



HEALTHY LUNCHES

Lunch can be just as important as dinner to a healthy family food culture.

I've struggled for years with eating at healthy intervals with balance. I admit there have been some days a coffee has gotten me all the way to 2pm. Not the best way to stay energized. So let there be lunch!

- Lunches serve 2-3 and work both for school age children and adults alike.
- Invest in a great lunch or bento box. Nothing takes the charm out of lunch like a brown paper bag.
- Vegetarian, Gluten Free and Dairy Free adjustments and substitutions are included for each meal.



Vegetarian



Gluten Free



Dairy Free

- A thermos with a wide mouth is highly recommended.

What follows is a simple six week plan to help you get out of a sandwich and salad rut. Use it to keep health and happiness during the day.

To your wild success,

Melissa Lanz

ceo + founder, The Fresh 20

LUNCH BASICS

Common lunch items

LUNCH MEAT

Look for organic, minimally processed meats instead of processed deli meat. Ask the deli counter for an ingredient list to limit preservatives.

GRANOLA BARS

Not all packaged bars are unhealthy. Many companies offer organic, low sugar bars that can easily be added to lunch. Pay attention to the sugar and sodium content of packaged foods. As with any lunch product, if the ingredients are confusing, chances are it's not the healthiest option. The best solution is to make your own bars. You would not believe how easy they are to make.

CHIPS

I don't want to get on a soap box, but chips just don't equate to health. Even the baked versions are loaded with preservatives. If you include chips in your lunch plans, look for natural chips that have no more than 3 ingredients: potato, oil and salt.

CRACKER SANDWICHES

If you notice the color of the cheese in some of the cracker sandwiches on the market, you can visually identify that it is not loaded with nutrition. It is always better to make your own. Whole grain crackers and slices of low-fat, natural cheese are a delicious alternative.

JUICE BOXES

I love the simplicity of grabbing a juice box and throwing into the lunch bag. However, it is not the best option. Juice is very highly concentrated in sugar. As a mom, it sometimes comes down to the lesser of two evils and juice is better than soda. Water is, by far, the best option. Either way, the most sustainable way to include drinks with lunch is to purchase a reusable drink container and fill it yourself.

YOGURT

Avoid gelatin based yogurts with heavy sweeteners. Many yogurt manufacturers have a healthier version than the ones marketed to kids with characters on the packaging. For optimal health buy plain Greek yogurt and add honey and/or fruit.

PEANUT OR NUT BUTTER

There should only be one ingredient: nuts.

COOKIES

Brands have made it very easy to purchase little cookie pouches as a filler to daily lunch. Cookies are not part of the lunch bunch. Cookies are a treat, not a food group. Limit use as a lunch staple. Better yet, bake a batch at home and freeze them for an occasional lunch inclusion.

Fruit Roll Ups are not fruit. Read the label. Is the first ingredient fruit?

TIPS

Use whole grains. Sweeten with honey or 100% maple syrup.

Buy organic, minimally processed lunch meat instead of processed, packaged deli meat.

Look for bread that is high in fiber and made with whole grains. If bread has more than 7 ingredients, skip it.

LUNCH MENU



MONDAY

BEAN N CHEESE BURRITO

Edamame beans, pears, trail mix

TUESDAY

CHICKEN PASTA SALAD

Green beans, red bell peppers, grapes

WEDNESDAY

POLENTA SQUARES & SAUSAGE BITES

Tomatoes & pears

THURSDAY

GRILLED CHICKEN STRIPS

Black beans, polenta sticks, grapes

FRIDAY

QUESADILLA

Green beans and Trail mix

SHOPPING LIST

MEAT / SEAFOOD

1 lb. organic chicken breast
(2 breasts)
2 medium turkey italian
sausage links (pre-cooked)

VEGETABLES & FRUIT

1 cup cherry tomatoes
1 cup edamame beans, ready
to eat (check deli section)
1 small tomato
½ lb. green beans (about 2
cups)
1 red bell pepper
4 pears
2 cups grapes
⅓ cup raisins
⅔ cup raw almonds

DAIRY

1-½ cups mozzarella
cheese, shredded
1 cup white cheddar cheese,
shredded (can also sub
mozzarella)

BAKERY / MISC

¾ cup cornmeal (polenta)
6-12" whole wheat tortillas
2-15 oz. cans black beans
(reduced sodium)

FROM THE PANTRY

4 Tablespoons olive oil
1 teaspoon kosher salt
1 teaspoon black pepper
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1 cup whole grain penne pasta

PREP AHEAD

GRILLED CHICKEN

(Meal #2 and #4)

1. Cut two organic, boneless skinless chicken breasts in half lengthwise and season with ¼ teaspoon each of cumin, salt & pepper.

2. Heat 1 Tablespoon olive oil in a medium skillet over medium heat.

3. Add chicken (in two batches if necessary) and cook 4-5 minutes each side. Remove from heat and allow to cool.

4. Cut 2 pieces into ½” cubes for meal #2. Cut the other 2 pieces into thin strips for meal #4.

5. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator until ready to use.

GREEN BEANS

(Meal #2 and #5)

1. Bring 3 cups of water to a boil in a medium stock pot.

2. Add ½ pound of trimmed green beans to the boiling water and cook for no more

than one minute. Lift beans out and run under cold water immediately. Dry beans completely with a paper towel.

3. Divide beans into 4 snack containers and refrigerate until ready to use. Add a small

piece of paper towel inside container to absorb any extra liquid.

4. Store in refrigerator for up to three days.

POLENTA

(Meal #3 and #4)

1. Bring 2-½ cups water to a boil and add ¼ teaspoon salt.

2. Slowly stir in ¾ cup polenta. Reduce to simmer and cook

for 15 minutes, stirring frequently to reduce clumping.

3. Pour cooked polenta into a lightly oiled loaf pan or square baking dish. Allow to cool before cutting into six 3” squares

and 4-6 sticks.

4. Store polenta pieces in an airtight container in refrigerator until ready for lunch.

TRAIL MIX

(Meal #1 and #5)

1. Divide ⅔ cup almonds and ⅓ cup raisins evenly into 4 small snack containers. Shake to mix and set aside for lunch snack.

PASTA

(Meal #1 and #5)

1. Cook pasta and store in airtight container.

BEAN N CHEESE BURRITOS

Edamame, Pears, & Trail Mix



INGREDIENTS

FOR BEAN N CHEESE BURRITOS

2 whole wheat flour tortillas (12")
1 cup black beans, drained and
mashed
1 cup shredded, part-skim
mozzarella cheese

FOR EDAMAME

½ cup cold Edamame beans

FOR PEARS

2 pears

FOR TRAIL MIX

½ cup trail mix **see prep guide*



*Replace cheese with mashed
avocado.*



*Replace flour tortillas with
corn tortillas.*

DIRECTIONS

PREP AHEAD

- Trail mix

FOR BEAN N CHEESE BURRITOS

1. Warm tortillas in the microwave for ten seconds.
2. Spread ½ cup of beans on middle of each tortilla.
3. Top with ½ the shredded cheese.
4. Fold tortilla towards middle only 2/3 of the way. Fold ends towards middle.
5. Fold remaining edge over all the other exposed edges so that only one seam is visible.
6. Press to seal. Wrap in foil wrap until ready to eat. Enjoy!

SERVING SIZE:

*1 burrito, ¼ cup cold Edamame beans,
¼ cup trail mix and 1 pear.*

CHICKEN PASTA SALAD

Green Beans, Red Bell Peppers, & Grapes



INGREDIENTS

FOR CHICKEN PASTA SALAD

2 cups cooked whole wheat penne pasta (1 cup dry)
2 Tablespoons olive oil
½ teaspoon kosher salt
¼ teaspoon black pepper
1 cup cooked chicken (1 breast), cut into ½”cubes *see prep guide
½ cup Edamame beans, ready to eat
1 small tomato, cut into small dice (yield ½ cup)

FOR GREEN BEANS

1 cup green beans, made ahead
** see prep guide*

FOR RED BELL PEPPERS

1 red bell pepper, cut into thin slices

FOR GRAPES

1 cup grapes



Use quinoa or brown rice pasta.



Replace chicken with 1 cup black beans.

DIRECTIONS

PREP AHEAD

- Green beans
- Grill chicken for cubed chicken
- Cook pasta and store

FOR CHICKEN PASTA SALAD

1. Toss cooked pasta in olive oil and sprinkle with salt & pepper. Add cooked, cubed chicken, edamame beans; fold in tomatoes.
2. Divide into two portions.
3. Can be served warm with chicken or at room temperature without chicken.

SERVING SIZE:

1-1/2 cups pasta salad with ½ cup of green beans, ½ red bell pepper, sliced, and ½ cup of grapes.

POLENTA SQUARES & SAUSAGE BITES

Tomatoes & Pears



INGREDIENTS

FOR POLENTA SQUARES & SAUSAGE BITES

6 - 3" polenta squares, made ahead

** see prep guide*

1 cup cherry tomatoes, cut in half

½ cup mozzarella, shredded

2 turkey Italian sausage links
(pre-cooked), sliced

Kosher salt and black pepper to taste

FOR PEARS

2 fresh pears



Omit cheese, add ½ cup edamame beans.



Omit sausage, increase cheese to 1 cup.

DIRECTIONS

PREP AHEAD

- Polenta squares

FOR POLENTA SQUARES & SAUSAGE BITES

1. Top polenta squares with tomato halves and sprinkle with mozzarella cheese and salt & pepper to taste.
2. If desired and time permitting, broil squares for 3-5 minutes before wrapping in foil for lunch.

SERVING SIZE:

*3 polenta squares with 1 sausage link, sliced
and one pear.*

GRILLED CHICKEN STRIPS

Black Beans, Polenta, & Grapes



INGREDIENTS

FOR GRILLED CHICKEN STRIPS

Grilled chicken strips, made ahead
from 1 breast * *see prep guide*

FOR BLACK BEANS

1 – 15 ounce can organic black beans
Dash of salt and pepper

FOR POLENTA

4-6 polenta sticks, made ahead
* *see prep guide*

FOR GRAPES

1 cup grapes



*Replace chicken with ½
avocado.*

DIRECTIONS

PREP AHEAD

- Grilled chicken strips
- Polenta sticks

ON LUNCH DAY

1. Arrange chicken strips and polenta sticks in the bottom of a small food container.
 2. Pour black beans (including liquid) over polenta.
 3. Season with a dash of salt and pepper.
- Seal tightly to prevent spilling.

SERVING SIZE:

*½ chicken breast with 2-3 polenta pieces with
½ cup beans and ½ cup grapes. (Pack each item
individually if desired.)*

QUESADILLA DAY!

Green Beans & Trail Mix



INGREDIENTS

FOR QUESADILLAS

- 4 whole wheat tortillas
- 1 Tablespoon oil for pan
- 1 cup white cheddar cheese

FOR GREEN BEANS

- 1 cup green beans, made ahead
- * see prep guide*

FOR TRAIL MIX

- ½ cup trail mix, made ahead
- * see prep guide*



Replace flour tortillas with corn tortillas.



Use 'Follow Your Heart' soy cheese; it melts well.

DIRECTIONS

PREP AHEAD

- Green beans
- Trail mix

FOR QUESADILLA

1. Prepare a simple quesadilla by lightly oiling skillet or grill pan and placing one tortilla down into pan.
2. Cover with ½ cup cheese and top with another tortilla. Allow cheese to melt and flip tortilla to brown the other side. Cut into wedges. Repeat steps 1 and 2 to make a second quesadilla.

SERVING SIZE:

*1 quesadilla with ½ cup of green beans
and a ¼ cup of trail mix.*
