



14 pages of useful lunchbox ideas

how to pack a HEALTHY LUNCHBOX

School mornings are busy enough without daily dilemmas on what to pack in the lunchbox. Nutritionist **Bobbie Crothers** gives five nutrition must-haves for creating healthy, balanced and tasty lunches.



1

HIGH FIBRE, WHOLEGRAIN CARBOHYDRATES

Reduce the chances of sandwiches returning home untouched by keeping them interesting when it comes to the bread. Steer clear of the usual plain white bread that ends up soggy before lunchtime comes around. Try other options such as wraps, flat breads, grainy rolls, crackers, bagels and high-fibre loaves. While it's important to choose high-fibre and wholegrain varieties, taste and texture is important to kids so try to let them have some say.

TIP If your kids love white bread, try using one slice of high-fibre white with one slice of brown in a sandwich as a way of easing them on to grainy bread.

2

PROTEIN Just as you need a little protein with your lunch to help you feel satisfied, so do kids. The protein component of their lunch also helps provide a number

of important essential nutrients such as calcium, iron and magnesium. Protein-rich foods are usually low-GI, too, which helps sustain energy levels. The best options include low-fat dairy snacks such as cheese sticks and slices, yoghurt tubes or pouches (these are also great frozen), or flavoured long-life milk. Boiled eggs are also a great addition to any lunchbox, either on a sandwich or still in their shell. Or try lean meats on a sandwich – chicken or turkey, tuna, salmon or lean ham are all good choices.

TIP Boiled eggs are often better welcomed when you add a hand-drawn smiley face or a brightly-coloured sticker to the shell.

3

FRUIT While not loved by every child, fruit is an essential ingredient in a healthy lunchbox. If this is something that also often returns home at the end of the day, you might have to steer away from the traditional apple or banana and try something with a little more appeal. When it comes to fresh fruit try strawberries, raspberries, grapes or blueberries. These are great as they naturally come in sizes perfect for little mouths. They are also bursting with flavour and colour to make them a little more interesting. Also try alternating fresh fruit with dried or packaged fruit like sultanas or canned pears and peaches. Remember: fresh is best as it has fewer kilojoules and usually more fibre.

TIP Some fruit is even yummiier frozen. Try peeled bananas, grapes, mango and melon balls.

4

SNACKS While some packaged snacks can help provide extra energy for active kids and help boost intakes of some nutrients, aim to include no more than one packaged snack in the lunchbox.

One positive to packaged snacks is they add a little excitement to the lunchbox, which is important, too!

TIP For our investigation on packaged lunchbox snacks available at the supermarket, and the HFG checklist on how to choose kids lunchbox snacks, see page 96.

5

FLUIDS

While fruit juice boxes and soft drinks are easily added to a lunchbox (and are guaranteed lunchbox stars, as voted by kids!) they are just not necessary. In fact, a 2008 review of the research found that sugar-sweetened drinks such as fruit juice, soft drink, sports drinks and cordials may contribute to childhood obesity in three ways: larger portion sizes, higher percentage of children consuming them and increasing number of serves. The researchers suggest children drink no more than two sweetened drinks per week including fruit juice. As you would have guessed, water is best!

TIP To try and keep kids interested when it comes to plain water, look for a snazzy drink bottle to make it a little less boring! [hfg](#)

**SWEET AS...
and juicy!**

- the ultimate snack -

available at Subway and the produce section of all leading supermarkets



It can be a challenge finding ways to make new and interesting kids' sandwiches. Try these lunchbox fillers as part of your child's school lunch.



NEW lunchbox favourites

25 TEMPTING SANDWICH FILLINGS

For a sandwich made with 2 pieces bread or 1 pita pocket.

PEANUT BUTTER FILLINGS

To peanut butter and extra-light cream cheese spread, add:

- 1 + mashed banana
- 2 + raisins
- 3 + chopped apple
- 4 + sliced celery

- Peanut butter may be substituted with any other nut butter.
- A batch of these fillings will last in the fridge for up to five days.
- These fillings can be frozen.

EGG FILLINGS

To 1 hard-boiled egg, add:

- 5 + grated capsicum + Marmite
- 6 + grated courgette + mild mustard
- 7 + thinly sliced mushroom + fresh basil or oregano

- A batch of these fillings will last in the fridge for up to three days.



CREAM CHEESE FILLINGS

To extra-light cream cheese spread, add:

- 8 + chopped pitted dates + chopped nuts
- 9 + chopped dried apricots + chopped nuts
- 10 + raisins + grated carrot
- 11 + canned crushed pineapple in juice (drained) + grated carrot
- 12 + shredded celery + chopped nuts
- 13 + chopped olives + alfalfa

- A batch of these fillings will last in the fridge for up to five days.
- Add as many vegetables as you like.
- These fillings can be frozen.

VEGAN FILLINGS

- 14 hummus + grated carrot + lettuce
- 15 mashed roasted pumpkin* + corn kernels + chopped nuts
- 16 avocado + bean sprouts + mustard + lemon juice
- 17 mashed canned beans + sliced cucumber + lettuce
- 18 homemade tomato pasta sauce + roasted eggplant + chopped nuts
- 19 pesto + sliced cucumber + lettuce

- 20 mashed cooked eggplant (roast whole eggplant in oven for 30 minutes and scoop out insides) + chopped olives + canned beans

• A batch of these fillings will last in the fridge for up to three days.

* This pumpkin filling can be frozen.



FISH AND MEAT FILLINGS

Either avoid fish fillings in hot weather (as they can begin to go off even in insulated lunchboxes), or freeze these sandwiches the night before and place them frozen in the lunchbox the next morning.

- 21 canned tuna in spring water, drained + grated courgette + avocado
- 22 smoked salmon shavings + sliced capsicum + lettuce
- 23 thin slices roasted meat + sliced roasted vegetables such as capsicum, onion, mushrooms, eggplant or pumpkin + mustard
- 24 thin slices roasted meat + rocket + sliced cucumber
- 25 sliced cooked chicken breast + avocado + reduced-fat mayonnaise

• A batch of these fillings will last in the fridge for up to two days. ☑

lunchbox from Foodtown, napkins stylist's own.