



# Lunchbox ideas

Easy recipe ideas to make your child's lunchbox healthier



Your child's lunchbox should provide a healthy and balanced meal. That means plenty of foods that contain the nutrients your child needs, and fewer foods that are high in sugar and saturated fat.

### Preparing your child's lunchbox

A balanced packed lunch should contain:

- ✓ **starchy foods** – these include bread, rice, potatoes, pasta and cous cous
- ✓ **protein foods** – including meat, fish, eggs, beans, soya and quorn products
- ✓ **a dairy item** – such as yoghurt or cheese
- ✓ **vegetables or salad, and a portion of fruit**

Starchy foods are a good source of energy, and should make up a **third** of the lunchbox. But don't let things get boring. As an alternative to sandwiches why not try **bagels, pitta bread, wraps** or rolls? And where possible try and use wholemeal or seeded versions.

Children often like food they can eat with their fingers, so chop up raw veggies such as carrots or peppers, and give them houmous or cottage cheese to dip the veggies in.

Always include at least one portion of dried, fresh or tinned fruit. Vary the fruit you provide as much as possible. Consider how your child would prefer to eat it e.g. whole or cut up into pieces.

Breadsticks and crackers are great finger foods that can be spread with low-fat soft cheese, or eaten with a slice of ham.

Limit the amount of chocolate bars, biscuits and cakes you give your child. Why not try other alternatives such as malt loaf, fruit bread or pop corn?

Unsalted nuts are a great snack food for children to have at home, but it's best to leave them out of your child's lunchbox. Many schools ban nuts to protect pupils with a nut allergy.

### Drinks


- ✓ **water**
- ✓ **diluted fruit juice**
- ✓ **low sugar squash**
- ✓ **milk**



### Lunchbox 1

- Crackers with ham
- Sliced boiled egg
- Vegetable sticks with cream cheese dip
- Grapes
- Bottle of plain water

### Lunchbox 2

- Wholemeal roll filled with egg mayonnaise and salad leaves 
- Cherry tomatoes
- Rice pudding pot
- Banana
- Bottle of diluted sugar free squash



### Egg mayonnaise

Mash together 1 boiled egg and 1 tablespoon of mayonnaise

## Lunchbox 3

Pitta pizza   
 Celery sticks  
 Apple chunks  
 Fruit bread   
 Fruit yoghurt



### Pitta Pizza

Serves 1  
 Prep time = 10 minutes  
 Cooking time = 10 – 12 minutes



#### Method

1. Grate all the cheese
2. Prepare toppings e.g. chop vegetables, meat etc. into small pieces. If you are using chicken cook before adding to the pizza
3. Spread the tomato sauce base over the pitta ensuring the whole area is covered
4. Sprinkle some grated cheese over the base (leave a sprinkle for the end)
5. Add your chosen toppings
6. Add the remaining cheese
7. Sprinkle with Italian herbs (optional)
8. Grill on a baking tray for 10 minutes or bake in an oven for 12 minutes until cheese has fully melted

#### Ingredients

- 1 pitta (preferably wholemeal)
- 2 tablespoons of tomato puree, tomato pasta sauce, tomato passata, or chopped tinned tomatoes
- 3 tablespoons grated cheddar/mozzarella cheese
- 1 teaspoon mixed herbs (optional)

#### Ideas for toppings include:

- Sliced tomatoes
- Sweetcorn
- Peppers
- Pineapple
- Mushrooms
- Onion
- Ham
- Chicken (cooked)



### Fruit bread

Serves 16  
 Prep time = 15 minutes  
 Cooking time = 1 hour




#### Method

1. Preheat the oven to 160°C or gas mark 3
2. Put the fruit, milk, butter/margarine and sugar in a large saucepan
3. Bring to boil stirring all the time
4. Once it has boiled turn the heat off
5. Leave to cool for 10 minutes
6. Fold in the flour and mix well, add egg and mix again.
7. Pour into a greased loaf tin and put in the pre-heated oven for 1 hour

#### Ingredients

- 200g dried mixed fruit
- 250ml milk
- 100g sugar
- 125g butter or margarine
- 250g self-raising flour
- 1 egg
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon (optional)

## Lunchbox 4



Wrap filled with tuna and sweetcorn mayonnaise   
 Custard pot  
 Plain popcorn  
 Strawberries  
 Bottle of plain water



### Tuna and sweetcorn mayonnaise

Mix together 1 tablespoon of tuna, 1 tablespoon of sweetcorn and 1 tablespoon of mayonnaise

## Lunchbox 5

Pasta salad   
 Fruity flapjack   
 Fruit salad  
 Carton of 100% pure orange juice



## Pasta / cous cous salad

Serves 6  
 Preparation time = 25 minutes  
 Cooking time = 15 mins



### Method

1. Cook the pasta or cous cous according to the packet instructions and allow to cool
2. Prepare your chosen additional ingredients. Chop or grate into bite sized pieces
3. Mix your chosen ingredients and the pasta/cous cous together
4. Mix in your chosen dressing

### Ingredients

- 4 tablespoons cooked cous cous or pasta

Mix and match from the following ingredients:

| Vegetables (2 tablespoons) | Additional ingredients (2 tablespoons) | Dressing suggestions include |
|----------------------------|--|------------------------------|
| Sweetcorn                  | Ham                                    | Cream cheese                 |
| Tomatoes                   | Cooked chicken                         | Salad cream                  |
| Cucumber                   | Cheese (grated or chunks)              | Mayonnaise                   |
| Beetroot                   | Chickpeas                              | French dressing              |
| Carrot                     | Boiled egg                             | Balsamic vinegar             |
| Pepper                     |  | Pesto                        |
| Onion                      |  | Mayonnaise                   |
| Celery                     |  | Houmous                      |
| Olives                     |  |                              |
| Peas                       |  |                              |



## Fruity Flapjack

Serves 16  
 Preparation time = 25 minutes  
 Cooking time = 15 mins



### Method

1. Heat the oven to 170°C or gas mark 4.
2. Lightly grease a shallow medium sized baking tin with a little margarine/butter
3. Measure out the oats and chop up any large pieces of dried fruit
4. Wash and grate the apple/s (including the skin) and mix together with the oats and dried fruit
5. Melt together the butter/margarine, sugar and golden syrup in a pan on a low heat
6. Add the oats, dried fruit and grated apple to the melted margarine/butter mixture and mix thoroughly
7. Spoon the mixture into the tin and level out
8. Bake for 15-18 minutes until pale golden but still soft
9. Leave in the tin until cool then cut and divide into equal pieces.

### Ingredients

- 300g porridge oats
- 50g dried fruit e.g. apricots, dates, figs, sultanas
- 1 large or 2 small apples
- 100g butter/margarine, plus extra for greasing
- 30g brown sugar
- 3 tablespoons or 75ml golden syrup



## More sandwich filling ideas

- ✓ Grated cheese and pickle
- ✓ Cream cheese and ham
- ✓ Chicken/turkey, lettuce and tomato
- ✓ Marmite and cucumber
- ✓ Houmous and grated carrot
- ✓ Egg and mayonnaise

(mash together 1 boiled egg and 1 tablespoon of mayonnaise)

- ✓ Tuna, sweetcorn and mayonnaise

(mix together 1 tablespoon of tuna, 1 tablespoon of sweetcorn and 1 tablespoon of mayonnaise)

- ✓ Salmon smash

(mix together 2 tablespoons tinned salmon with a dash of ketchup)

- ✓ Cheesy apple slaw

(mix together 1 tablespoon grated apple, 1 tablespoon of grated cheese, 1 chopped spring onion, a squeeze of lemon juice, 1 tablespoon of mayonnaise)

- ✓ Pesto chicken

(mix together 2 tablespoons of cooked chicken, 2 teaspoons of pesto, 1 tablespoon of mayonnaise)



## Tips for keeping your kids packed lunch fresh and safe!

- ✓ Always wash your hands before preparing
- ✓ Pack your kids lunch in a clean lunchbox or cool bag
- ✓ Wash fruit and vegetables thoroughly before packing into the lunchbox
- ✓ Pack chopped fruit and vegetables in a separate box or bag
- ✓ Lightly coat chopped up fruit in lemon juice to prevent browning
- ✓ Wrap sandwiches and rolls in tin foil, cling film or food bags
- ✓ If you prepare the lunchbox the evening before, make sure it is stored in the fridge overnight
- ✓ An ice pack will keep the food cool