



Low Waste Lunch Ideas

How to pack it...

There are so many clever packed lunch boxes available. Choosing a box with compartments can mean that you don't need extra packaging to separate foods. Below are some great examples of these from the Nursery children's lunches.

Little tupperware style pots are also very handy. It may be that you have containers, such as take away or hummus pots which can be reused for cold foods.

Small tiffin boxes are also an easy way to separate and transport food.





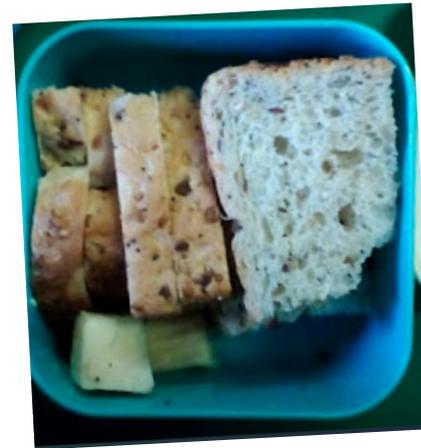
How to pack it...

Try to find reusable alternatives for anything single use.

Packing a reusable water bottle and avoiding drinks in single use bottles or cartons is a simple way to save waste.

Insulated containers can be great for packing hot food such as soups and stews in the Winter or keeping yogurt cool in the Summer.

Sandwiches and wraps can be packed comfortably into reusable pots. If your wraps and sandwiches need more holding together, save waste by choosing a reusable beeswax wrap over cling film or tin foil. Beeswax wraps can also be used for covering bowls of food and most other things that you might use cling film for. They're made from cotton and beeswax and can be reused many times.





Tips for avoiding single use packaging.

Foods marketed towards children are often heavily packaged. They're also normally more expensive weight for weight and often contain more sugar. By avoiding convenience lunch items and buying larger packets instead you can reduce the amount of single use packaging that you buy and save money.



Fruit and vegetables are naturally packaging free and most shops have packaging free options. They're also full of vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants and an excellent source of dietary fibre, making them a very healthy food to pack children's lunch boxes full of.

Pasta salads are a great way of packing veg into lunch boxes. I often add beans such as butter beans too.



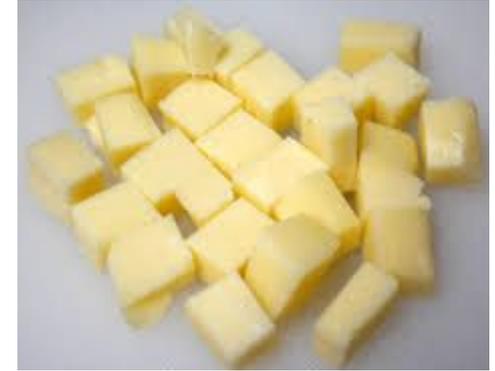
Popcorn kernels are great fun to pop and will easily keep for the week if stored in an airtight container.



Here are some suggestions for swaps for some of the most common packaged lunch items.



Swap individually packed cheese for cut up pieces from a large block.



For Babybel fans, try Giant Baybel, aka Edam. Weight for weight it's almost half the price and comes with about half the packaging. Babybel's contain almost as much packaging as cheese and it's not recyclable.



Most delicatessens, including those in supermarkets, allow customers to bring their own reusable containers. (covid restrictions may currently apply in some shops)



Swap small yogurt pots and tubes for a bigger tub which can be decanted into a reusable pot.



Studies have shown that yogurts aimed at children are generally higher in sugar. Look for lower sugar, live yogurts for a healthy swap.



If you're really keen, you could have a go at making your own yogurt.

<https://downshiftology.com/recipes/how-to-make-homemade-yogurt/>

Small yogurt pots and containers use more plastic and cost more by weight than buying larger pots. [21 tips for reusing large yogurt containers.](#)

Swap dried fruit sweets for dried fruit



Many fruit sweets contain [more sugar than Haribo!](#) As well as seeming healthier than they actually are, they also come with lots of non recyclable packaging. Bear Yoyos are marketed with a paper and card appearance but are actually packaged in mixed materials which aren't recyclable. For a similar sweet snack with much less waste and cost pack dried fruit such as apple rings, banana chips or apricots.



Replace cereal bars with homemade bars. There are lots of quick, no bake [recipes](#) online and if you store them in an airtight container they'll keep for the week. Or pack granola so that it can be added to yogurt.

Ms Moore's Banana and Oat Cakes



The basis for these cakes is bananas and I usually make them when I have overripe bananas that need using up. It's an extremely simple recipe which children can easily get involved in making. Ours are different each time depending on which ingredients we have.

1. Mash 6-8 bananas and add 1 cup of oats.
2. Stir in any other ingredients that you like ensuring that your mix stays at a gooey consistency.
3. Place the mixture into a baking tray or individual cup cake cases. Grease with a little oil or butter to avoid sticking.
4. Bake in the oven at 200c for 20 to 30 mins.
5. Leave to cool and set.

Other ingredients that work well...

Raspberries, blueberries or diced apple.

Dried fruits such as raisins, cranberries, cut dates or apricots.

Mixed seeds -we especially love linseed, chia seed and sunflower seeds.

Nuts such as walnuts or flaked almonds.

Flavourings such as cinnamon, cocoa powder, or vanilla essence.

Zero Waste Shops

To reduce your waste even further, you might like to explore some of our local zero waste shops which allow you to bring your own refillable containers.



[Heart and Soul Exmouth](#)



[Nourish Topsham](#)

Lunch Box Ideas

The following is adapted from www.netmums.com/back-to-school/lunchbox-ideas

Tummy-fillers	Five-a-day options	Good for growing bones	Snacks	Thirst-quencher
Sandwich or wrap Wholemeal, granary, multi-grain or white bread, bread roll, pitta bread, naan, chapatti, bagel, tortilla/wrap, croissant. See below for filling ideas*	Any combination of: raisins, pumpkin/sunflower seeds, ready to eat dried apricots, dates or prunes.	Fruit yogurt, fromage frais or dairy-free alternative	Hard boiled egg, scotch/savoury egg, mini sausages, falafel etc.	Water
Savoury muffin or scone, pancake, potato cake	Whole fruit - satsuma, apple, banana, pear, peach, plum, grapes (whatever is in season)	Cold rice pudding or custard	Cubes of cheese	Milk (whole, semi-skimmed, goats or soya)
Pasta salad, rice salad, cous cous, potato salad.	Fruit salad pot - any combination of prepared fruit (strawberries, orange, melon, kiwi etc.), fruit puree/apple sauce or fruit jelly made with fruit pieces and pure fruit juice. Try to use fruits that are in season.	Greek or plain yogurt	Small piece of cake, malt loaf, scone, gingerbread man or flapjack	Milkshake
Quiche, mini quiche or frittata/Spanish omelette	Salad pot - any combination of prepared raw vegetables (cucumber, pepper, celery, cherry tomatoes, carrot) or coleslaw.	Cheese portion, cottage cheese with pineapple.	A handful of low/no salt crisps/savoury snack in a pot.	Pure fruit juice or smoothie - preferably diluted.
Pizza slice, sausage roll, mini pasty, cheese and potato roll, samosa, pakora, spring roll	Tinned fruit pot (useful in the winter if you can't find ripe fresh fruit) - mandarins, pineapple, peaches, fruit salad, pears)	Dips - hummus, tzatziki, raita, cream cheese and plain yogurt.	Crackers, crisp bread, oatcakes, rice cakes, cheesy biscuits, savoury flapjack, bread sticks, home made popcorn etc.	Well diluted high-juice squash

*Fillings

Meat - wafer thin cooked meats, cubed chicken/turkey breast with tomato and lettuce, ham and cheese, roast chicken & hummus, leftover cold meats (chicken, turkey, meatloaf, sausages etc) with salad, chicken and mashed avocado, cold BLT.

Fish - tuna mayo & sweetcorn, tuna salad, sardine and tomato, fish paste and cucumber.

Veggie - grated cheese, cheese spread, cream cheese, Quorn slices and salad, cottage cheese with pineapple, cheese and grated carrot with a little mayo, veggie sausages, vegetarian pate with cucumber, cheese and coleslaw, egg salad/egg mayo, cheese and pickle.

Sweet - High-fruit jam/fruit spread, chocolate spread, honey, lemon curd.

