



## Healthy Lunchbox Ideas



**Bringing a lunch to work is a great idea for lots of reasons:** it saves calories, it saves money, and it even saves time, allowing you to relax at lunch instead of fighting the crowds at fast-food restaurants.

The more home-cooked meals you have, the better. When you're packing a brown-bag lunch, you'll almost always do better, calorie- and fat-wise, say experts.

**Packing a daily lunch, whether for work or school, can be a monotonous task.** But there's no reason to settle for ham-and-cheese or peanut butter and jelly every day. The following ideas are tasty, healthy and easy to make.

First of all, invest in an insulated lunchbox that can hold a frozen cold pack to keep food fresh and cool. Then follow some of these tips to keep lunch healthy, satisfying and interesting!

### Sandwiches

People tend to get stuck eating the same sandwich every day. But these following combinations are so good, it's tempting to always try a new one; here are some suggestions:



- Onion roll, mayonnaise/mustard, chicken strips or turkey, cheddar cheese (sliced or grated), avocado
- Sourdough bread, herb mayonnaise (or mustard), turkey, any type of cheese, lettuce, tomato
- Sourdough bread, tuna fish, jack cheese, lettuce, tomato
- Dark rye bread, chicken salad, lettuce
- Dark rye bread, Muenster cheese, (canned) cranberries, turkey (optional)
- Wheat bread, grated cheese, avocado, tomato

### Pasta

Whether from last night's dinner or store-bought, pastas are a tasty lunch option.

- Spiral noodles, spinach, tomato, feta cheese

- Angel hair pasta, tomato, zucchini, Parmesan cheese
- Noodles in cream sauce, vegetables, pine nuts, Parmesan cheese
- Cold spaghetti with mozzarella cheese
- Macaroni salad

### Non-Pasta Options

- Three bean salad (kidney beans, garbanzo beans, green beans, with onion – often available pre-made at supermarkets)
- Potato salad
- Rice with vegetables
- Cottage cheese with raisins, served with fruit, crackers or Frito's chips
- Sliced buffalo mozzarella, tomato and basil with a drizzle of balsamic vinegar

### **Some Like It *HOT!* Or *COLD!!***

Bring a Thermos to keep the following hot:

### Soups

- Tomato soup, with Parmesan-flavored goldfish crackers
- Lentil soup with grated cheese and a roll or Foccacia bread
- Potato soup with Foccacia bread
- Minestrone soup with grated Parmesan and garlic bread
- Chicken noodle soup with crackers

Other hot foods to put in a Thermos:

- Mashed potatoes with grated Cheddar cheese
- Garlic mashed potatoes
- Mashed potatoes and gravy
- Stuffing
- Spaghetti-O's (not just for children!)
- Chili (veggie or otherwise)



## Cold foods

- Milkshake
- Smoothie
- Milk (*just add cereal!*)
- Yogurt parfait
- Cottage cheese and fruit



## Chips

It's hard not to want chips at lunchtime. Here are two ways to satisfy the craving in a healthy manner:

- Purchase the individual 100-calorie packs. Eat the entire bag without feeling guilty!
- Baked tortilla chips are another option. Pack a small container of guacamole or salsa for dipping.

## Fruit

Fruit is important, but a plain apple can be so dull. Try a variety of canned fruits. Simply transfer fruit from can into a container and it's ready to eat.

- Mandarin oranges
- Cranberries
- Pears
- Peaches
- Fruit cocktail



For fresh fruit, snack on grapes or sliced banana with peanut butter and raisins.

## Dessert

Don't deprive yourself of dessert. It doesn't mean endless munching on chocolate chip cookies. The following are satisfying, better-for-you desserts...and much better than the vending machine!

Pack a container of **chocolate pudding**. Bring **'Nilla Wafer cookies and sliced banana** – spread pudding on cookies and bananas, and enjoy. Other treats to compliment pudding:

- **Teddy Grahams**
- **Banana nut bread**
- **Pumpkin bread**
- **Angel food cake**

### **More sweet-tooth ideas...**

- Slice apples and sprinkle with cinnamon. Dip in honey or Cool Whip.
- Spread a thin layer of chocolate cake frosting on plain or Cinnamon Graham Crackers; or spread a layer of vanilla cake frosting on chocolate Graham crackers.

