

Balanced packed lunch tips: A simple guide to support families



This guide complies with school food standards and offers tips on how to build a balanced packed lunch on a budget.

A packed lunch should contain:

One portion of whole grains & one source of protein:

- Three bean pasta salad
- Jollof rice & a boiled egg
- Lentil dahl and roti
- Roast chicken sandwich
- Cheese quesadilla
- Wholemeal pitta and hummus
- Falafel salad with flatbread
- Vegetable noodles
- Chickpea and potato curry
- Pitta pizzas
- Tuna salad baguette
- Cheese and ham roll ups
- Soup and crackers
- DIY tacos
- Black bean burger
- Cucumber and cream cheese bagel
- Lentil pilaf
- No nut pesto pasta
- Tuna and bean salad
- Roast vegetable sandwich
- Chickpea and vegetable wrap
- Roast vegetable and turkey pasta
- Potato and cauliflower curry
- Cucumber and hummus wraps
- Homemade egg mayo



At least one portion of vegetables & one portion of fruit:

- Bell pepper
- Carrots
- Celery
- Peas
- Edamame
- Broccoli
- Cherry tomatoes
- Kale / sweet potato homemade crisps
- Salad
- Cucumber
- Spinach
- Courgette
- Green beans
- Beetroot
- Radish
- Sugar snap peas
- Grapes
- Banana
- Orange
- Pineapple
- Cherries
- Mango
- Raspberries
- Strawberries
- Blackberries
- Dried fruit
- Tinned fruit (not in syrup)
- Apple
- Pear
- Papaya
- Apricot
- Melon



One snack:

- Small bag of plain popcorn
- Malt loaf
- Low sugar yoghurts or Greek yogurt
- Raisins / sultanas
- Homemade fruit yogurt pot with oats
- Brown, plain rice cakes
- Dips and hummus

+ only water or milk
(try adding lemons, cucumbers or mint to water)



More tips on the back!



Tips to make a balanced packed lunch:

- Ensure there is a source of protein + carbohydrates + fruit and vegetables in the lunch as this is what is offered for school dinners and fuels your child
- Ensure fruit and vegetables are always included- these can be contained in the main i.e. a chicken pasta salad with peppers and tomatoes or lentils with broccoli and raisins
- Choose wholegrain where possible (bread, pasta etc.) as increased fibre will keep your child fuller for longer
- Replace crisps, cheese strings, chocolate and high sugar yogurts with one of the snacks suggested



Tips to create a healthy packed lunch on a budget:

- Keep different types of wholegrain bread products in the freezer so you have a variety of options that will last longer over the weeks – bagels, pittas, sliced bread and wraps
- Use leftover vegetables/roast meats or legumes from the day before to make cold pasta salads or sandwiches
- Buy tinned fruit / vegetables (not syrup) or frozen- they are just as nutritious and often cheaper!
- Chop up fruit and vegetables into bite sized portions to allow it to stretch further throughout the week
- If your child has a thermos, you can send them left overs in here



Tips to help your child enjoy packed lunches:

- Involve your child with making their lunch - cutting the fruit/veg or adding salad to their wrap (do it the day before and squeeze some lemon on any fruit to keep it fresh)
- Where possible or as a treat, provide a dip such as hummus or tzatziki so children can dunk their carrots, cucumbers or peppers as a side snack
- Taste the rainbow - try a variety of different fruits and vegetables for a visually fun packed lunch.
- Include healthier foods that your child actually enjoys at home to ensure they're having a nutritious meal

