

Save Money and Eat Healthier

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Do you find yourself going out for lunch most days, spending close to \$10/day? And you know what you're eating is high in fat and calories. Make a ***Holiday Resolution*** to bring a healthy lunch to work on most days. That way you might be able to indulge and not feel so guilty at your holiday gatherings.



Enticing Lunch Ideas

- Frittatas are an uncommon but easy-to-make menu item that can liven up your lunchtime experience. You can use ingredients that you may have left from a holiday meal, too!
- Sprinkle a small amount of your favorite salad dressing over leftover cooked vegetables. Wrap them up — along with shredded lettuce and low fat cheese — in a whole-wheat tortilla.
- Mixing flavors and textures is a great way to make a packed lunch seem special. Add nuts or seeds to salads, soups or sandwiches for their “crunch appeal.” Or put toasted spiced nuts in your bag instead of chips. Baby carrots are ready to pack, super nutritious and delicious! A bag of dry ready-to-eat cereal adds crunch, too. Dried fruit, such as raisins, adds a sweet taste that stands alone or dresses up yogurt or a sandwich.
- There's no need to limit lunch items to cold foods. An insulated bottle keeps foods hot when you're craving warmth in the colder months. Try soups, pastas, stir-fry or hot beverages.
- If you and some reliable co-workers take your lunches to work every day, consider starting a Brown Bag Lunch Club. Each day, one of you brings lunches for the group.

When it is your turn, you'll find that it takes less time to make several lunches one day a week than one lunch every day. And you'll get added variety!

Keep in Mind Food Safety

Storing lunches for hours brings concern for food safety. Cold food should remain cold and hot food hot. How? An insulated lunch bag will help ensure safe food until the noon hour. Here are more ways to keep food safe:

- *Cold Food.* Keep cold foods at 45 degrees or lower. Even with an insulated bag, it helps to include frozen gel packs, a freezer bag of ice cubes, or other cold items such as a frozen juice or water bottle.
- *Hot Foods.* Keep hot foods at 140 degrees or higher. Fill an insulated bottle with boiling water, wait a few minutes, and then dump it out and add hot food. Keep the insulated bottle closed until lunch time to lock in heat.
- Discard perishable foods that were not eaten at lunch.

For additional information, contact the Wildcat Extension District, Crawford County, 620-724-8233, Labette County, 620-784-5337, Montgomery County, 620-331-2690, Pittsburg Office, Expanded Food and Nutrition Education (EFNEP), 620-232-1930.

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