

Q: What is Fresh Picks Cafe?

A: Fresh Picks Cafe is a privately owned regional food service management company based in Manchester, NH. Our mission is to create food service partnerships with schools that exceed the school's and the community's expectations by providing responsive & responsible management, friendly & reliable service, and nutritious, fresh food every day.

We conduct our business in line with our values: Treat everyone fairly, create great experiences, be responsive & responsible, serve nutritious & fresh food.

Q: How does Fresh Picks Cafe promote healthy eating?

A: Promoting healthier eating is at the core of what we do at Fresh Picks Cafe. We start with a base of freshly prepared, real food. By providing choice we can help students understand how to build a diet that is wholesome and nutritious, and form healthy habits that will last a lifetime.

Fresh Picks Cafe participates in Cornell University's Smarter Lunchroom Movement. In line with this initiative we use marketing techniques to promote the healthiest food choices, provide nutrition education activities to enable students to understand how food affects their bodies and help students learn how to choose a balanced diet that is right for them.

Our menus put a heavy emphasis on fruits, vegetables and a variety of "real food". We regularly offer students opportunities to try new fruits & vegetables they may have never tried, and the opportunity to taste foods from different ethnic cuisines.

Q: What's for lunch?

A: Elementary schools offer a wide range of choices. "Signature Picks" is our premier station offering everything from comfort foods to kid friendly ethnic dishes. "Deli Picks" offers a variety of sandwiches, while "Salad Picks" offers everything from fresh made salads, to yogurt parfaits and our popular "Lunchbox" bento-box entrée offerings.

Middle and High School students enjoy access to a wider variety of more sophisticated offerings. "Signature Picks" is expanded to include cutting edge culinary trends and made to order cooking stations. "Deli Picks" becomes a made to order deli similar, to any sandwich shop, "Salad Picks" offers an even wider range of healthy grab n' go offerings. "Pizza Picks" offers a variety of fresh baked pizzas, and "Express Picks" offers grab n' go convenience with hot sandwiches.

Many of our schools go beyond these foundational station concepts to include things such as salad bar stations, panini stations, sauté stations, soup stations and more.

Q: What is included in the school lunch price?

A: Students are able choose from a wide variety of vegetable and fruit offerings along with any entrée from one of our stations. Our vegetable offerings are made with fresh or fresh frozen produce; fruit is fresh or packed in water or natural juices. 1%, skim or low fat flavored milk is also included in the meal price. Our milk offerings are regionally sourced and free of added growth hormones.

Q: Where can I find the menu?

A: Menus are available online. ~~You can find them by visiting your school's website, by visiting www.freshpickseafe.com and choosing your school district from the "SCHOOLS" dropdown, or by adding the Nutrislice mobile app to your smartphone or tablet.~~

Our online, interactive menus provide a wealth of information beyond just knowing what's for lunch. You can click on each menu item to view nutritional & allergen information and provide us with feedback on the item through the rating feature. Use the allergen filters to view allergen sensitive menus or use the translate feature to view the menu in one of several different languages.

Q: Where does the food in my cafe come from?

A: Fresh Picks Cafe's program is based on making fresh food from scratch, right in the schools where we serve. We do not operate a commissary or "ship in" ready to eat meals.

In too many school food service operations, fresh is just an adjective placed on menus to denote that a fruit or vegetable is served without being cooked or that a product just came out of the oven.

For Fresh Picks Cafe, the word fresh is not just an adjective. Fresh is a concept that embodies a more creative approach to cooking.

Our foods meet the following standards:

- We never purchase items with artificial trans fats
- We never purchase items with MSG
- We serve produce that is fresh, fresh frozen or packed in water or natural juices.
- We only serve proteins that are USDA certified
- We serve milk that is regionally sourced and free of added growth hormones
- We source local and regional products as often as possible
- We offer a variety of whole grain bread, pasta and cereal options
- We write our menus to feature seasonal and regionally available ingredients

Fresh Picks Cafe became a pioneer in the Farm to School movement over 20 years ago with our founding membership in Food Connects, a non-profit group dedicated to connecting local food producers with schools & institutions. Over the past decades we have grown our local purchasing network to include dozens of local farms and food producers. Fresh Picks Cafe partner school districts who desire strong local purchasing from their program often see more than 40% of their food come from local sources and up to 80% from local and regional sources.

Q: What if my child has a food allergy?

A: We have many tools and resources in place to help your school's food service program manage service to students with food allergies. Our online menu provides reliable allergen information, and our point of sale software in the cafeteria reminds cashiers to check for allergens as students pass through the line.

Our team of Registered Dietitians provides regular allergen training to all of our staff members, and is available to work one on one with Food Service Directors, School Nurses and families to create a plan for service for students with allergens and complete all required USDA documentation to support that service.

Q: How do I sign up?

A: Students enrolled in a Fresh Picks Cafe partner school automatically have an established lunch account. You can manage your student's account, view their purchases, add funds to their accounts and more through the online payment portal for your school district.

~~Links to the online payment portal website can be found on your online menus, on your school's website, or at www.freshpickseafe.com under the "SCHOOLS" dropdown. Instructions for enrolling are available there as well.~~

Q: What if a student doesn't have money for lunch?

A: Fresh Picks Cafe never denies any student a full, nutritious meal.

Fresh Picks Cafe does not profit from additional sales in your cafeteria. We are paid a fixed fee for management of the program. All cafeteria sales are for the financial benefit of your school district, not our company.

We follow your school board approved meal charging policy and school administration approved procedures. Every student will always be provided with a full meal, but snack and a la carte items are only available when a student's food service account has a positive balance or the student has cash in hand.