**Food options**

Everybody loves snacks at a party, and one issue to keep in mind in planning a fair/expo/carnival is what food options to provide, both for staff and volunteers and for those thousands of visitors you're hoping will come. How do you get people the food they need to have a great time at your event without diluting the science-themed environment or breaking your budget? Whether you are looking to provide a lunch option or just expand the festival experience, here are some ways to do it:

**Standard fair food:** contract with vendors who specialize in serving fairs, such as those who sell kettle corn, hot dogs, and fresh lemonade

* pros: professional, easy to work with, plentiful food
* cons: not particularly cheap or tasty, not special or likely to be open to creating a science-themed booth, does not sustain local networks, businesses, or goodwill

**Free samples from corporate brands:** recruit corporate brands, such as energy bars, soft drinks, candy

* pros: free food a marketable draw for audience, possibility of booths that provide science content as well as samples, possible tie-ins with corporate event sponsorship, professional, easy to work with, minimal permitting necessary
* cons: strongly commercial, weakens community feel, can create lots of litter

**Food stands by local restaurants:** invite local restaurants to sell outdoor food, usually tented

* pros: builds local goodwill, food usually high-quality
* cons: food can be expensive, permitting may be complicated, some restaurants may require special attention and assistance

**Food trucks**: mobile kitchens ready to serve a variety of cuisines

* pros: food usually high-quality, may have a local following that helps drive attendance, uncomplicated permitting, small businesses may be open to creating custom science-related meals or displays
* cons: typically expensive meals, not available in all cities

**Self-catering**: take matters into your own hands and sell or give away food your organization prepares

* pros: total control over quality, pricing, themes, etc.
* cons: complicated permitting, can take enormous efforts of planning, preparation, and staffing