

# Darien Food Services Newsletter



## Darien Cafeteria News

Welcome to your winter Food Services Newsletter!

### Discovery Kitchen

As you may know, each month we bring our Discovery Kitchen program to the cafeteria. This month, our Discovery Kitchen theme is Spice It Up!

Spice It Up! is a celebration of international recipes that are proven to raise the bar of the spice rack! See the calendar pages for special recipe days.

### Fun Days

We have been celebrating Fun Days at all schools! In November we celebrated: National Nacho Day and National French Toast Day.

We have more Fun Days and plans for the winter months to keep students engaged. See what we have in store for your dining program in this issue and make sure to follow us on Instagram [@DarienPSLunch](https://www.instagram.com/DarienPSLunch)



Food Services

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<https://www.darienps.org/departments/food-services>

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## A Reason to Celebrate!

### December is Pear Month!

In addition to apples and oranges, pears will be in all cafeterias in December to celebrate Pear Month! All meals include one piece of whole fruit, so let your students know they can enjoy a pear today!

### December 4: National Cookie Day

National Cookie Day on December 4th serves up a sweet treat. Bakers across the country warm up the ovens for holiday baking, and we enjoy giving cookies to friends and family all season long. We will have special paid cookie options at MMS and DHS.

### December 11: National Have a Bagel Day

National Have a Bagel Day encourages everyone to enjoy this delicious doughy delight in their favorite configuration. Bacon, egg, and cheese bagel sandwiches will be available for purchase to celebrate the day at MMS and DHS.

### All Month Long: Happy Holidays!



## Look For These Upcoming Special Events in December!

In the middle and high schools, we are hosting **Student Choice** this month. Students can vote for their favorite sample of: **Bok Choy's**, Sweet & Sour Chicken; **Made to Melt's**, Mozzarella, and Tomato Panini; **Big City BBQs**, Pulled Pork with Crispy Onions, at DHS; or **BUILD's** Chicken Alfredo Flatbread at MMS. The winning theme will be on the menu the following week!

Student Choice samples will be offered at Darien High School on, December 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, and 7<sup>th</sup>, with voting on the 8<sup>th</sup>.

Student Choice sample will be offered at Middlesex Middle School on December 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, and 14<sup>th</sup>, with voting on the 15<sup>th</sup>.



## Sushi is Served

Sushi is available at Darien High School every other Monday!  
In December: 12/4/23 and 12/18/23



## More Events and Fun Days this winter!

### January: National School Board Recognition Month

Thank you, School Board Members! On behalf of all of our Chartwells team members – and our 16,000 fellow associates across the country, we can't thank you enough for supporting our mission of serving up happy and healthy every day.



### January 1: Happy New Year

New Year's Day is a holiday that is observed on the first day of January on the Gregorian calendar – which is January 1st. For many people, it is seen as the end of the holiday season and it is also a day in which many people start their New Year resolutions.



See the [Food Services Current Menus page](#) for special recipes on the following Fun Days:

### January 15: Bagel Day

### January 19: National Popcorn Day

Popcorn is definitely one of America's favorite snacks, and what better way to honor this wholesome snack than by dedicating an entire day to it?! Join us in the Darien High School cafeteria to celebrate National Popcorn Day with a special seasoned popcorn station!

### February 14: Valentine's Day

St. Valentine's Day is celebrated throughout the world on February 14th of every year. Love, romance and kindness are shared with others through the giving of gifts such as candy, cards, flowers, and jewelry. The color red is associated with St. Valentine's Day along with chocolate, cupid, and the shape of a heart.



See the [Food Services Current Menus page](#) for special recipes on the following Fun Days:

### February 2: National Tater Tot Day

### February 9: National Pizza Day

Celebrate one of America's all-time favorite foods, pizza! Dine with us for special pizza options! #nationalpizzaday

### February 20: National Muffin Day

It's National Muffin Day! English muffins have been whipped up in kitchens as far back as a thousand years ago in Wales, and American style muffins have been around since the 18th century. Muffins are a great breakfast on the run, a perfect substitute for toast during brunch, and an easy treat to make and give as a gift.

### February 23: Pancake Day, Italian Food Day & Mardi Gras!



**MOOD BOOST is back!**

We will visit the elementary schools in the month of January with special MOOD BOOST activities. [@DarienPSLunch](#)



## Discovery Kitchen Activities

**December** is **Spice It Up!** month. We'll be engaging students with fresh and flavorful recipes. Spice It Up! is a celebration of international recipes empowering students to join in cooking with various spices that are sure to spice up any meal with their family and friends. See a special recipe card below.



**January** features **The Great American Roadtrip** allowing students to experience this great country through the power of food! We will take your students on a journey through the quadrants of the U.S., where they will learn about the local favorites of each region and, about the geography that allows these regions to produce certain foods for the entire country.



**February** features **Smart Snacking**. There's no question that students today are busier than ever! With school, sports, and other extra-curricular activities, we want to ensure students understand how healthy snacks and meals can be an important part of keeping them energized all day long.



### Mexican Spice

#### INGREDIENTS

2 ¼ tsp chili powder  
¾ tsp ground paprika  
½ onion powder  
¼ tsp kosher salt  
½ tsp garlic powder

Servings: 4; serving size 1 tsp

#### METHOD

1. Combine all ingredients in mixing bowl. Stir together well to combine.
2. Before using, stir or shake all ingredients well. Ingredients may settle during storage.

Use and Enjoy!

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**Discovery**  
**KITCHEN**

# December Menus

## What's on the Menu?

Darien Elementary School  
December 2023

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
				1 <b>Cheese Stuffed Breadsticks</b> Tossed Salad with Italian Dressing
4 <b>Chicken Nuggets</b> Smile Potatoes Seasoned Corn	5 <b>Fluffy Pancakes</b> Tater Tots Crispy Bacon Homemade Strawberry Topping	6 <b>Italian Baked Pasta</b> Dinner Roll Seasoned Zucchini	7 <b>Popcorn Chicken</b> Crinkle Cut French Fries Roasted Green Beans	8 <b>Cheese Stuffed Breadsticks</b> Tossed Salad with Italian Dressing
11 <b>Chicken Tenders</b> Smile Potatoes Seasoned Corn	12 <b>Waffles</b> Hash Brown Patty Crispy Bacon Homemade Blueberry Topping	13 <b>Toasty Grilled Cheese</b> Tater Tots Roasted Baby Carrots	14 <b>Rotini Pasta in Italian Meat Sauce</b> Garlic Twist Italian Vegetables	15 <b>Cheese Stuffed Breadsticks</b> Tossed Salad with Italian Dressing
18 <b>Popcorn Chicken</b> Tater Tots Seasoned Corn	19 <b>Fluffy Pancakes</b> Hash Brown Patty Pork Sausage Link	20 <b>Beef Nachos</b> Homemade Creamy Cheddar Cheese Sauce	21 <b>Macaroni and Cheese</b> Garlic Twist Carrots and Broccoli Medley	22 <b>Cheese Stuffed Breadsticks</b> Tossed Salad with Italian Dressing

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All meals Include one piece of whole fruit, such as a fresh apple or orange, and a choice of 8 oz. low-fat milk, fat-free chocolate milk, or water.

### Daily Offerings

**HOT**  
Cheese Pizza

**COLD**  
Garden Salad with Cheddar  
Fresh Fruit Cups

Assorted Deli Sandwiches  
Sunbutter & Jam



Vegetarian

**MOOD BOOST**  
is back next month!  
We will visit the elementary schools in the month of January with special MOOD BOOST activities.



## What's on the Menu?

Middlesex Middle School  
December 2023

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
				1 <b>Macaroni and Cheese</b> Dinner Roll Seasoned Corn
4 <b>Italian Baked Pasta</b> Garlic Bread Fresh Vegetable Medley	5 <b>Spice It Up</b> <b>Baja Beef Rice Bowl</b> Mexicali Corn	6 <b>Fluffy Pancakes</b> Crispy Bacon Tater Tots Homemade Strawberry topping	7 <b>Cheese Steak with Peppers and Onions</b> Sweet Potato Fries Roasted Carrots	8 <b>Toasty Grilled Cheese Sandwich</b> Smile Potatoes Roasted Green Beans
11 <b>Buffalo and BBQ Wings</b> Seasoned Fries Herbed Cauliflower	12 <b>CHOICE</b> <b>Beef Nachos</b> Lettuce and Tomato Homemade Cheddar Cheese Sauce Seasoned Corn	13 <b>CHOICE</b> <b>Waffles</b> Pork Sausage Hash Brown Patty Homemade Blueberry Sauce	14 <b>CHOICE</b> <b>Italian Meatball Sub</b> Fresh Vegetable Medley	15 <b>Spice It Up</b> <b>Thai Pineapple and Chicken Fried</b> Brown Rice Egg Roll
18 <b>Toasty Grilled Cheese Sandwich</b> Smile Potatoes Seasoned Corn	19 <b>Hard Shell Beef Tacos</b> Mexicali Rice Pico de Gallo Cheddar Cheese	20 <b>Fluffy Pancakes</b> Crispy Bacon Tater Tots Homemade Strawberry sauce	21 <b>Chicken Parmesan</b> Penne Pasta with Marinara Roasted Green Beans	22 <b>Chicken Bacon Buffalo Ranch Sandwich</b> Seasoned Fries Buffalo Cauliflower

Vegetarian

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All meals Include one piece of whole fruit, such as a fresh apple or orange, and a choice of 8 oz. low-fat milk, fat-free chocolate milk, or water.

### Daily Offerings

**HOT**  
Cheese Pizza  
Pepperoni Pizza  
Grilled Classics

**Grab and Go**  
Assorted Sandwiches  
Salads  
Sweet Treats

12/4 National Cookie Day

12/11 Have a Bagel Day



Try free samples 12/12-12/14!  
Vote for your favorite on 12/15!

**CHOICE**  
Sweet & Sour Chicken  
**MOOD BOOST**  
Mozzarella & Tomato Panini  
**BUILD**  
Chicken Alfredo Flatbread



Spice It Up! is a celebration of international recipes that are proven to raise the bar of the spice rack!

Did you know, you can find all Food Service information including monthly menus at:  
<https://www.darienps.org/departments/food-services>



# December Menus

## What's on the Menu?

Darien High School  
December 2023

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
 <b>Sushi Monday's</b> 12/4 & 12/18				<b>Crispy Chicken</b> <sup>1</sup> Homemade Mashed Potatoes Cornbread Seasoned Green Beans
 <b>Grilled Chicken</b> Herbed Roasted Potatoes Seasoned Broccoli	 <b>Italian Sausage and Peppers</b> Penne Pasta with Marinara Sauce	 <b>Cajun Roasted Pork Loin</b> Yellow Rice Seasoned Corn	 <b>Thai Pineapple and Chicken</b> Brown Fried Rice Vegetable Egg Roll	<b>Philly Cheese Steak with Peppers and Onions</b> <sup>8</sup> Seasoned Fries Green Beans
 <b>Sweet &amp; Sour Chicken</b> Steamed Rice Broccoli Florets	 <b>Baja Beef Rice Bowl</b> Mexicali Corn	 <b>Swedish Meatballs</b> Egg Noodles Roasted Green Beans	 <b>Italian Chicken Parmesan Sandwich</b> Seasoned Fries Vegetable Medley	<b>Chicken Fajitas</b> <sup>15</sup> Cuban Yellow Rice Pico de Gallo
 <b>Beef Burger and Impossible Burger Bar</b> <sup>18</sup> Seasoned Fries Roasted Cauliflower	<b>Fried Chicken and Waffles</b> <sup>19</sup> Tater Tots	<b>Pulled Pork</b> <sup>20</sup> Macaroni and Cheese Roasted Brussel Sprouts	<b>Beef Nachos</b> <sup>21</sup> Yellow Rice Homemade Cheddar Cheese Sauce	<b>Early Dismissal</b> <sup>22</sup> No Lunch Served

Vegetarian Option

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All meals Include one piece of whole fruit, such as a fresh apple or orange, and a choice of 8 oz. low-fat milk or fat-free chocolate milk.



### Daily Offerings

**HOT**  
 Cheese Pizza  
 Pepperoni Pizza  
 Grilled Classics

**COLD**  
 Deli Station  
 Salad Bar  
 Fresh Fruit and Yogurt Bar

**GRAB & GO**  
 Assorted Sandwiches  
 Salads  
 Sweet Treats

12/4 National Cookie Day

12/11 Have a Bagel Day

**STUDENT CHOICE**  
 FOOD YOUR WAY

Try free samples 12/5-12/7!  
 Vote for your favorite on 12/8!

**IS OK CHOW**  
 Sweet & Sour Chicken

**WASH TO MELT**  
 Mozzarella & Tomato Panini

**DIG CITY**  
 Pulled Pork with Crispy Onions

**Spice It Up**

Spice It Up! is a celebration of international recipes that are proven to raise the bar of the spice rack!



Don't forget to pick up a pear today!  
 All meals include a whole fruit for students at all schools. Pears are a special addition, in December, to celebrate Pear Month!

Did you know, you can find all Food Service information including monthly menus at:  
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