

# Tips for a healthy lunchbox!

Make lunches interesting and appetizing by varying the food you choose, as well as its colour and texture. *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide* proposes a variety of foods in each group that will stimulate your taste buds.

Schools provide nutritious foods to young people in keeping with *Going the Healthy Route at School: The Framework Policy on Healthy Eating and Active Living*. Parents and children are encouraged to play their part in this effort by choosing healthy foods for school lunchboxes.

## A complete lunch

includes at least one item from each food group.

- **Vegetables and fruit**
  - Choose dark green or orange-coloured vegetables and eat them raw, steamed, baked, or sautéed rather than fried.
  - Choose vegetables and fruit more often than juice.
- **Grain products**
  - Eat a variety of whole grain products, and choose those lower in fat, sugar or salt.
- **Milk and alternatives**
  - Select lower fat milk and milk alternatives.
  - Choose milk alternatives fortified with calcium and vitamin D.
- **Meat and alternatives**
  - Substitute tofu and legumes for meat and eat fish regularly.
  - Opt for lean meats and meat substitutes cooked with little or no fat or salt.



## Rainbow-coloured ideas

- **Oils and fats**
  - Use vegetable oils like canola, olive or soy and choose non-hydrogenated margarine.
  - Limit your intake of butter, hard margarine, lard and shortening.

Santé et Services sociaux Québec

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# colourful Lunches



Québec

## Vegetables and fruit

### RAW vegetables

- |               |                |
|---------------|----------------|
| <b>Whole:</b> | <b>Sticks:</b> |
| · mushrooms   | · carrot       |
| · snow peas   | · celery       |
| · radishes    | · green pepper |
| · cauliflower |                |
| · broccoli    |                |

- Slices:**
- cucumber
  - zucchini
  - avocado

### SALADS

- lettuce (Boston, Romaine, etc.)
- spinach
- carrot
- green or red cabbage
- mushroom
- potato
- beet

### SOUPS

- vegetable
- tomato
- broccoli
- carrot
- leek
- various types of squash

### Juice

- fruit, no sugar added
- vegetable, low sodium

### Fruit

#### Fresh

- grapes
- plums
- nectarines
- bananas
- pears
- peaches
- melons
- apples
- oranges

#### CANNED

#### pureed fruit

#### fruit salad

## Grain products

### Bread

- |                 |                  |
|-----------------|------------------|
| · whole wheat   | · bagel          |
| · rye           | · rice cake      |
| · kaiser roll   | · English muffin |
| · hamburger bun | · pita bread     |
| · sub roll      | · tortillas      |

### UNSALTED CRACKERS

### whole wheat PASTA

- macaroni
- fettucine
- penne

### GRAINS

- rice
- bulgur wheat
- couscous
- barley

### Home-made bread muffins cake

- banana
- bran
- carrot
- cranberry
- apple
- zucchini

## Milk and alternatives

### milk

- enriched cow's milk
- enriched goat's milk
- enriched soy beverages



### yogurt

- plain or fruit-flavoured (in a container, in tube, or to drink)

### pudding

- milk
- tapioca
- rice

### cheese

- cottage
- fruit flavoured fresh cheese (in a container)
- swiss, cheddar and mozzarella: grated, sliced, cubed or in sticks

## Meat and alternatives

### Fish

- tuna
- salmon



### meat

- chicken
- turkey
- ham
- slice of roast beef or pork
- hard-boiled eggs
- veal, turkey or chicken cretons



### Legumes

- |                 |               |
|-----------------|---------------|
| · lentils       | · veggie pâté |
| · chick peas    | · hummus      |
| · red beans     | · tahini      |
| · white beans   |               |
| * peanuts,      |               |
| * peanut butter |               |



### NUTS AND seeds

- \* trail mix
- \* almond or hazelnut butter



WARNING WARNING WARNING WARNING

## \* Food Allergies

There are children with food allergies in almost every school in Québec. Peanuts and other nuts are the most dangerous foods because they are everywhere but not necessarily detectable. A number of schools have taken measures to ensure the safety of allergic children, and have banned foods containing peanuts or other nuts from lunch boxes.

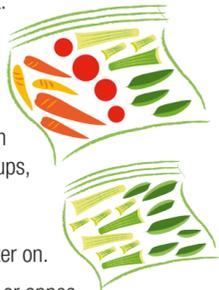
All foods are potentially allergenic. To avoid an unforeseen allergic reaction, children should never trade their lunch for that of another child.

# PLANNING

It's simpler to plan ahead



- Plan menus ahead of time and make a list of the food to be bought.
- Prepare raw vegetables for packing with lunches, and keep them in the fridge.
- Make extra helpings of certain dishes (casseroles, hearty soups, pasta, rice) and include them in the lunch box the next day, or freeze them for lunches later on.
- Freezing can alter the texture or appearance of certain foods. The following foods should not be frozen: homemade yogurt, soft and fresh cheeses, milk or gelatine-based desserts, milk-based soups or sauces, fruit and vegetables to be eaten uncooked, mayonnaise, salad dressing, pickles, eggs in their shells and hard-cooked eggs.



## A safe lunch box: beware of bacteria!!!

- Always use an ice pack to keep food cool.
- An insulated (thermos-style) lunch box should also contain an ice pack.
- A meal will remain hot, even when surrounded by ice packs, if it is in a tightly closed thermos that was heated for 10 minutes with boiling water prior to use.



- Wash the lunch box every day with soapy water to eliminate bacteria. Keep bad odours away by leaving it out in the open to dry.
- Lunch boxes and thermoses can occasionally be washed with water and baking soda to eliminate persistent odours.

## Do not

- Use non-washable lunch bags, which contribute to the development of bacteria
- Use a frozen main dish or frozen juice to keep the other food in the lunch box cool
- Bring a frozen main dish in a plastic container, or other type of container, without an ice pack
- Put your lunch on a window ledge in winter to keep it cool

## Containers

- Choose a sturdy lunch box that has lots of room in it and can be easily carried and cleaned.
- Choose the right container for microwave heating: glass or plastic (follow the manufacturer's instructions), or cardboard (for short microwaving times). Do not use empty yogurt, margarine or cottage cheese containers, or a plastic wrap, to heat food in a microwave oven. Upon contact with hot food, this type of plastic may break down into toxic substances that could be harmful to your health.
- Use reusable rigid plastic containers instead of wax paper, aluminum foil, plastic wrap, or plastic sandwich bags, which end up in the trash. Opt for metal instead of plastic utensils to preserve the health of our environment.

## It's easy to eat vegetables AND fruit!

- 4 servings for kids aged 2 to 3
- 5 servings for kids aged 4 to 8
- 6 servings for kids aged 9 to 13
- 7 to 8 servings for teens aged 14 to 18

Offer one or more servings with each meal or snack.

### One serving is:

- 1 medium-size vegetable or fruit
- 125 ml (1/2 cup) of raw, cooked, frozen or canned vegetables or fruit
- 125 ml (1/2 cup) of unsweetened fruit or vegetable juice
- 250 ml (1 cup) of lettuce, cucumber or spinach
- 60 ml (1/4 cup) of dried fruit

# Super Recipes



## Date Cereal

### Bars

8 bars

- 250 ml (1 cup) canned lentils, rinsed and drained
- 2 eggs
- 125 ml (1/2 cup) canola or olive oil
- 175 ml (3/4 cup) brown sugar
- 250 ml (1 cup) whole wheat flour
- 125 ml (1/2 cup) oat bran
- 60 ml (1/4 cup) wheat germ
- 375 ml (1 1/2 cups) oat flakes (plain oatmeal)
- 175 ml (3/4 cup) finely chopped dried dates

- Position baking rack in middle of oven. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Oil an 8 in. x 8 in. (about 20 cm x 20 cm) Pyrex baking dish.
- In a large bowl, purée lentils using a hand blender or fork. Add eggs and oil. Mix well and set aside.
- In another bowl, combine brown sugar, flour, oat bran, wheat germ, and oat flakes.
- Add dry ingredients to wet ingredients and mix well. Add dates and blend again.
- Spread mixture in baking dish and press down firmly. Bake for about 20 minutes. Cool before cutting into bars.
- For variety, replace the dates with raisins, dried cranberries, chocolate chips, or nuts, for example.
- This recipe can be frozen.

## Hearty Lentil and Rice Soup

6 servings

- 2 medium onions, finely chopped
- 30 ml (2 tbsp.) vegetable oil
- 2 cloves of garlic, finely chopped
- 2 medium carrots, sliced
- 2 celery stalks, diced
- 15 ml (1 tbsp.) curry
- 500 ml (2 cups) milk
- 2.5 l (10 cups) chicken broth
- 500 ml (2 cups) green lentils
- 1 bay leaf
- Salt
- 125 ml (1/2 cup) brown rice
- 300 g (one 10 oz bag) spinach, chopped

- In a large saucepan, brown onions in oil over medium heat, stirring often.
- Add garlic, carrots, celery, and curry powder. Stir while cooking to coat with oil.
- Add the milk, chicken broth, lentils, and bay leaf. Let simmer 45 minutes, partially covered.
- Add the rice, salt, then continue cooking for 45 minutes.
- Add spinach and cook until spinach is hot.



Source: Regroupement des cuisines collectives du Québec

## Spinach and Leek Quiche

2 quiches

- 250 ml (1 cup) spinach, cooked and chopped
- 250 ml (1 cup) leeks, cooked and chopped
- 1 tomato, diced
- 125 ml (1/2 cup) grated cheese
- 4 eggs, beaten
- 500 ml (2 cups) milk
- 1 ml (1/4 tsp.) nutmeg
- 5 ml (1 tsp.) herbes de Provence
- 2 pastry shells
- Salt and pepper
- Fresh parsley

- Preheat oven to 375°F. Place pastry shells in two quiche dishes.
- In a large bowl, mix the cooked spinach and leeks with the tomato.
- Add cheese, eggs, milk, nutmeg and herbes de Provence. Salt and pepper to taste. Mix well.
- Pour mixture into the 2 pastry shells. Garnish with fresh parsley. Bake for about 45 minutes. Serve.
- Round out your meal with assorted cooked vegetables and home-made or canned fruit salad.
- This recipe can be frozen.



## Let your imagination run wild!

### Fun sandwiches

- Ciabatta bread with sliced turkey, cheese, and sticks of red and green pepper
- Whole wheat pita bread with tuna, sliced avocado, green onions and lemon juice
- Bagel with hummus and garnished with spinach leaves and grated carrots
- Whole wheat bun stuffed with eggs, cheese and lettuce



### Hot dishes

- Pea and barley soup
- Vegetable stir-fry with shrimp, chicken or pork
- Shepard's pie
- Veggie, meat, or seafood lasagne
- Beef stew with vegetables

### Hearty salads

- Romaine lettuce, tangerines, chicken and almonds
- Pasta, tomatoes, cucumber, feta cheese and olives
- Chick peas, rice, broccoli, carrots and corn



### Colourful, easy-to-carry snacks

- Apples, pears, bananas, clementines, cherry tomatoes, grapes, canned or dried fruit
- Peeled orange sections or pieces of pineapple or melon
- Sticks of red, orange or green pepper
- Cucumber slices, snow peas, carrot sticks



Source: Patisserie Galliers