

UNJUNK *your* LUNCHES *FOR Kids*

HEALTHY LUNCH HACKS FOR BUSY PARENTS



INCLUDES TIPS, IDEAS AND RECIPES!

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WELCOME TO LUNCHTIME

Simplified

Back-to-school is a great time to get back into routines, and can be a happy time for busy families and working parents, but with that also comes the dreaded chore of PACKING LUNCH BOXES!

This guide is designed to help you find simple, healthy options that will keep your child happy and satisfied without relying on packaged snacks that are usually full of additives and not exactly budget-friendly!

When following this guide you can ensure your child's lunch is:

- ✓ HEALTHY & NUTRITIOUS
- ✓ BALANCED
- ✓ BUDGET-FRIENDLY
- ✓ NEVER BORING



As a health coach, nutritionist, and teacher, with two teenagers in the house, I have a lot of experience with lunch boxes and creating simple, healthy lunches kids actually want to eat!

The thing to remember when packing lunches is that children enjoy and need structure and routine. Are you thinking your child will get bored if you're not sending Pinterest-worthy lunches to school? You'll be happy to know that it couldn't be farther from the truth!

I have used this same system for over 10 years for packing my kids' lunches, and they have never once told me they were bored of their lunch ;)



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So instead of dreading this very important task, embrace it with a new mindset that packing lunches can (and will be!) simple and enjoyable, and not only will your children benefit from their healthy lunches, but you don't have to keep stressing over them or trying to come up with new ideas!





A GUIDE TO MACROS

Having a balanced lunch that includes all the macronutrients (proteins, carbs and fats) is very important since each of these macronutrients plays a unique role in your child's development and day-to-day functioning at school.

✓ PROTEIN

Proteins are essential for growth and repair in the body. During school, children are constantly growing and developing. Protein helps support their physical development, strengthens their immune system, and keeps them full and focused throughout the day. (lean meats, eggs, dairy products, beans, nuts, and seeds)

✓ CARBOHYDRATES (CARBS)

Carbohydrates are the body's primary source of energy. A steady supply of carbohydrates ensures that your child has the energy to stay alert, concentrate on lessons, and actively participate in school activities. (whole grains, fruits, vegetables, and legumes)

✓ FATS

Fats are vital for brain development, hormone production, and the absorption of fat-soluble vitamins. Healthy fats contribute to cognitive function, helping your child to think clearly, remember information, and stay mentally sharp during school. (avocados, dressings, nuts, seeds, olive oil, and fatty fish)

By ensuring a balanced lunch that includes proteins, carbohydrates, and fats, you're not only fueling their body but also supporting their ability to learn, grow, and thrive in their academic environment.



LUNCHBOX *Tips*

A few tips and tricks for packing lunches:

Invest in a good lunch box with compartments or an insulated lunch bag with separate small containers (like Sistema) for each different “category” (see next page for categories).

Buy large yogurt containers and spoon into smaller containers rather than individual packages.

Have veggies pre-chopped and/or use veggies that don't need chopping (baby carrots, snap peas, etc.)

Keep homemade snacks in freezer so they last longer (mini muffins, protein balls, etc.)

FOLLOW THIS FORMULA:

1 main course

2-3 fruits & veggies

1 protein

+ 1-2 snacks

1 nutritious lunch!



✓ HELPFUL TIP

Do some packing while you're cooking dinner

- If you're chopping veggies for dinner, throw some into the lunch containers
- If you're making something that can be used for lunches (quesadillas, pizza, etc.) make extra for lunch and pack it that night

Healthy Lunch Options



Choose from each category

+

MAIN COURSE

- Sandwich
- Wraps/Roll-ups
- Crackers/Cheese/Meat
- Mini pizzas/Naan Pizzas
- French Toast Strips/ Waffles
- Quesadilla
- Muffins
- De-constructed Tacos
- Cereal
- Pasta Salad
- Egg Bites
- Bagel with Cream Cheese
- Pita Bread with Hummus or Tzatziki
- Soup
- Leftovers

+

VEGGIES

- Baby Carrots
- Cherry Tomatoes
- Snap Peas
- Cucumbers
- Bell peppers
- Broccoli
- Cauliflower
- Celery

+

FRUITS

- Apple Slices
- Orange Segments
- Banana
- Berries
- Unsweetened applesauce
- Mango
- Melon
- Pears
- Kiwi
- Fruit Cup (packed in water)

+

PROTEIN

- Yogurt
- Cheese String
- Hard Boiled Egg
- Cottage Cheese
- Nuts
- Protein Balls

+

SNACKS

- Fruit Pouches
- 100% Fruit Bars
- Granola Bar
- Mini Muffins
- Nuts/ Trail Mix
- Protein Ball
- Pretzels
- Popcorn
- Raisins/ Dried Fruit
- Rice Cakes

+

DIPPING SAUCES & EXTRAS

- Salsa/Sour cream
- Veggie Dip
- Ranch Dressing
- Hummus
- Tzatziki
- Vanilla Yogurt - for french toast or fruit
- Peanut Butter
- Granola/Seeds

Ideas



+

Sandwiches

- Nut butter and Jelly or Honey
- Ham and Cheese
- Turkey and Cheese
- Tuna Salad
- Chicken Salad
- Egg Salad
- Cucumber & Cream Cheese

+

Mini Muffins

- Banana
- Oatmeal
- Blueberry
- Apple Cinnamon

+

Wraps

- Nut butter and banana
- Ham and Cheese
- Turkey and Cheese
- Veggie and Cream cheese
- Chicken
- Pizza wrap

+

Leftovers

- Pizza
- Quesadillas
- Stir Fry
- Mac & Cheese
- Pasta
- Taco Salad
- Meatballs and Rice
- Soup/Chili

Pantry Staples

+

Snacks

- Healthy granola bars
- Unsweetened apple sauce
- Fruit bars
- Nuts and trail mix
- Crackers
- Pretzels
- Raisins

+

Other

- Nut butter - natural
- Oats
- Dates
- Wraps
- Ranch Dressing
- Pizza Sauce



LIMITING SUGAR

Tips

Did you know that children should only be eating up to 6 tsp of added sugars a day, yet the average American child eats 17-20 tsp a day?

For every packaged snack, you can usually assume there is at least 3 tsp of added sugar, or more! (granola bars, yogurt tubes, fruit cups, fruit snacks, Bear Paws, cookies, crackers, etc.)

Here are a few simple tips to cut back on the amount of sugar in your child's lunchbox:

- ✓ Mix plain yogurt with flavoured yogurt
- ✓ Choose unsweetened applesauce
- ✓ Make your own granola bars, muffins and trail mix
- ✓ Choose fruit cups packed in water
- ✓ Pack water or water with a splash of 100% fruit juice in a thermos rather than sugary drinks or fruit juices
- ✓ Always check the nutrition label for best choices (4 g = 1 tsp of sugar)



LUNCHBOX RESCUE RECIPES

EGG BITES

(Makes 12 Egg Bites)

INGREDIENTS

- 8 eggs
- 1/2 cup milk
- 3/4 cup cheddar cheese (shredded)
- salt and pepper to taste
- Other fillings as desired: ham, peppers, onions, broccoli, sausage, etc.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350F and grease muffin tin or use silicone liners
2. Chop toppings and divide any toppings and cheese between the muffin cups
3. Combine eggs, milk, salt and pepper and whisk well
4. Pour into muffin cups to 3/4 full
5. Sprinkle with extra cheese if desired
6. Bake for 18-20 minute until set
7. Can be kept in freezer and reheated when ready to eat.

MINI PIZZAS

INGREDIENTS

- Mini Naan breads (or regular Naan bread)
- Pizza Sauce
- Pizza toppings of choice
- Mozzarella cheese (shredded)

ASSEMBLY

1. Spread pizza sauce on Naan breads
2. Top with desired toppings
3. Sprinkle with cheese
4. Cook in oven until cheese melts or in microwave.

LUNCHBOX RESCUE RECIPES

PROTEIN BALLS

(Makes 36 balls)

INGREDIENTS

- 1pkg pitted dates (374g)
- 1 cup large flake oats
- 1 cup almonds
- 1/2 cup unsweetened coconut
- 1/4 cup cocoa
- 1/4 cup maple syrup

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Place all the ingredients into a food processor and chop for 30 seconds
2. Mixture will be crumbly but should stick together when squeezed
3. If needed, add 1 tbsp water to make stickier or add oats if too sticky
4. Roll into 1 Tbsp sized balls

MINI BANANA MUFFINS

(Makes 36 mini muffins or 12 regular sized muffins)

INGREDIENTS

- 3 ripe bananas (1 cup)
- 1/2 cup mayo
- 1 egg
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1 1/2 cups flour
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/2 cup chopped nuts (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350F
2. In a large bowl, mash bananas
3. Add mayo, egg, sugar and stir
4. In a separate bowl, mix flour, baking soda and salt
5. Add dry ingredients to wet and stir until combined
6. Stir in nuts if using
7. Scoop batter into 36 greased mini muffin cups and bake for 18-20 minutes.

LUNCHBOX RESCUE RECIPES

VEGGIE DIP

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup (250 g) nonfat plain greek yogurt
- 2 Tbsp mayo
- 2 tsp garlic powder
- ½ tsp onion powder
- 1 tsp dried dill
- ½ tsp sea salt, plus more to taste
- ½ tsp honey
- 3-4 Tbsp water to thin dressing

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Place all the ingredients except the water in a bowl or mason jar and whisk together until well combined, adding water 1 tsp at a time until it reaches your desired consistency.
2. Taste and adjust seasonings if necessary.
3. This will keep for a week in the refrigerator.

TZATZIKI SAUCE

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup (250 g) nonfat plain greek yogurt
- 1/2 cucumber (shredded and water squeezed out)
- 1 green onion chopped finely
- 2 cloves garlic minced
- ½ tsp onion powder
- 1-2 Tbsp fresh lemon juice
- 1 tsp dried dill
- ½ tsp sea salt, plus more to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Place all the ingredients except the water in a bowl or mason jar and whisk together until well combined.
2. Taste and adjust seasonings if necessary.
3. This will keep for a week in the refrigerator.

ARE YOU READY TO



UNJUNK *your* LIFE?

Thank you for being part of the Unjunk America Movement!

You've taken the first step—and we're just getting started.

Small changes lead to big results.

Each meal you “unjunk”, each label you read, and each ingredient you choose is a powerful act of change – not just for your home, but for the future of health in America.

Keep going. Keep learning. Keep showing up. You are making a difference.

Want more simple swaps, recipes and food tips?

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