together, we're making sure every tray tells a story worth celebrating.



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About National School Lunch Week

National School Lunch Week (NSLW) is an annual celebration dedicated to recognizing the vital role that school meals play in nourishing students across the country.

It highlights the hard work and dedication of school nutrition professionals who provide healthy, delicious, and affordable meals every day, ensuring students have the fuel they need to learn and thrive.

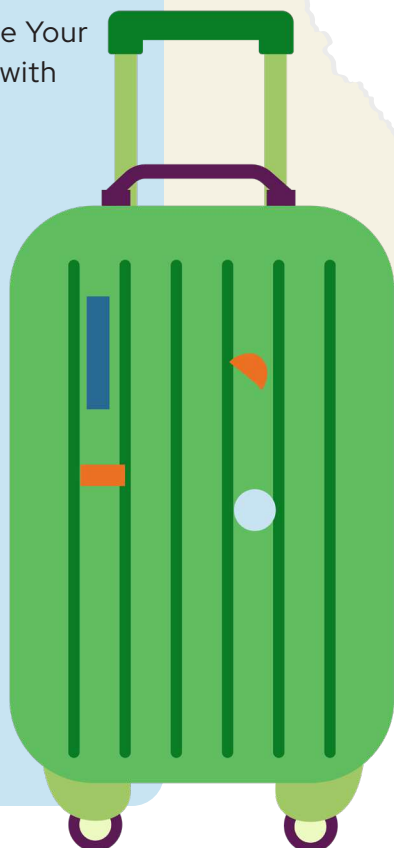
Beyond just food, NSLW fosters awareness about the importance of nutritious school meals in supporting student health, academic success and overall well-being. It is a time for schools, communities and families to come together to celebrate and advocate for the value of school nutrition programs.

why this theme?

The 2025 theme, "Taste the World: Your School Lunch Passport," was chosen to inspire curiosity, cultural appreciation and adventure through food.

By featuring international cuisines and flavors, this theme encourages students to explore new tastes and traditions, making school meals exciting and engaging. It celebrates the diversity of cultures both within our schools and around the globe, lifting up school meals as a gateway to learning about the world.

This global approach helps break down barriers, promotes inclusivity and shows that school lunch is not just about eating, it's about experiencing and connecting with a wider world, one delicious bite at a time.



NSLW25 checklist

Everything you need to plan for National School Lunch Week on October 13–17, 2025.

6–8 Weeks Before (Late August–Early September):

- ☐ Alert your principal and school leaders about your NSLW25 celebration plans and secure any necessary permissions.
- ☐ Host a team meeting to brainstorm ideas, assign roles and finalize your celebration timeline.
- ☐ Set your theme goals: Will you decorate, serve global meals, host contests or involve the community? Decide what success looks like for your school.
- ☐ Download SNA's official NSLW25 resources, including the social media kit, press release and proclamation templates.

4–6 Weeks Before (Mid–Late September):

- ☐ Create your NSLW25 menu plan with meals inspired by different countries. Plan backups in case of ingredient delays.
- ☐ Order your official NSLW25 merchandise from the SNA Shop, including posters, stickers, shirts and more.
- ☐ Start decorating prep: Plan your global-themed cafeteria and compile a list of props, flags, posters and materials. Assign team members to gather or make items.
- ☐ Invite special guests like school board members, principals, community leaders, local media or even elected officials to visit your cafeteria during the week.
- ☐ Promote the week ahead of time:
Share your plans in school newsletters, morning announcements, parent emails and social media.



2–3 Weeks Before (Early October):


- ☐ Download and print the NSLW25 activity sheets, coloring pages and DIY crafts from the SNA website.
- ☐ Prep all themed activities—from passport stamp cards to costume contests. Make sure materials, instructions and any prizes are ready to go.
- ☐ Encourage your team to dress up as chefs, travelers or airline crew on themed days. Share guidelines to ensure food safety and professionalism.
- ☐ Coordinate with teachers to incorporate cross-curricular activities—geography lessons, creative writing prompts or travel-inspired games.



Week of NSLW25 (October 13–17, 2025):

- ☐ Transform your cafeteria into a global experience—hang flags, maps, signs and travel-themed decor!
- ☐ Serve your international menu and stamp students' lunch passports as they try different meals.
- ☐ Engage on social media: Post photos, tag SchoolNutritionAssociation, and use #NSLW25 and #SchoolLunchPassport to join the global celebration.
- ☐ Host your planned contests and activities: Best-dressed traveler, global trivia or coloring competitions.
- ☐ Celebrate your staff with shout-outs and recognition for making the week a success!
- ☐ Take lots of photos and videos to share with families, your school community and SNA.

After NSLW25:

- ☐ Thank you for your team and any special guests who helped make the week successful.
 - ☐ Share your highlights with school leadership, local media and SNA—you just may be featured on our social media or in School Nutrition magazine!
 - ☐ Reflect on what worked well and jot down ideas for next year's celebration.
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passport to flavor: how to plan a global menu for NSLW25

Take your students on a delicious journey around the world—no plane ticket required! Each day of the week can highlight a different country's cuisine, giving students the chance to "travel" through new flavors, ingredients and cultures—all from the comfort of the cafeteria.

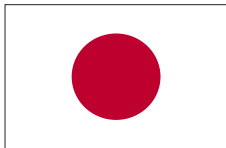
Choose five countries (or more!) to feature throughout the week and build your menus around authentic, kid-friendly dishes from each destination. Keep it simple and flexible! Offer options that are easy to prepare in bulk, use familiar ingredients with international flair and reflect a balance of nutrition and taste.

Below are sample country-themed lunch menus to help you get started planning your global adventure!



Italy: Pasta Primavera with Garlic Bread

Serve whole grain pasta tossed with lightly steamed veggies (like zucchini, carrots and bell peppers) in a mild tomato or olive oil sauce. Pair with a slice of garlic bread and a side of fruit.



Japan: Teriyaki Chicken with Rice and Edamame

Offer oven-baked chicken glazed in a sweet soy teriyaki sauce, served over steamed brown or white rice. Add steamed edamame pods or mixed Asian vegetables for a fun and colorful side.



Mexico: Beef or Veggie Tacos with Fiesta Corn

Offer soft or crunchy whole grain taco shells with seasoned ground beef or beans. Let students choose toppings like shredded cheese, lettuce and salsa. Pair with fiesta corn and fruit.



Vietnam: Banh Mi-Inspired Chicken Sandwich

Offer grilled chicken in a whole grain sub roll with pickled carrot and cucumber slaw (light vinegar dressing). Serve with fruit and a crunchy veggie side.



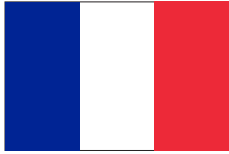
Greece: Mediterranean Chicken Pita Gyro with Tzatziki

Serve grilled or roasted chicken strips in a whole grain pita with lettuce, tomato and a dollop of tzatziki (yogurt-cucumber sauce). Add a side of roasted potatoes or hummus with carrots.



India: Mild Chickpea Curry with Rice and Flatbread

Create a kid-friendly chickpea or lentil curry using mild curry spices and a tomato base, served with rice and warm naan or pita bread. Add cucumber slices or yogurt for a cooling side.



France: Cheesy Croque-Inspired Sandwich with Roasted Veggies

Serve a warm grilled cheese with lean ham (optional) and a sprinkle of shredded cheese on top, open-faced or closed. Pair with roasted green beans or herbed potatoes.



South Korea: Bulgogi Beef Bowl with Rice and Kimchi Slaw

Serve thinly sliced beef (or ground beef) marinated in a sweet soy-garlic sauce over rice. Offer a crunchy, mild cabbage slaw inspired by kimchi—less spicy for younger palates.



Brazil: Black Bean & Rice Bowl with Plantains

Offer black beans over brown rice with a sprinkle of shredded cheese or optional grilled chicken. Serve with a side of baked plantains or sweet potato wedges.



England: Baked "Fish & Chips" with Peas

Offer oven-baked fish sticks with seasoned potato wedges ("chips") and a side of peas or carrots. Add a lemon wedge and tartar sauce for dipping.



Germany: Turkey Sausage with Roasted Potatoes and Cabbage Slaw

Feature turkey or chicken sausage links with roasted herbed potatoes and a side of apple cider-dressed cabbage slaw. Offer applesauce or a pretzel roll on the side.



Thailand: Mild Thai-Inspired Peanut Noodles

Toss whole grain noodles in a light peanut or sunflower butter sauce with shredded carrots, edamame and a touch of lime. Offer grilled chicken strips as an optional topper.



China – Vegetable Stir-Fry with Rice or Noodles

Offer a colorful veggie stir-fry (broccoli, carrots, snap peas) in a light soy or ginger sauce, served with rice or whole grain lo mein noodles. Add mandarin oranges on the side.

NSLW25 menu planning chart

Use this template to plan your week of global flavors!



Day	Country	Dish Name	What's Needed (Ingredients/ Supplies)	Notes/Decor Ideas
Monday				
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				

school Lunch passport playlist

Set the mood for your global lunch adventure with a playlist that celebrates travel, culture and world unity! These kid-friendly songs and international instrumentals can be played during lunch or while serving to make each day's "destination" come alive.

World-Themed & Travel Songs:

- "It's a Small World" – Disney A timeless classic that celebrates global unity.
- "Waka Waka (This Time for Africa)" – Shakira Upbeat and energetic, with global rhythms.
- "Come Fly with Me" – Frank Sinatra A fun, jazzy travel classic.
- "Roam" – The B-52's Catchy 80s tune all about traveling the world.
- "Life is a Highway" – Tom Cochrane or Rascal Flatts (from Cars) Great Road trip energy.
- "On Top of the World" – Imagine Dragons Positive, uplifting tune with a global vibe.
- "We Are the World" – USA for Africa A powerful message of togetherness and global care.
- "Around the World" – Daft Punk Repetitive lyrics and a global theme—fun background beat.
- "Best Day of My Life" – American Authors Feel-good, energetic song to boost lunchtime mood.

Songs with International Flavor or Instrumentals:

- "Zorba the Greek" – Instrumental Great for a Greek menu day—builds up to a dance party!
- "Jai Ho" – A.R. Rahman & The Pussycat Dolls (from Slumdog Millionaire) High energy with Bollywood flavor.
- "La Bamba" – Ritchie Valens Classic Latin rock—perfect for Mexico day.
- "Volare" – Dean Martin Lovely and familiar for Italian day.
- "Sakura Sakura" – Traditional Japanese Instrumental Beautiful background music for Japan-themed menus.
- "Kookaburra Sits in the Old Gum Tree" – Australian folk song Great for an Aussie-themed day—fun and kid-friendly.
- "Danza Kuduro" – Don Omar ft. Lucenzo (Instrumental or Clean Version) Lively Latin vibe, great energy.

Hear all these songs and more on the official NSLW25 Spotify Playlist!

Visit <https://open.spotify.com/playlist/1laXGyhoda8QD-nU8QZkNqc?si=hckOolLMQPanJTDMtMyZow>



Bonus Idea: "Flight Announcement" or Travel Sound Effects

One idea is to add airport announcements; plane takeoff sounds or even have a staff member act as a "travel guide" on the mic to say things like:

"Welcome aboard our lunch flight to Italy. Please enjoy your pasta and don't forget your passport stamp!"

gLoBaL movie Moments for NSLW25

Bring the “Taste the World” theme to life with movies that highlight international cultures, cuisines and adventures. Whether you’re playing full features or looping scenes during lunch, these age-appropriate picks help transport students around the globe—right from their cafeteria seats!

Elementary School

Fun, colorful, and age-appropriate global adventures:

1. “Ratatouille” (France)
2. “Encanto” (Colombia)
3. “Moana” (Polynesia/Oceania)
4. “Coco” (Mexico)
5. “Khumba” (South Africa)
6. “Around the World in 80 Days” (Animated version)

Middle School

More depth, humor, or culturally rich stories while still including fun:

1. “The Breadwinner” (Afghanistan)
2. “Paddington” (England)
3. “Rio” (Brazil)
4. “Kiki’s Delivery Service” (Japan – Studio Ghibli)
5. “Akeelah and the Bee” (USA multicultural)

High School

Deeper stories, international themes or documentaries that tie them into food and culture:

1. “The Hundred-Foot Journey” (India & France)
2. “The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind” (Malawi)
3. “Chef” (U.S./Cuba road trip)
4. “Jiro Dreams of Sushi” (Japan, Documentary)
5. “He Named Me Malala” (Pakistan/Global, Documentary)



Bonus Ideas:

- Use subtitles and play without sound if the cafeteria is noisy.
- Loop scenes of iconic global landmarks or cooking montages from films.
- Theme the movie to the day's lunch (for example, “Ratatouille” on French food day).

tips for decorating your cafeteria

Transform your cafeteria into a globe-trotting experience! Create an engaging, festive atmosphere that reflects cultures from around the world—and gets students excited to explore new flavors.

DIY Decor

Easy, budget-friendly ways to bring the world to your walls and serving lines:

- **Passport Wall:** Create a bulletin board or hallway mural where each student can add a "stamp" or sticker as they try new lunches from different countries throughout the week.
- **Flag Bunting:** Print or make color paper flags from different countries and string them across the room. Get students involved in coloring or assembling them!
- **Table Centerpieces:** Use small globes, travel postcards or mini suitcases made from boxes. Add country name signs or faux airline boarding passes.
- **Photo Booth Corner:** Set up a travel-themed photo area with props like pilot hats, sunglasses, world landmarks (Eiffel Tower, Great Wall) and paper suitcases. Great for social media moments!
- **Airline/Travel Signs:** Make cardboard signs that say things like "Now Boarding: Lunch Flight 742 to Italy," "Customs Checkpoint Ahead" or "Tasty Terminal C."
- **World Map Display:** Put up a large world map and add pins or stickers to mark each day's lunch "destination."
- **Menu Posters:** Design travel-inspired menus with airline ticket or passport-style graphics for each day. Add translations for fun!

Buyable Decor

If time is tight or you want to take it up a notch, here are items you can purchase:

- **Travel-themed Party Packs:** Look for "Bon Voyage" or "Around the World" kits that include banners, signs and centerpieces.
- **Inflatable Globes or Airplanes:** Hang them from the ceiling or place near food stations for a 3D effect.
- **Mini Flags or Table Toppers:** Small flag picks, tablecloths with maps or passport stamps and multicultural-themed cutouts add great detail.
- **Costumes and Hats:** Flight attendant caps, chef hats or accessories from different countries for staff to wear as part of the celebration.

Don't Forget Your Official NSLW25 Gear!

Check out the official NSLW25 merchandise in the SNA Shop! From posters and stickers to T-shirts and banners. Visit schoolnutrition.org/SNAShop to browse and order your NSLW25 merchandise.

dress the part: NSLW25 costume ideas

Add even more excitement to NSLW25 with themed costumes! Staff dressing up can make lunchtime feel like a full-on adventure—and it's a great way to get students engaged and curious about other cultures and cuisines.

Important Note:

Celebrate Without Stereotypes

While dressing up is fun, it's important to do so respectfully and inclusively. Please avoid costumes that rely on cultural stereotypes or caricatures, and do not dress in traditional attire from cultures that are not your own unless it is done with respect, understanding or personal connection.

✓ Do:

- Wear attire that reflects your own cultural or family heritage—this is a great time to celebrate and share your story!
- Choose travel- or food-themed outfits that are fun and non-offensive.
- Use this opportunity to educate students about global cultures with kindness and curiosity.

✗ Avoid:

- Dressing in traditional attire of other cultures (such as Native American headdresses, kimonos, saris, sombreros, etc.) unless you have a direct personal or cultural connection and wear them with respect.
- Costumes that rely on outdated or cartoonish portrayals of any group.

Travelers:

- Hawaiian shirt, sunglasses, camera, sun hat
- Backpack and rolled-up map or travel guide
- Tourist T-shirts ("I NY," Eiffel Tower graphic, etc.)

Flight Crew & Airport Staff:

- Pilot uniform (white shirt, epaulets, hat)
- Flight attendant with scarf, name tag, blazer
- TSA officer or security (playfully, with a badge and clipboard)
- Ground crew in reflective vests with walkie-talkies.

Other Ideas:

- Chef hat and apron from an international "kitchen"
- Dress as a food item (taco, sushi roll, spaghetti) – always a hit with kids!
- World map or globe costume
- "Boarding Pass" sandwich board
- Dress in the colors of a flag (e.g., red/white/green for Italy)



social media tips: share your school lunch journey with the world!

Social media is a powerful tool for promoting your NSLW25 "Taste the World: Your School Lunch Passport" celebrations. Use it to display your incredible meals, fun activities and hardworking staff while connecting with families and your community.

Here are some top tips to help you spread the excitement online:

Engage With Your Community!

- Tag SNA on Instagram and Facebook for a chance to be featured in stories, reels or on the main page!
 - **Instagram:** @SchoolNutritionAssociation
 - **Facebook:** School Nutrition Association
- Make sure to respond to comments and reposts or share any photos from teachers, parents or students.

Tag your posts with NSLW25 hashtags:

- #NSLW25
- #NSLW
- #NationalSchoolLunchWeek
- #LunchWeek
- #SchoolLunchPassport
- #TasteTheWorld

Social Media Checklist

Use this quick checklist to keep your school's social media on track during the week:

- ☐ Post a photo of your decorated cafeteria.
- ☐ Share today's "lunch destination" and menu.
- ☐ Spotlight a school nutrition staff member.
- ☐ Share a student quote or lunch passport entry.
- ☐ Show a behind-the-scenes prep moment.
- ☐ Run a fun costume or food-themed contest.
- ☐ Tag SNA and use #NSLW25 in at least one post.
- ☐ Thank your school community at the end of the week.

Bonus Social Media Idea:

- Post photos and videos of your decorations, themed meals, crafts and student activities.
- Share a daily "Destination of the Day" post with the featured country and menu item(s).
- Highlight students trying new foods or showing off their lunch passports.
- Give your followers a sneak peek into your team preparing meals from around the world or getting ready for NSLW25.
- Run a "Best Dressed Traveler" costume contest and post entries to your social channels.
- "What Country Would You Visit for Lunch?" polls or Q&As in stories.

Use SNA's NSLW25 Social Media Kit

The official SNA NSLW25 Social Media Kit includes sample graphics, captions and logos. Download it at schoolnutrition.org/NSLW.

bringing teachers, parents & families into the celebration

Involving the whole school community makes NSLW25 more impactful—and more fun! Here are ways to invite teachers, parents and caregivers to participate in the global journey:

Engaging Teachers & School Staff:

1. Encourage teachers and other school staff to join you in dressing up!
2. Invite teachers and other school staff to help serve lunch or greet students at the serving line or as they enter the cafeteria.
3. Ask teachers to read a "World Destination of the Day" fact on the morning announcements. Provide a short script or fun tidbit about the featured country.
4. Have teachers encourage students to write notes to cafeteria staff on postcards or "airmail" cutouts to display in the cafeteria.
5. Reach out to English/Language Arts, Foreign Language, Geography, or Social Studies/History teachers to see if they can include food- or travel-related activities during the week.

Involving Parents & Families:

1. Invite families to join their child for lunch on one day during the week, especially if you're serving a particularly exciting or cultural meal.
2. Send home a flyer or email encouraging families to talk about their heritage and favorite traditional dishes. Consider collecting simple recipes or photos for a "Global Recipe Wall" or digital slideshow.
3. Set up a sampling station during pickup/drop-off where families can try a bite of a featured dish and vote on their favorite "flavor destination."
4. Encourage parents to follow along on social media! Ask them to share photos, menus and student-created content using a school hashtag (e.g., #LunchPassportWeek).
5. Send home a fun passport activity or word search that kids can complete with their family.



engaging ALL Age groups: tips for making NSLW25 a global celebration for everyone

Whether you're serving kindergartners or seniors, NSLW25 offers a chance to connect students of all ages with culture, cuisine and curiosity. Here are strategies to tailor the experience for elementary, middle and high school students, ensuring everyone feels included and excited.

Elementary School:

- **Stamp Their Passports:** Hand out simple paper "passports" and give stamps or stickers for each day that they try the lunch special from a new country.
- **Photo Booth Fun:** Set up a decorated photo area with travel props (mini suitcases, sunglasses, pilot hats).
- **Meet the Chef Day:** Invite the school nutrition team to talk about the global recipes they're preparing.
- **Story Time Tie-In:** Ask teachers to read international or culturally diverse children's books during the week.
- **Pro tip:** Use school-wide announcements or videos to introduce the "daily destination."

Middle School:

- **Design a Dish Contest:** Have students created or named a global dish they'd like to see on the menu?
- **Cultural Trivia or "Where in the World?" Game:** Post a clue about each day's country in the morning and reveal the answer at lunch.
- **Social Media Challenge:** Encourage students to snap a photo with their lunch and post using a school hashtag (with parent's permission of course).
- **Lunchroom DJ or MC:** Assign a student or teacher to act as the "flight crew" and announce the lunch destination with fun facts.
- **Pro tip:** Tie in world geography, language, or social studies classes for cross-curricular involvement.

High School:

- **Passport Punch Card & Prizes:** Create a passport punch card that gets marked each day that a student tries the international menu. Offer small prizes or raffle entries for completed cards.
- **Food & Culture Features:** Set up lunch table signs or short videos with facts about the meal from the country of the day—highlight music, language or traditions.
- **Student Ambassadors or Interns:** Have culinary or leadership students help plan, cook or promote the menus for the week.
- **Multicultural Club Takeover:** Partner with student clubs to host themed music, displays or a "taste test" station during lunch.
- **Pro tip:** Consider offering taste tests of more adventurous items; they may be more open to trying new things than you'd expect!

bonus diy craft: make your own school lunch passport!

Let students track their global lunch adventure by creating a custom School Lunch Passport! This activity is simple, printable and a great way to encourage kids to try new foods and engage with the week's theme.

What You'll Need:

- Printable passport template (provided or created using folded paper)
- Crayons, markers or colored pencils
- Stickers, stamps or ink pads (or just check marks!)
- Stapler or glue stick
- Optional: school lunch stickers or themed stamps

Instructions:

1. **Print or Fold Your Passport:** Print a small booklet-style passport template (4-6 pages) OR Fold 2-3 sheets of paper in half and staple them to create a mini booklet.
2. **Decorate the Cover:** Title it "My School Lunch Passport." Include the students' name and a drawing of themselves as a world traveler.
3. **Create Destination Pages:** Inside, label each page with a different country or day of the week (e.g., "Monday – Italy"). Leave space for students to draw the meal, write what they tried or rate it with stars or smiley faces.
4. **Stamp or Sticker It Daily:** Give students a sticker, stamp or check mark each day they try a new lunch or learn something about the featured country.
5. **Optional Bonus Page:** Include a "Favorite Meal" or "Place I Want to Visit" page at the end!



Want to keep going? Here are some ideas to take this craft even further:

- Turn it into a mini writing journal for older students: "What I learned about ____"
- Invite teachers to incorporate it into class time (writing, art or social studies)
- Host a "passport completion" raffle at the end of the week!