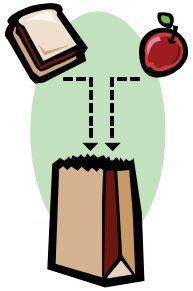
HOME LUNCH EXAMPLES



Packing a home lunch meal can be as simple as combining ingredients you already have at home. It may even be quicker and cheaper than buying prepackaged convenience meals at the store. To help you get ideas for home lunch combinations, take a look at the following examples. Try the ones you think your child will enjoy!

SANDWICHES		
Pita bread Tuna, cottage cheese Celery sticks Cranberries	English muffin Cheese, ham Broccoli Tomato sauce	Tortilla Refried beans, cheese Cabbage, tomato Salsa

BENTO & NOODLES		
Hapa rice Tofu, soybeans Frozen peas, carrots Flavored rice vinegar	Macaroni Cheese, beans Tomatoes, corn Salad dressing	Somen noodles Imitation crab, egg Cucumbers, lettuce Somen sauce

LEFTOVERS		
Macaroni Cheese, chicken Frozen spinach Clementine	Brown rice Pork Onion, carrots Package seasoning mix	Dinner roll Meatloaf Mushrooms, peppers Spaghetti sauce

For more tips on meal planning & simple recipes, please visit the NEW website: www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/new/

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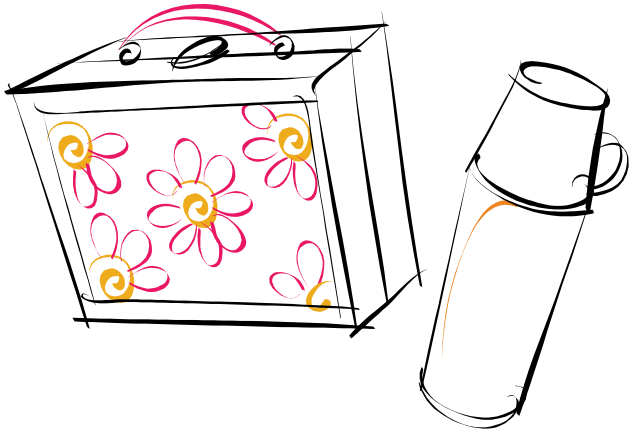
Munchable Home Lunches

Tips for packing healthy & yummy lunches



Hawaii Child Care Nutrition Program
Nutrition Education for Wellness Program

As a parent, you may find that you don't have a lot of time to put together **fancy** home lunches for your child every day of the week. That's okay. Let's look at how we can find a **balance** and realistically work towards packing healthy & hearty home lunches that your child will enjoy!

PERFECTION - This is the 'ideal' meal that includes homemade goodies. Though, in reality, it requires time, and might not always be possible to attain. It would be great if we could try to make these twice a week. Here are some examples:

- Soba noodles with fishcake, eggs, fruits, vegetables & milk
- Hearty tuna sandwich with fixings, sliced fruits, vegetables & milk

HEALTHY MODERATION - This is the second best type of meal to strive for - still balanced, but easier to make. Strive to make these about twice a week. Here are some examples:

- Peanut butter sandwich with raisins, sliced vegetables & milk
- Leftover dinner - chili with rice, vegetables, canned fruit & milk

OKAY FOR "SOME" OF THE TIME - For those days when you don't have time & you need something quick. Try to reserve these types of meals for once a week or less. Here are some examples:

- Microwave mini pizza
- Fast food sandwich

HELPFUL TIPS:

* Add a **creative** touch—attach a sticker or memo with a personal drawing to the lunch bag that will make your child smile.
* Dedicate some time to planning your home-packed meals. Your child will appreciate your thought & effort.
* Consider investing in individually packaged, single-serving foods, like string cheese, fruit cups, boxes of raisins for those busy days.
* Prepare & gather the home lunch items the night before to help minimize the chaos in the morning rush.
* Use insulated lunch bags with coolants & clean them regularly.
* Freeze what you can (like bottled water). They will serve as 'ice packs' and defrost in time for lunch.
* Pack only what your child can eat for lunch to avoid perishable leftovers.

FOOD CHOICES

Strive for balanced meals that include foods from **all** food groups to help your child get the nutrients they need to grow strong and healthy. Choose a food from each food group below to create 'complete' meals that will surely satisfy your child's appetite!

You can make sandwiches, bento meals, pasta dishes, soups—the possibilities are endless! Just combine your meal with a complementary sauce, gravy or condiment to meld everything together!

Food Group	Examples	
Meats & Proteins	• Beef, pork, poultry, fish • Beans, peas • Canned meats, poultry, fish • Cold cuts / deli meats • Egg • Fishcake, imitation crab	• Hummus • Nuts, nut butters • Sausage • Seeds • Tofu
Grains & Breads	• Breads, rolls, bagels, pita • Biscuits, muffins • Cereal (hot, cold) • Crackers • Pasta (macaroni, spaghetti)	• Noodles (soba, udon, somen) • Rice (brown, enriched, 'hapa') • Tortilla
Fruits & Vegetables	• Fresh (apples, bananas, berries, citrus, melons, papaya, pineapple, bell peppers, eggplant, herbs, leafy greens, potato, veggie sticks, etc.) • Frozen (berries, peaches, carrots, corn, mixed vegetables, peas, spinach, etc.)	• Canned (applesauce, fruit cocktail, peaches, pears, pineapple, tomato [diced, sauce], etc.) • Dried • 100% juice
Milk & Dairy	• Cheese • Cottage cheese	• Milk • Yogurt