

Tips for Preparing Healthy Bag Lunches for Your Entire Family

Whether you're packing lunches for your kids to take to school or for yourself or family members headed off to work, bag lunches can be a great option to offer heart-healthier foods in a convenient way.

Here are some easy ways to prepare all your healthy bag lunches at once – the day or night before! It's all about pairing items that are easy to prepare, easy to store, and able to please everyone's taste buds.

Grab the key ingredients

Step 1:

Select a grain. Try a whole grain tortilla or bread, whole grain pasta or even brown rice.

Step 2:

Choose a spread. Try pesto, hummus, almond or peanut butter, light mayo or herbed cream cheese, or a salad dressing like yogurt and herbs, olive oil or balsamic vinegar.

Step 3:

Choose your veggies. Try grape tomatoes, baby carrots, celery, raw broccoli, radishes or sweet peppers.

Step 4:

Pick a lean protein. Try hard-boiled eggs, turkey deli meat, chicken breast, tuna or low-fat cheese.

Step 5:

Grab fruits of your choice as part of the dish or simply dessert.

Build your convenient lunches

When building your lunches, store the ingredients in different containers until you're ready to eat your meal. For example, you don't want your tortilla or bread to get soggy with spread, or your lettuce leaves to lose their crispness from being pre-mixed with the salad dressing.



At lunchtime, it's assembly time:

Wrap: tortilla + spread + lean protein + veggies + fruit

Sandwich: whole grain bread + spread + lean protein + veggies + fruit

Power salad: dark green leaves + veggies + lean protein + salad dressing + fruit

Pasta salad: whole grain pasta (cooked) + light mayo and plain low-fat yogurt + veggies + lean protein + fruit

Additional tips:

Try batch cooking. When you cook on the weekends or in the evenings, cook extra and save a few portions in the freezer or refrigerator to take to work or school in the next day or so. One effort, but double the pleasure!

Get the kids involved. If you have young children at home, have them choose from the ingredient options you've already selected, so you don't end up having too many menus to prepare at once.



[Learn more about the benefits of whole grains](https://tinyurl.com/MHIFwholegrains)
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