



## **Healthy Lunch Box, Soups and Snacks**

### **Top Tips:**

Make sure your children's lunch boxes are varied everyday. You can use different breads such as Pitta, Ciabatta, Grannary, wholegrain wraps etc. Gone are the days of boring marmite sandwiches!! As always try and use up those green vegetables that you now have so many of in your fridge!

Salads make an excellent choice of lunch, and these can also be varied. Try chicken salad, cherry tomatoes and a few mini balls of mozzarella and your own made salad dressing for those all essential omega oils. The dressing is simple, Hemp, Sesame or Olive Oil mixed with lemon and crushed garlic if you like it. You could also make turkey salad with pasta sweet corn, cherry tomatoes and spring onion. Sprinkling sesame, pumpkin and sunflower seeds over the top of any salad gives it nutritional value and makes it nice and crunchy.

As we are avoiding all processed food, there will be no crisps in these lunch boxes.... **will there!!!** Try offering occasional twiglets, toasted seeds (put your seeds in the oven on a baking tray for 10 mins or until crisp), roasted cashew or homemade pop corn as a treat.

Pasta salads and sandwich fillings can be prepared the night before to save minutes in the morning. You can use left over's from the night before pasta dinner, or homemade soup.

Invest in a thermos flask. These are ideal for serving up a cup of homemade soup which is warming and nutritious for your child.

Beware of cereal bars, as they are processed foods and contain more than 40% sugar and get stuck to your child's teeth for the rest of the day. Make your own granola bars or muffins for an occasional lunch time treat.

Make the fruit in your child's lunch boxes exciting. Cut up wedges of mango, melon, papaya, and pineapple covered in strawberries, raspberries or blueberries. Fruit like this is much more likely to be eaten! Include a napkin as it could, and should, get messy!!

Hard boiled eggs are a good one to include whole in the lunch box.

Sometimes I tuck a little note in my children's lunch boxes, just a little joke or a few inspirational words encouraging them to eat all their food. Try it and see if it can help!

### **Recipe Ideas:**

## **Stuffed Pitta Pockets**

*Stuffed pitta pockets with a nutritious filling make a nice change from an ordinary sandwich for your child's lunchbox -try this tasty tuna mix which can be made up the night before.*

### **Ingredients**

2 eggs  
200g can tuna in oil  
100g (4 oz) sweetcorn  
1 tbsp mayonnaise  
4 spring onions, chopped  
salt and freshly ground black pepper  
a few drops Tabasco sauce (optional)  
salad cress  
2 pitta breads

### **Method:**

- Put the eggs in a saucepan of cold water and bring to the boil. Reduce the heat and simmer for 7 to 8 minutes (the yolk should be solid). Drain and cool under cold water. Peel the eggs when cold.
- Meanwhile, strain the oil from the can of tuna and mix the flaked tuna together with the sweetcorn, mayonnaise, spring onion, salt and pepper and the tabasco sauce. Roughly chop the hard-boiled eggs and add to the tuna mix with the salad cress, stirring well.
- Cut the pitta breads in half to give 4 pitta pockets and divide the mixture between them.

**MAKES 2 PORTIONS**

## **Lunch On A Stick**

You can make up kebabs using skewers or straws with many different foods. They are quick to put together and easy to pack in your kid's lunchbox. Here are some examples, but feel free to make up your own combinations choosing healthy foods that your child enjoys.

### **Ingredients**

Slices of ham or turkey rolled up and interspersed with cubes of cheese and wedges of pineapple  
Cherry tomatoes and mozzarella  
Chicken or turkey  
Cucumber  
Carrot and red pepper  
Cubes of cheese (low fat and small amount)  
Cherry tomato

## **Fruit on a stick**

Thread a selection of fruits onto a thin straw or for older children you can use a skewer. You can use a mixture of fresh and dried fruits eg:

Chunks of pineapple

Dried apricots  
Strawberries  
Melon  
Kiwi  
Grapes  
Cubes of mango

## **Prawn & Watercress**

This is a great lunch idea and one of my favourite sandwiches. This can also be used in a wrap or pitta or simply in a salad.

### **Ingredients**

4 slices granary bread  
Butter or low fat spread  
a handful of watercress, trimmed, tough stalks removed  
125g cooked prawns  
1 tbsp mayonnaise  
1 tbsp tomato ketchup  
paprika

### **Method:**

- Spread two slices of bread thinly with butter.
- Arrange the watercress on the bread .
- Mix the prawns together with the mayonnaise and ketchup and spoon onto the watercress. Sprinkle with paprika and sandwich together with the remaining bread.
- Cut into quarters and trim the crusts.

**MAKES 2 PORTIONS**

## **Soup Idea's**

### **Tomato and Basil Soup**

Fresh tomato soup is highly superior to tinned varieties. Sun-ripened tomatoes give the sweetest flavour, so this soup is ideally made in the summer with almost overripe tomatoes. The pasta is optional or replaced by the same amount of rice.

### **Ingredients**

2 lb (900 g) ripe tomatoes  
2 tablespoons olive oil  
2 cloves garlic  
2 tablespoons tomato puree  
1 1/4 pints (725 ml) vegetable stock  
1 1/2 oz (40g) small pasta shapes  
1 bunch fresh basil  
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

### **Method**

- Chop the tomatoes. Heat the oil in a saucepan and gently saute the garlic for 2 - 3 minutes. Add the tomatoes, tomato puree, stock and sugar. Bring to the boil, reduce the heat and simmer for 20 minutes.
- While the soup is simmering, cook the pasta shapes in boiling, salted water until tender. Drain and keep to one side in cold water.
- Pass the tomatoes and liquid through a sieve, or puree in a liquidiser and pass through a fine sieve.
- Drain the pasta and add to the soup. Reheat gently. Reserving 6 whole leaves, finely chop the basil and stir into the soup. Season to taste, garnish with the basil leaves and serve.

**SERVES 4 - Preparation time : 15 minutes: Cooking time : 30 minutes**

## **Vegetable Soup (Immune booster)**

### **Ingredients**

4 oz (100 g) carrots, shredded  
3 celery stalks, shredded  
4 oz (100 g) spinach or Watercress (salad cress), shredded  
1 large onion, chopped  
1.2 litres (2 pints) water  
1 tablespoon chopped parsley  
salt pepper  
4 tomatoes, skinned and chopped  
1 green / red pepper, cored, seeded, and chopped

### **Method**

- Put the carrots, celery, spinach or watercress, onion, water, parsley, salt and pepper in a saucepan and bring to the boil. Simmer for 25 minutes.
- Add the tomatoes and pepper, and simmer for a further 10 minutes or until all the vegetables are tender.
- Bring to the boil, blend and serve.

**SERVES 6 - Preparation time : 15 minutes: Cooking time : 30 minutes**

## **Lentil and Tomato Soup**

### **Ingredients**

100 g (4 oz) red lentils  
1 large onion, peeled  
1 small turnip, peeled  
1 parsnip, peeled  
2 stalks celery, washed  
450 g (15 oz) can tomatoes  
1 litre (1 1/4 pt) stock or water  
bay leaf  
salt and freshly ground pepper  
whole wheat croutons  
7 g (1 tbsp) chopped parsley

### **Method**

- Wash and rinse the lentils, removing any discoloured or black pieces.
- Chop the vegetables roughly into even-sized pieces.
- Put the lentils, vegetables, tomatoes and stock or water into a large saucepan with the bay leaf. Season to taste.
- Bring the soup to the boil and remove and skim.
- Lower the heat to allow liquid to simmer for about 35 minutes, until vegetables and lentils are tender. Allow to cool slightly.
- Liquidize the soup in a blender or food processor.
- If the mixture is too thick, add a little more stock, or water. Reheat and taste for seasoning.
- Serve with wholemeal bread croutons and a sprinkling of chopped parsley.

**SERVES 4**

## **Carrot Soup**

### **Ingredients**

1.2 lb (225 g) leeks or onions, finely sliced  
2 teaspoons Olive oil  
Pinch of sea salt  
1 lb (455 g) carrots, sliced  
4 oz (110 g) whole green or brown lentils, washed  
1/2 teaspoon dried thyme  
2 pints (1.1 litres) stock  
1/2 fresh lemon, finely sliced

### **Method**

- Sauté or simmer the leek with salt until tender.
- Add the carrots, lentils, thyme and water, bring to the boil and simmer for 30 minutes.
- Sieve or liquidize the soup
- Reheat, taste and adjust the seasoning if required and serve garnished with lemon slices.

Soups are a fantastic way of getting a variety of vegetables into your child. Experiment with the recipes and add greens where ever you can. **Enjoy!!!**