



MLA/DLA Annual Conference
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FROM PAGE TO PLATE

Empowering Young Cooks with
Library Kitchens

ABOUT US



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OBJECTIVES

Define Success

Key components of a great 1-hour youth cooking program in a library setting

Know Your Options

Five types of cooking setups suitable for any library space

Connect & Explore

Cooking supports literacy, storytelling, and cultural exploration for youth

WHY COOKING IN LIBRARIES?

Literacy

Following recipes builds reading comprehension and sequencing skills

Culture

Food is a delicious entry point into global traditions and community stories

Life Skills

Hands-on cooking builds confidence, math, and real-world independence

Connection

Shared meals and making together create lasting community bonds



FOOD SAFETY FIRST

Get Certified

ServSafe Food Protection Manager and/or Food Handler certifications for staff

Check Local Rules

Connect with your local health department for facility requirements

Allergen Plan

Make a plan for how your branch will handle allergies and consider training





You'll need:



SUPPLIES



- You don't need a full kitchen to run a great cooking program
- Most tools overlap all setups
- Your cooking set up will shape your programs
- Start small, expand intentionally
- Safety and sanitation are non-negotiable

THEMES & GOALS



Cultural
Exploration

Seasonal &
Holiday

Book
Tie-ins

Community
Partners

Cooking
Basics

BOOK CHOICES

Books can help tie in themes about food and cooking, and provide further inspiration



Fiction



Cookbooks



Manga



PROGRAM EXAMPLES



Teaching Kitchen

Exploration Commons at 50 East
— full commercial kitchen setup
for hands-on culinary classes



Kitchen Cart

Dedicated makerspace with a
portable cart — flexible,
movable, and surprisingly
powerful



Meeting Room Setup

No dedicated kitchen?
No problem — a meeting room
with a microwave and hotplate
goes a long way

For Teens



DINNER'S ON ME

Make a meal they could replicate at home



Kid's Baking



HAMBURGER CUPCAKES

Basic baking skills and creativity



Community Building



BAKING WITH A BADGE

Connection and community (along with basic baking skills)



Demonstration



MOZZARELLA CHEESE

Fresh, simple, and delicious —
perfect for learning about food
science



Group + Individual Cooking 🔍

APPLE TURNOVERS

Seasonal flavor and a combination
of cooking skills



Community Expert



CAKE DECORATING

Creative, seasonal and interactive



New Flavors



CUSTOM PASTA

Quick, customizable, and delicious



Quick and Easy



WALKING TACOS

A meal on the go, make it your own

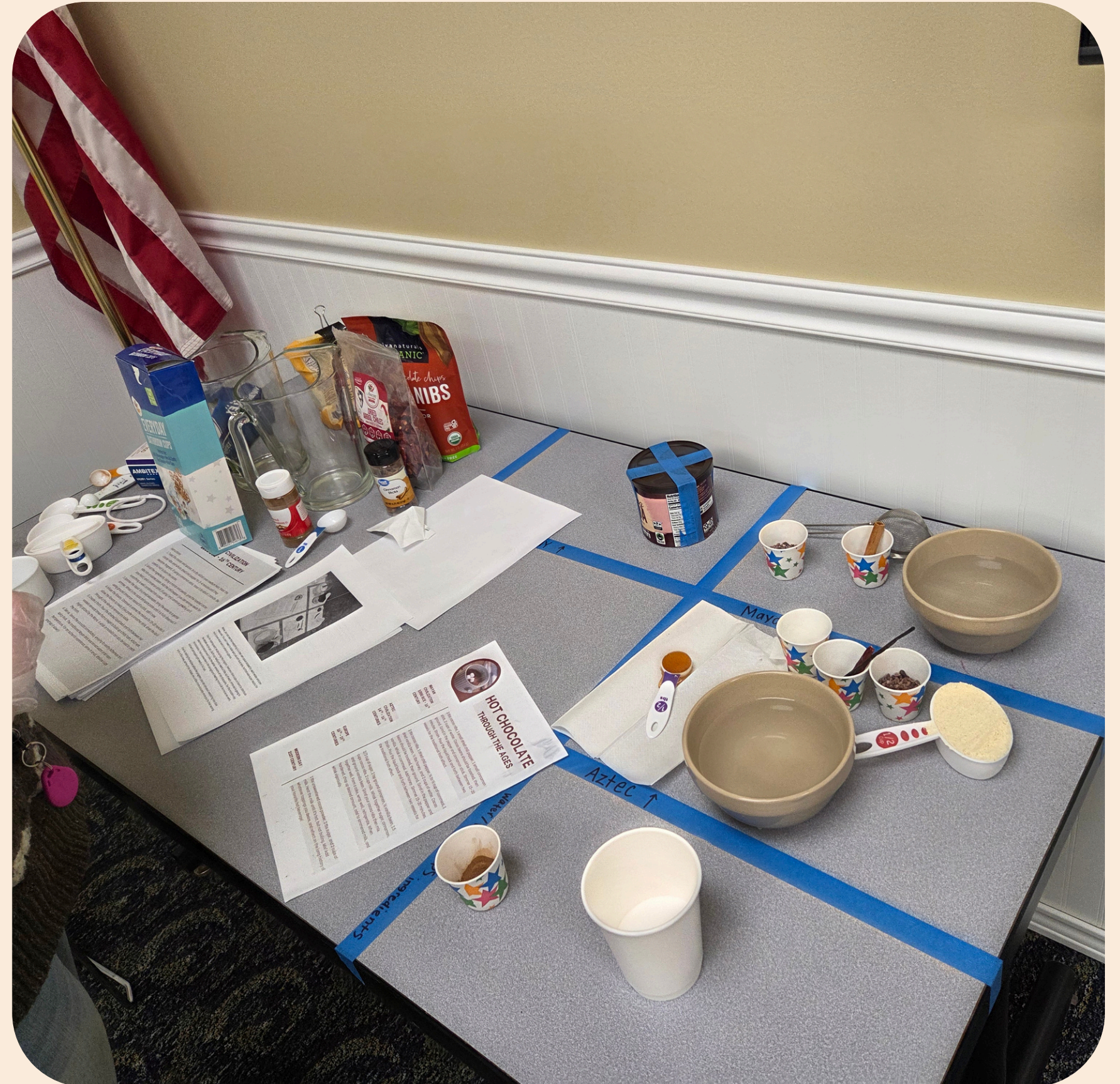


Sweet History Lesson



HOT CHOCOLATE THROUGH THE AGES

A sweet taste of ancient cultures, shared between branches



LESSONS LEARNED THE HARD WAY

Let's get started!

- Double your time
- Check your avocados
- Plan for clean-up
- Keep empty packages



CHOCOLATE TASTING DEMO



1. Look: Does it look smooth or chalky?
2. Snap: A clean snap usually means better tempering.
3. Smell: Try to connect it to a memory or food. Think about other things it smells like.
4. Melt: Place chocolate in your mouth and let it melt a little. Don't rush—this is where flavor develops.
5. Notice: What sticks around after it's gone? How would you describe it to a friend?

THANK YOU!

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