

**PENNY SAVER NEWS**

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Summer's here, school's out, what do you feed the children for lunch every day? Especially if they are off to the park or the beach for much-needed exercise and activity, what do you put in a lunch bag that's interesting, nutritious and doesn't need a knife and fork? Sandwiches of course! The problem is coming up with enough different sandwiches to keep children interested as well as nourished. You are free to put anything you want, in any combination you want, between two slices of bread. Sometimes however, we need some sparks of inspiration. So, here are some hints.

First, think about the bread. Surely by now you are using healthy whole wheat bread instead of plain white. But why stop at bread? Try pita pockets, or use tortillas to make a rolled sandwich instead of a flat one. Then there are rolls - hard rolls, Kaiser rolls and lots of specialty rolls with cheese, peppers or other flavorful ingredients. There nothing to say you must put a burger in a hamburger bun, so put meatballs in a hot dog bun. Try rice cakes, or for an extra surprise, pancakes or waffles instead of bread.

Now, what goes inside? Consider the usual, meat or cheese. Sliced lunch meats are quick and easy, but often high in fat and salt unless you shop carefully. Use meat from last night's dinner instead. An extra pork chop can be sliced thinly. Pull the meat off a chicken leg from the grill. Slid a slice of meatloaf into a pita pocket and top with chutney or tabasco. Canned tuna is common, but there are also canned chicken, salmon, and even sardines. If you have a slow cooker you can 'roast' an inexpensive cut of beef till it's tender. Add some barbeque sauce and there's dinner tonight and

sandwiches for several days.

There is plenty of variety in the cheese department too. Try a different flavor than your usual - sharp cheddar instead of American. Go easy on the jalapeño unless you know your children like the peppers. Instead of slices, sprinkle on grated cheese. Or blend shredded cheese into the mayo or mustard you use. And there are several flavors of soy-based cheese slices on the market too.

Next, the fruit and vegetable choices range from lettuce and tomato to mango chutney and pepper jelly. Aim for variety. A sandwich with a little crunch is more interesting. So add some crunchy pickle slices, sweet or dill your choice. A slice of chicken can use cranberry relish, tomato salsa or peach chutney. Avocado slices or shredded apples, slivered green peppers to sliced zucchini will all work in a sandwich. For children, avoid sprouts because of the bacterial risk.

Sandwiches don't have to have meat and cheese. Even a standard peanut butter and jelly can be interesting. Spread it on a tortilla, sprinkle on a bit of granola or even a few corn flakes, then roll it up. Or add sliced bananas and raisins and skip the jelly. Sliced tomato, lettuce and bacon bits on peanut butter is another version.

Don't forget that many children will be delighted with a pizza sandwich - 2 slices of cold pizza pressed together. Some will love cold spaghetti between bread. Refried beans on a tortilla or in a pita, with shredded cheese and salsa is tasty and nutritious. Hummus (blended chickpeas) is available in several varieties for a Mediterranean flavor. Neufchâtel is a lower fat alternative for cream cheese. Blend in chopped nuts and drained, crushed pineapple or chopped dried fruit for variety.

Even if you use lunch meat and cheese, use a cookie cutter to make it an interesting shape. Or use one slice white and one whole wheat. And ask the children

what they would like. If they suggest it they are more likely to eat it, no matter how weird the combination seems to us!

Here's a recipe for sandwiches that are baked together. Let each child add a filling of their own, such as chopped chicken or pickle relish to personalize their portion.

### Cheesy Squares

1 pkg refrigerated crescent rolls (8 oz)	1 C (4 oz) shredded Cheddar cheese
2 tsp instant minced onion	1 tsp chili powder (optional)
1 tsp poppy seed	Pan spray

Preheat oven to 375° F. Combine cheese, onion and chili powder. Unroll dough and pat half into bottom of an 8 inch square pan. Sprinkle cheese over dough. Allow child to add their special ingredient to one quarter. Pat remaining dough into an 8 inch square and place over cheese. Spray with pan spray and sprinkle with poppy seeds. Bake 15 to 20 min until golden brown. Cool, then cut into quarters.

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