

December Featured Story

Healthy and Simple School Lunch Ideas for Every Day of the Week

For many parents, packing school lunches can feel like a mundane chore. But there are plenty of ways to make the daily task a little more fun — and nutritious.



Linzi Qi, M.A., R.D., C.D.N., a clinical dietitian at NewYork-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center, suggests using a bento-style lunch box with multiple compartments to help create a well-balanced lunch. “Bento boxes make it easy to visually plan meals,” she says. “Filling the boxes with colorful ingredients — with a mix of fruits, vegetables, whole grains and proteins — can make eating more fun, too.”

Here, Qi shares five easy meals for your child’s bento box, one for each day of the week.

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Weekly Meal Plan

Monday

Turkey egg scramble. This yummy option is low-fat and high in protein. Turkey can be substituted with other lean proteins, such as uncured ham or chicken sausage.

Sides

Mashed avocado with crackers. A great pairing of a healthy fat with fiber.

Cottage cheese with fresh strawberries. You get protein and calcium from cottage cheese, and the fresh strawberries provide some natural sweetness and bright color.

Tuesday

Chicken pesto bow-tie pasta. This heart-healthy dish is a crowdpleaser at dinner — and makes for great leftovers for lunch the next day.

Sides

Celery topped with sun butter and raisins. A fun way to add crunchy fiber and healthy fat into a diet.

Fresh blueberries. They’re a great source of Vitamin C, which helps **boost the immune system.**

Wednesday

Egg salad with cucumber sandwich on wheat bread. A high-quality protein with the immune-boosting antioxidant carotenoid, egg salad pairs well with crunchy, refreshing cucumbers.

Sides

Cinnamon roasted sweet potatoes or sweet potato fries. Filled with fiber and vitamin B6, roasted sweet potatoes are a good source of energy.

Dried apple slices. Consider any dried fruits without added sugar.

Thursday

Blueberry bagel with peanut butter and sliced banana. This combo delivers good fiber, protein, and fruit. Replace the peanut butter with another nut butter if preferred.

Sides

Cheese stick. This is always a simple grab-and-go protein option.

Baked broccoli tater-tots. Found in most grocery store freezer aisles, they can be a fun way to get in a serving of vegetables.

Friday

Whole wheat pita bread with chickpea hummus. This combo is rich in fiber and plant-based protein.

Sides

Carrot sticks with veggie dip. Carrots are high in vitamin A, which is beneficial for eye health.

Yogurt-covered pretzels. A sweet and salty treat that also works as a snack.

More Ideas for Healthy Sides

- Sliced sweet peppers or cucumbers
- Oatmeal raisin energy balls
- Natural fruit bars
- Dried cranberries
- Banana mini-muffins