

CHEF WHITNEY'S LUNCHBOX TIPS



Until we raise the bar for school food, Back-to-School means packing a lunchbox! The process can stump many parents because your *thinking* becomes limited. I urge you to keep your minds open to possibilities, as lunch can be fun, it can be healthy, and your child most certainly will benefit from having home-cooked, home-packed lunches. Here are some tips to make this happen:

- Involve your child in the lunchbox choices: Find and give the child *only good* choices (i.e. offer 2 healthy options and don't resort to pre-packaged, processed foods that are 'easy outs'.) Ask them the night before "What would you like for lunch tomorrow?" and "Will you eat {this}?". Then, tell them what they can look forward to in the morning. This will increase the chances of them liking and eating their food at lunchtime.
- Send hot and/or cold food to school: Put a hot soup into a thermos, or pack a freezer icepack to keep food cold. If you have a special stacking lunchbox*, you can send 2 hot items and one cold. Compartments allow you to pack a complete meal with items separated.
- Plan to pack leftovers- If they loved it for dinner, they will eat it for lunch. Chili & Rice, Roasted Turkey, Roasted Vegetables, Chicken Parmesan, Beef Stew, Soups, Baked Potatoes-- are all wonderful lunch options. Plan to cook enough portions for the next day or two and this will save you time as well.
- Buy the healthiest options possible for sandwiches: whole wheat or grain bread, pocket bread, tortillas, sun-dried tomato or spinach wraps or lavash bread. Try some gluten free options. The less ingredients and preservatives, the better.
- Put fruits and vegetables in the lunchbox: Bananas, apples, pears, dried fruit, and grapes all travel well. For fun, make fruit skewers from pineapple, melon, grapes, strawberries. Carrots and celery with Ranch Dip or Hummus (in separate containers) can provide that necessary vegetable serving at lunch. If your child will eat salad, send salad with their favorite dressing!
- Some of my favorite snacks: Kids do love sweet, gooey, finger licking snacks! Here's a list of treats that will keep 'em going without the sugar highs and lows of most processed snacks.
 - Fresh fruit cup (with spork)

- Ants on a log (celery, nut butter, raisins)
 - Veggie sticks with hummus
 - 100% fruit juice
 - Rice cakes with nut butters and fruit spread
 - Non-GMO popcorn
 - Plain yogurt with a bit of your own natural sweetener added (cut up fruit, maple syrup, agave, raisins)
 - Nuts, seed and dried fruit mix
 - Coconut rolled dates
 - For premade bars, muffins and breads look for a short ingredient list with names you recognize - choose items that are made mostly from whole foods and don't have hydrogenated oils, corn syrup, and lots of chemical preservatives.
- Put some special love into the lunchbox: My mother would put a handwritten note in my box telling me what we would be doing after school. Sometimes the note would just say "Have a great day, I love you, Mom". Cut out hearts and sprinkle them into the box. Special surprises and touches can make a kid's day!

Have fun with your Lunch and Lunchbox!

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**While supplies last, Two Angry Moms is giving away Zojirushi stainless steel vacuum insulated jar that retails for \$68, to the next people who donate \$80 or more to Two Angry Moms! The Zojirushi round jar has 3 food stackable, microwaveable bowls for hot or cold lunch storage. The vacuum insulation keeps food hot or cold until lunchtime. It's also easy-to-clean and has a convenient carry-strap for easy transport! Please visit our ["Join Us"](#) page to donate now and receive your thank-you gift.*