



Build a better bag

Lunch

A new school year is the perfect time to reinvent the traditional brown bag into a more nutritious (and fun) lunch that kids will enjoy.

AFTER SCHOOL SNACKS

Encourage kids to invent their own snack mixes by combining dry, whole-grain cereal, dried fruit and unsalted nuts or seeds.

Serve apples with nuts and raisins. Offer frozen juice bars. Invite kids to make their own concoctions adding whole or crushed berries or bananas for added nutrition.

SANDWICH SWITCH-UP

Swap a sandwich for humus dip with multi-grain tortilla chips. Add baby carrots, cucumbers, cherry tomatoes and cubed (1/3 cup) low-fat cheddar cheese chunks for dipping. Or mix together 1/3 cup low-fat cheddar cheese with shredded lettuce and tomatoes. Add flavor with black olives and fresh salsa or guacamole, then roll into a corn tortilla or whole-grain pita wrap.

BROWN BAG SWAPS

Swap white bread for whole grain or 100 percent wheat. Pair carrots, cucumbers and grape tomatoes with yogurt dip, or smear apple chunks with almond or peanut butter.

Include a serving of low-fat or fat-free dairy, such as 1 cup of yogurt, 2 slices of Swiss cheese, 1/3 cup low-fat cheddar cheese or 1 cup of fat-free or low-fat milk. Swap salty, high-fat chips for popcorn or multi-grain tortilla chips or vegetable chips.

Provide 2 ounces of lean, roasted, low-salt beef, pork, chicken or turkey or non-meat options like 2 ounces of raw or roasted seeds or nuts. Find more ideas at www.nuval.com.

RECIPE ROUNDUP

Chicken Meatballs with Sun-Dried Tomato Pesto

FROM COOKINGPLANT.COM

- 1 tablespoon fresh oregano
- 2 tablespoons fresh parsley
- 3 cloves garlic
- 2/3 cup onions
- 1-1/4 pounds ground chicken breast
- 3/4 cup Parmesan cheese, grated
- 1 large egg
- 1/3 cup whole milk

- 1 slice white bread
- 1/4 cup pine nuts
- 3/4 cup sun-dried tomatoes, packed in oil
- Black pepper
- Kosher salt
- 7 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

Prepare a food processor with the blade attachment.

Trim parsley leaves from stems, finely chop to measure indicated amount. Place half in food processor, place other half in a large mixing bowl.

Pick oregano leaves off stems, finely chop to indicated amount. Cut onion into 1/4-inch dice to measure indicated amount.

Smash garlic under the side of your knife to remove peel. Mince garlic, add half to the oregano, place other half into bowl of food processor. Place sun-dried tomatoes in bowl of processor, it's OK if some of the oil gets included. Add pine nuts, Parmesan and olive oil to food processor. Purée tomato mixture until nearly smooth, salt and pepper to taste, mix quickly to combine. Transfer to a small serving dish.

Preheat oven to 400°F. Heat a medium sauté pan over medium-high heat. Add olive oil and warm. Once oil is warm, add onions, sauté until softened and just slightly starting to caramelize.

Add oregano and garlic to softened onions, cook 2 minutes, stirring often. Transfer onion mixture to bowl of parsley.

Crack egg into a small mixing bowl and whisk to combine.

Lightly grease a sheet pan with olive oil. Place a small bowl of water nearby.

Place ground chicken into large mixing bowl with parsley, onions and garlic. Season with salt/pepper, add grated Parmesan and whisked egg.

Squeeze the milk out of the bread slice. Add bread to chicken. Discard milk.

Combine chicken mixture well. To form a meatball, measure out 2 tablespoons chicken mixture. Dampen fingers in bowl of water to prevent sticking, shape chicken into balls. Set meatballs on prepared sheet pan, continue with remaining chicken.

Place meatballs in preheated oven. Bake 17-22 minutes until cooked through and golden brown.

Transfer 3-4 meatballs to each dinner plate. Serve warm with the sun-dried tomato pesto on the side.

Gluten-free Dairy-free Pop Tarts

FROM CAROL KICINSKI, WWW.SIMPLYGLUTEN-FREE.COM

- 1 cup superfine brown rice flour
- 3/4 cup tapioca or potato starch
- 1/4 cup sweet rice flour plus more for rolling
- 1/2 teaspoon xanthan gum
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 tablespoon sugar

- 1 cup solid vegetable shortening, at room temperature and cut into 1-inch pieces
- 2 large eggs, use divided
- 2-3 tablespoons rice milk
- 10 ounces dessert filling (any flavor)
- 2 teaspoon coarse sugar

Line a baking sheet with a piece of parchment paper.

In a large mixing bowl, whisk together brown rice flour, tapioca or potato starch, sweet rice flour, xanthan gum, salt and 1 tablespoon sugar. Add shortening and work it into flour mixture with your hands until it is crumbly and the texture of coarse sand with some large pieces about the size of grapes. Add one egg and 2 tablespoons rice milk.

Mix with a spoon until you have a soft dough that is not sticky. You may need to work the dough with your hands to get it to come together. If too dry add the final tablespoon of rice milk. Divide dough into 2 equal portions, shape into rectangles. Wrap one portion of dough with plastic wrap, place in refrigerator while rolling the first.

Place a piece of waxed or parchment paper on a work surface, sprinkle with sweet rice flour, place one piece of dough on parchment, sprinkle with a little more sweet rice flour and top with another piece of paper.

Roll into a rectangle a bit larger than 12x8 inches. Trim dough with a knife into a 12x8-inch rectangle. Cut the 8-inch side in half and the 12-inch side into fourths to form eight 3x4-inch rectangles.

Beat remaining egg and brush the bottom 4 rectangles with some of the egg. Place 2 heaping tablespoons of dessert filling on each bottom rectangle and shape it into a rectangle leaving 1/2-inch border on all sides. Slide your hand under the paper under the top rectangles and flip them so they are directly on top of the filled dough. Press edges of the dough together, then press with tines of a fork. Prick the top of each pop tart several times with fork tines. Brush with more egg wash, sprinkle each pop tart with 1/4 teaspoon coarse sugar and place on the baking sheet lined with parchment paper.

Place in the refrigerator and repeat with the final piece of dough. Refrigerate at least 1/2 hour.

Preheat oven to 350°F while pop tarts are in the refrigerator. Bake 30-35 minutes until golden brown. Let cool and serve.

Makes 8 pop tarts.

Chicken Tacos with Peach Salsa

WWW.CANSGETYOUCOOKING.COM

- Salsa:**
- One 15.25-ounce can lite sliced peaches, drained and chopped
 - One 4.25-ounce can green chilies, chopped, drained
 - 1/4 cup finely chopped red onion
 - 1 tablespoon fresh chopped parsley
 - 1 tablespoon lime juice
 - 1/4 teaspoon hot pepper sauce

- Tacos:**
- 8 corn, flour or whole wheat tortillas, slightly warmed
 - One 5-ounce can chicken breast, drained and flaked
 - Finely shredded green cabbage
 - Shredded low-fat Monterey Jack cheese, optional
 - Lime wedges, optional

Salsa: In medium bowl combine all ingredients. Cover and refrigerate until ready to serve.

Tacos: Fill tortillas with chicken; top with salsa. Serve with shredded cabbage and cheese. Garnish with lime wedges.

Thai Style Spring Rolls

FROM WWW.STARKIST.COM

- Two 4.5-ounce cans solid albacore in water, drained
- 10 sheets rice paper
- 20 pieces bibb lettuce, membrane cut out, 2x3 inches in length

- 1/2 cup matchstick carrots
- 1/2 cup very thinly sliced red pepper
- 1/2 cup thinly sliced napa cabbage
- Fresh cilantro, mint or basil leaves
- Spicy soy dipping sauce

Prepare ingredients, set in front of you. Heat water to boiling, place in a cookie sheet with sides. Take rice paper, one at a time, soak in hot water 20-30 seconds. Remove from water and lay flat on a clean surface. Place lettuce on bottom third of rice paper, leaving 1 inch on each side. Top with carrots, pepper, cabbage, tuna and herbs. Pull bottom of rice paper tight over top of vegetables, roll tightly to middle of rice paper. Fold in sides, continue to roll tightly. Cut in half, place on serving platter.

Cover with wet paper towel until ready to serve.

Repeat with rest of the paper, vegetables and tuna.





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