

45 Days of Quick, Easy, and Practical Lunches

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Sandwiches/Wraps

Aside from your basic pb&j, or turkey sandwich, here are some variations that are quick and easy!

1. **Turkey pesto wrap**: spread pesto on a tortilla and top with turkey and sliced cheese.
2. **Chicken salad wrap or sandwich**: canned or rotisserie chicken, mayo, ranch seasoning, celery, and grapes or apples
3. **Ham and cheese pinwheels**: spread cream cheese on a tortilla and top with green onions, ham, and cheese. Cut into one-inch wheels.
4. **Chicken Ceasar salad pitas**: in a bowl, combine lettuce, grilled chicken strips, croutons, parmesan cheese and Caesar dressing. Add to pitas.
5. **Quesadillas**: Add cheese, beans, chicken, or shredded beef. Grill and then cool on a wire rack before you pack them.
6. **Cookie cutter sandwiches**: Use cookie cutters to quickly add some fun to your sandwiches (and remove the crust at the same time!
7. **Ham or Turkey "Sushi"**: spread cream cheese on a slice of ham or turkey, add a carrot stick, celery stick, or dill pickle. Roll and cut into fourths.
8. **Bean and cheese burritos**: use the frozen version, or make your own.

Hot Lunch

Sometimes we forget the power of the thermos--voila, food stays hot for hours! This opens up a lot of hot lunch possibilities!

9. **The FIRST RULE of hot lunches: Invest in a good thermos!** Our readers recommend the [Thermos FOOGO or FUNtainer](#).
10. **Spaghetti and meatballs**
11. **Hot dogs** : pour boiling water into a thermos and add the hot dogs. The water will cook the dogs by lunch!

12. **Oatmeal:** if your kiddos love oatmeal, just make it before school and then put it in a thermos to keep warm. Try our favorite {and SUPER EASY} overnight recipe [here](#).

13. **Last night's dinner:** if they loved dinner last night, heat it back up and throw it in a thermos. Enchiladas, beef stroganoff, lasagna, etc.

14. **Soups:** canned, or homemade

15. **Mac and Cheese**

16. **Sloppy Joes:** Meat goes in the thermos, bun in a container to keep from getting smashed.

17. **Pulled Pork:** make ahead pulled pork in a crock pot, then divide into individual portions for lunches. You can freeze and defrost as well. Serve with pretzel or Hawaiian rolls.

18. **Taco salads or walking tacos:** keep beans in a thermos, and provide all the mixings for salad or tacos. Check out these [tacos in a bag](#).

Breakfast for Lunch

19. **Cereal:** put cold milk in a thermos and their favorite cereal in a bowl.

20. **French toast**

21. **Pizza muffins:** [combine a favorite breakfast and lunch idea in one recipe. Try this one here.](#)

22. **Bagels, bagels, bagels:** these round wonders are all the rage. Top them with cream cheese, fruit, almond butter, lunch meat, make pizza bagels, or your own creation. [Find some bagel inspiration here.](#)

23. **Waffles and wafflewiches:** Freeze a batch of waffles, or buy the frozen version. Pop them in the toaster and top them with peanut butter and bananas, Nutella and strawberries, ham and cheese, or [more inspiration here](#).

24. **Muffins:** freeze a batch ahead of time and use for quick lunches. Try all of [our favorite muffin recipes here!](#)

Quick Ideas

25. **Nachos:** ditch the Lunchable version, try [these yummy versions](#) found on Pinterest.

26. **Pitas and hummus**

27. **Kabobs:** anything is better on a stick. Skewer grilled chicken, turkey and ham slices, veggies, fruit, cheese, etc. Get some inspiration [here](#).

28. **Frozen smoothies:** freeze them ahead of time, then stick them in the lunch box. By noon, they'll be ready to drink.
29. **Hard boiled eggs**
30. **Chicken nuggets:** for a homemade version, [look here!](#)
31. **Chicken strips and bbq dip**
32. **Frozen Gogurts**
33. **Chicken salad with crackers:** mix up your favorite version using canned or rotisserie chicken, then throw in a sealed container and provide crackers for dipping.
34. **Quick salads:** if your kids enjoy salad, they make great lunches. Cut lettuce and veggies ahead of time and keep them in zip-locked bags. Pop a frozen, cooked (breaded) chicken breast in the microwave, cut and add to salad.
35. **Frozen bagel pizzas**
36. **Apple rounds w/ peanut butter:** core and apple, slice it horizontally, and add peanut butter, nuts, chocolate chips, or oats.
37. **Pepperoni, mozzarella cubes, and marinara sauce for dipping**
38. **Try sun butter:** if your school doesn't allow peanut products. Find it [here](#).
39. **Homemade Lunchables:** find ideas from [Pinterest](#).
40. **Pizza:** use last night's pizza, or a take and bake version to portion out to your kiddos throughout the week.
41. **Frozen taquitos or burritos**
42. **Empanadas**
43. **Corn dogs:** use a homemade version by using Jiffy corn muffin mix, half a hot dog, then bake.
44. **Mini chicken pot pies**

Tips from a teacher:

45. *I work with primary school age kids and sit with my students twice a week for lunch to work on social skills. Here is what I have noticed... If you send a whole fruit, apple, orange, etc it goes in the trash, untouched. **Cut it up**, and they gobble it up! Cut veggies with dip are popular, as are rolled lunch meats. No one has a plain old sandwich anymore. **Mini bagels** are a hit with cream cheese. The **all metal***

thermos holds the heat well. If they loved what you made for dinner, it works for lunch. Please don't give them something YOU want them to eat, figuring they will be hungry and give in and eat what they have. **THEY DONT!** It all goes in the trash, and any opportunities for learning are gone for the rest of the day because all they can think about is their empty belly!