

Back to School Lunch Ideas (nut-free)



Lunch food safety

- Chill items before placing them in the lunch bag.
- Foods should travel in an insulated lunch bag with a freezer pack or frozen juice box.
- If sending food in a thermos, fill first with hot water, empty, then fill with warm food.
- Do not pack a lunch and seal in lunch bag to place in fridge overnight. The insulated bag will prevent the cold from chilling the food inside.
- Wash lunch bag, containers and cutlery in hot soapy water every night.



Lunch Box Tips

1. Involve your kids in the planning and preparation– they are more likely to eat their lunches that way.
2. Use leftovers! Making a healthy dinner double the size can provide lunches for your kids during the week.
3. Put ‘already prepared’ fruit and veggies in pre-packaged amounts for busy kids with less time and patience to ensure more is eaten.
4. Prevent soggy sandwiches by putting the “extras” like lettuce and tomato in separate containers
5. Indulge your child on occasion and provide a small treat in their lunch.



Snack alternatives to put with healthy lunches

- Cheddar cheese wedges and whole grain crackers
- Yogurt drinks
- Cauliflower and broccoli “trees” and low-fat creamy dressing
- Home-made ‘trail mix’ with sunflower seeds, dried fruit like raisins, and some cereal such as multigrain cheerios or shreddies
- Apple slices or unsweetened applesauce
- Whole wheat bread sticks
- Canned fruit salad
- Cucumber slices
- Hard-boiled egg wedges



Easy lunch ideas

- ✓ Feta cheese and cucumber sandwich on multi-grain bun
- ✓ Egg salad and lettuce, spinach, or alfalfa sprouts on whole wheat bagel
- ✓ Bean dip (hummus) with veggies, whole wheat tortilla chips, or pita triangles
- ✓ Home-made ‘lunchable’ (sliced meat, cheese, crackers in sectioned container) with cut up raw veggies
- ✓ Ham and cheese on pumpernickel bread
- ✓ Strawberry cream cheese and banana on whole wheat wrap
- ✓ BLT in sectioned container (whole wheat bread, bacon and tomato slices, lettuce)
- ✓ Chicken salad and lettuce roll-up in a thin, whole wheat pita
- ✓ Hummus, grated carrots and lettuce/veggies in whole wheat pita pocket

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Turkey, Swiss and Apple Sandwich

Tired of the same old-same old? Spice up your kids daily lunch with this hearty, wholesome sandwich that's nutritious and full of flavor!

What you need:

- 1 whole wheat sandwich bun
- 1 Tbsp. calorie-wise mayonnaise
- ½ cup loosely packed baby spinach leaves
- 30 g deli reduced-sodium turkey breast
- 1/3 cup thin apple slices
- 1 thin red onion slice
- 1 slice Swiss cheese



How to make it:

SPREAD the bun with mayonnaise
FILL with remaining ingredients

Home-made Lunchable

This creative, simple twist on a classic school lunch will boost the nutrition and focus for learning at school. Give it a try!

What you need:

- 5-6 small slices of meat
- Cut up raw veggies (any type)
- 1-2 tbsp salad dressing or yogurt for dip
- Approx. ½ cup fresh fruit
- 3-4 small slices cheese
- 5-6 whole wheat crackers



How to make it:

PREPARE all the ingredients, making sure to wash veggies and fruit thoroughly. Place ingredients into separate sections in a container.
Enjoy!

Taco Pasta Salad

Try something new with this easy to make, easy to pack lunch! This salad can be made ahead of time and refrigerated OR frozen in 1-cup portions in freezer plastic bags. Makes 10 servings, 1 cup (250 mL) each.

What you need:

- 2/3 cup calorie-wise rancher's choice dressing
- 2 Tbsp. lime juice
- 1 tsp. chili powder
- ½ tsp. ground cumin
- 3 cups whole wheat pasta, cooked, rinsed, and cooled
- 1 can (19 fl oz/540 mL) black beans, rinsed
- 4 cups loosely packed baby spinach leaves
- 1 tomato, chopped
- 1 cup light shredded cheese



How to make it:

MIX first 4 ingredients in large bowl
ADD remaining ingredients; mix lightly

Mexican Blizzard Soup

What you need:

- 1 tbsp. (15 mL) vegetable oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, squished
- 1 tbsp. (15 mL) Mexican chili powder
- ½ tsp. (2 mL) ground cumin (optional)
- 1 tsp. (5 mL) oregano
- 28 oz (796 mL) can tomatoes (with liquid)
- 1 cup (250 mL) chicken broth (no salt added)
- 19 oz (540 mL) can kidney (or other) beans, drained, but reserve the liquid
- 12 oz (341 mL) can corn niblets drained, but reserve the liquid



How to make it:

In a large saucepan, COOK the onion and garlic in the vegetable oil over medium heat for about 3 minutes. ADD the chili powder, cumin, and oregano and cook, stirring, for another 3 minutes. POUR in the can of tomatoes and using a potato masher, mash the tomatoes until they're pretty broken up. POUR in the chicken broth and the reserved corn and bean liquid and bring to a boil. Simmer for about 20 minutes. ADD the beans and corn and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and let the soup simmer for a couple of minutes, then serve with a sprinkle of cheese. Serves 6.