

## Pack-Alongs

Here are some tasty and healthy food items to quickly make and pack for school, day trips, or anytime on-the-go. These foods do not require much in the way of preparation. They are easy to make and don't need a real recipe – only your imagination and your child's appetite.

Not being able to pack peanut butter (for school and community activities) can be difficult for some children. However alternatives such as soy nut butter, and sunflower butter can be a good source of protein and makes a healthy snack paired with the following foods:

- Spread on chunks of apple
- Spread on brown rice cake
- Sandwiched between two waffles or pancakes
- Spread on wheat tortilla, topped with a banana and rolled up
- Spread on lavosh with fruit spread and rolled and cut into pinwheels

Vegetables and fruits can make their own snacks with a little extra effort to make them special and appealing to children

- Celery stick spread with cream cheese and sprinkled with raisins
- Fruit chunks (melon, pineapple, grapes) skewered on a popsicle stick
- A cored apple stuffed with granola or cereal
- Carrot and jicama sticks served with dip
- Lettuce leaves stuffed with egg-olive spread, then rolled

When the bag of plain old cereal needs a shake up. A variety of homemade trail mixes make easy to pack favorites. You can even pop in a few chocolate chips to any of these for a real treat:

- Favorite low sugar cereal mixed with raisins and coconut flakes
- Granola mixed with dried apricots, cranberries
- Dried fruit pieces mixed with wheat pretzels
- Seeds (pumpkin, sunflower) mixed with goji berries and banana chips
- Yogurt covered pretzels mixed with whole wheat crackers

Something other than typical sandwich bread. Pita bread makes a handy and healthy pocket to stuff your child's favorite fillings:

- Stuffed with lettuce, avocado and cheese
- Stuffed with spinach and hummus
- Stuffed with ricotta cheese and herbs
- Stuffed with left-over meats and veggies

Lavosh or flatbread and tortillas make a neat roll-up for little hands. These rolls can also be cut for a special, colorful presentation – kind of like sushi!

- Spread with cream cheese and shredded veggies (carrots, red pepper, zucchini)
- Spread with hummus and sliced cooked turkey
- Spread with tomato sauce, sprinkled with mozzarella cheese
- Spread with bean dip and sprinkled with jack cheese

Mini bagels and english muffins make a good platform for lots of spreads and fillings. You can even cut bagels in half and remove some of the bread, so filling stays in better and bagel is not so filling for little tummies. Here are a few options:

- Spread with tomato sauce, sprinkled with mozzarella cheese and chopped veggies – like a pizza
- Layered with cottage cheese and sliced strawberries
- Stuffed with scrambled egg pieces
- Spread with pumpkin or fruit butters

Waffles and pancakes can be good for making fun sandwiches and rolls

- Spread pancakes with cream cheese and any fruit puree and roll up (secure with toothpick)
- Spread soy nut or pumpkin butter on waffle and sprinkle raisins in holes
- Layer scrambled eggs between waffles or pancakes for a breakfast sandwich

Pasta left-overs. Pasta from dinner can be reinvented to work in your child's lunchbox.

- Tortellini threaded on popsicle sticks with marinara sauce for dipping
- Favorite cooked pasta shape with pesto or veggie dip
- Cooked pasta shapes tossed with cut cherry tomatoes and mozzarella cheese chunks