

25 Little Lunches

YOUR PRESCHOOLER WILL
ACTUALLY EAT



WELCOME



I'm Teacher Terra

Welcome to "25 Little Lunches your Preschooler will actually eat!" I'm Teacher Terra - BUSY mom and Founder of Jumpstart Preschool - and I'm thrilled to guide you through creating delicious and nutritious lunches that your little ones will love. Let's make lunchtime fun and full of yummy surprises!

Teacher Terra



INTRODUCTION

Creating lunches that your preschooler will enjoy can be a fun (and frustrating) adventure! This guidebook is designed to inspire you with easy-to-make, balanced meals using a variety of food groups. From proteins and grains to vegetables, fruits, dairy alternatives, and healthy fats, you'll learn how to mix and match ingredients for diverse and appealing lunches. We'll also explore meal prepping strategies to save time and ensure your child gets a nutritious meal every day. Get ready to transform lunchtime into a joyful experience for both you and your preschooler!

HOW TO USE THIS *Guide*

Before we jump into the good stuff let's walk through how to use this guide - Because the whole enchilada requires some secret sauce! MEAL PREP! It's life changing - I promise. Meal prepping lunches ahead can save time and ensure your child enjoys balanced and nutritious meals throughout the week. This guide will help you narrow down your shopping list and mix and match to streamline your preparation process:

Essential Tools:

First, invest in a good lunch set that includes a thermal container to keep foods hot or cold, a bento box for organized portions, and smaller containers for snacks. These tools make it easier to pack a variety of foods while keeping them fresh until lunchtime.

Planning and Prep:

- **Choose Variety:** Each week, select two to three options from each food group. For proteins, prepare grilled chicken strips, boiled eggs, and lentil patties. For grains, cook a batch of brown rice, quinoa salad, and whole grain pasta. Prepare a mix of vegetables like carrot sticks, cucumber slices, and steamed broccoli florets.
- **Prep Ingredients Ahead:** To make your life extra easy, you can wash and chop vegetables, cook grains, and pre-portion proteins into smaller containers each Sunday. Store these prepped ingredients in the fridge for quick assembly during the week.
- **Mix and Match Creatively:** Combine different options each day to keep lunches interesting. For example, pair grilled chicken with quinoa salad and cherry tomatoes one day, and lentil patties with colorful rice and veggies the next.

Include Variety:

- **Safe Food:** Include a familiar favorite that your kiddo enjoys, like yogurt or cheese cubes.
- **Maybe Food:** Introduce a food they're unsure about, such as cucumber slices or mango chunks.
- **Something New:** Offer a new food item occasionally to encourage exploration.

Make it fun!

- **Cut Cute Shapes:** Use cookie cutters for fun shapes.
- **Make it Colorful:** Include a variety of colorful foods.
- **Mix Textures:** Combine crunchy with smooth textures.
- **Use Small Portions:** Offer small portions of new foods.
- **Fun Containers:** Use colorful cupcake liners for snacks!
- **Include Notes:** Add a little note to brighten their day.
- **Broaden their palate:** Try roasted sweet potato fries or chia seed pudding!

Involve Your Toddler:

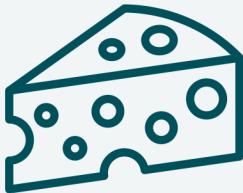
- **Let Them Help:** Involve your child in meal prep by letting them wash fruits, stir ingredients, or assemble their own lunch components (with supervision).
- **Communication is Key:** Discuss lunch options on the way to school to avoid surprises. This helps them anticipate and look forward to their mealtime, fostering a positive eating experience.

By using these tips and involving your child in the process, you can create enjoyable and nutritious preschool lunches that cater to their taste buds and nutritional needs. Meal prepping not only saves time but also ensures that each meal is balanced and appealing, setting a healthy eating habit for years to come.

Our *Safe* foods

Use this page to keep track of your little one's Safe foods.

Be as detailed as possible!





MIX

and match

PROTEINS

- Chicken Breast
- Turkey
- Fish
- Eggs
- Tofu
- Beans
- Lentils
- Ground Beef
- Cottage Cheese
- Greek Yogurt

VEGGIES

- Carrots
- Bell Peppers
- Broccoli
- Cucumbers
- Cherry Tomatoes
- Spinach
- Sweet Potatoes
- Green Beans
- Peas
- Cauliflower

GRAINS

- Whole Wheat Bread
- Brown Rice
- Quinoa
- Whole Grain Pasta
- Oatmeal
- Barley
- Buckwheat
- Millet
- Farro
- Corn

DAIRY

- Yogurt
- Cheese
- Milk
- Almond Milk
- Soy Milk
- Coconut Milk
- Rice Milk
- Oat Milk
- Hemp Milk
- Cashew Milk

FRUITS

- Bananas
- Apples
- Berries
- Oranges
- Grapes
- Peaches
- Pears
- Kiwi
- Mango
- Pineapple

HEALTHY FATS

- Avocado
- Nut Butters
- Chia Seeds
- Flax Seeds
- Sunflower Seeds
- Olive Oil
- Nuts
- Coconut
- Dark Chocolate
- Seeds

LUNCH BOX

Ideas

- GRILLED CHICKEN WRAP WITH SPINACH AND CHEESE
- TURKEY AND CHEESE ROLL-UPS WITH CHERRY TOMATOES
- FISH STICKS WITH SWEET POTATO FRIES
- SCRAMBLED EGGS WITH WHOLE WHEAT TOAST
- TOFU NUGGETS WITH QUINOA SALAD
- BEAN AND CHEESE QUESADILLAS WITH SLICED CUCUMBERS
- LENTIL SOUP WITH WHOLE GRAIN CRACKERS
- MINI MEATBALLS WITH BROWN RICE AND PEAS
- COTTAGE CHEESE WITH BERRIES AND OATMEAL MUFFIN
- GREEK YOGURT PARFAIT WITH MANGO AND CHIA SEEDS
- WHOLE WHEAT PASTA SALAD WITH MIXED VEGETABLES
- OATMEAL PANCAKES WITH APPLESAUCE
- BARLEY SALAD WITH AVOCADO AND TOMATOES



LUNCH BOX

Ideas

- BUCKWHEAT PANCAKES WITH YOGURT AND BERRIES
- MILLET STIR-FRY WITH TOFU AND BROCCOLI
- FARRO RISOTTO WITH SPINACH AND PARMESAN
- CORNBREAD MUFFINS WITH COTTAGE CHEESE AND GRAPES
- CARROT STICKS WITH HUMMUS AND CHEESE CUBES
- BELL PEPPER SLICES WITH RANCH DIP AND TURKEY SLICES
- BROCCOLI AND CHEESE SOUP WITH WHOLE GRAIN BREAD
- CUCUMBER SLICES WITH TZATZIKI DIP AND PITA BREAD
- CHERRY TOMATO SALAD WITH MOZZARELLA BALLS
- SPINACH AND CHEESE QUESADILLAS WITH SALSA
- SWEET POTATO FRIES WITH YOGURT DIP
- GREEN BEAN SALAD WITH ALMONDS AND CHICKEN STRIPS



WEEK

at a glance

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thurs

Fri

Sat

Sun



CONCLUSION

Creating lunches your preschooler will love doesn't have to be a challenge. With a little planning, creativity, and the right ingredients, you can ensure they enjoy nutritious meals every day.

By mixing and matching from different food groups, involving your child in the process, and adding a touch of fun, you'll make lunchtime a highlight of their day. Here's to happy and healthy lunchtimes with your little one!



THANK YOU

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— *Teacher Terra* —



FOUNDER, JUMPSTART PRESCHOOL

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