

Pack a Healthy Lunch

Bagged lunches aren't just for kids! Save calories and money by making it yourself



Lori Loughlin

Celebrities often complain that it's hard to eat healthy on set due to all the food offered by craft services. And for the rest of us, lunchtime proves to be just as tricky, with an array of options from fast food to vending-machine fixes. If you frequent the local deli for your midday meal, dietician Heather Bauer, founder of Nu-Train and author of *The Wall Street Diet*, warns that your lunch may not be as healthy as you

think. That extra-large salad or deli sub could have loads of unwanted calories and fat — not to mention the portion sizes are usually much bigger than they should be! “By packing your own lunch, you have portion control,” explains Heather. “You can keep your lunch between 300 to 500 calories, whereas eating out, some people go up to 1,000. So you could save 500 calories a day — that’s 3,500 calories a week.” Since most of us don’t have time

to spare in the morning, Heather recommends planning and preparing ahead of time. You want to include a protein, a grain and some vegetables. Although it’s easy to bulk up on one food for the week, it’s important to switch it up so you don’t get tired of eating the same thing. Here are some waist friendly ways you can spice up your lunch and add variety to your week.

OK!

— Karen Berg

BAG A PROTEIN

“The easiest way to get a protein is to use leftovers,” says Heather. If you cook chicken, turkey or fish, make extra so you can have it the next day. If you’re doing cold cuts, lean turkey is the best option. “I always recommend keeping it in 1/4-pound bags at home so it’s in a single serving for you,” Heather adds. Greek yogurt is also packed with protein and calcium. Pair it with a cup of fruit.



6-ounce Fage Greek yogurt, \$1.99; supermarkets

NOT ALL BREAD IS THE SAME



Read the nutrition label on your bread or wrap – you could be packing in loads of unwanted fat and calories. Heather says, “The most important thing when picking a bread is that the first ingredient is whole wheat. You don’t want to see white flour, corn fructose syrup or sugar.” She recommends two slices that equal fewer than 100 calories and have 4 grams of fiber. Thomas’ and Pepperidge Farm have light breads that fit those requirements. Ezekiel 4:9 bread is also a hearty option, but is higher in calories so stick to one slice.



FRUITS AND VEGGIES

“If you slice and prepare your fruits and veggies instead of keeping them whole, you are more likely to eat them,” says Heather. Some good sliced-veggie options are peppers, cucumbers, zucchini and celery. “Your best bet is to wash and cut everything when you get home from the supermarket on Sunday,” adds Heather. It makes packing lunch that much easier. If you want a dip, mix any kind of vegetable-soup powder with Greek yogurt for a protein-rich punch.

DRINK UP!

“Water can actually help people lose weight,” says Heather. If you normally drink sugary beverages, try swapping them out for Crystal Light On the Go. You can add these small powder packets to your bottle of water for only 10 calories a pop. If you’re struggling to get your



veggies in, an 8-ounce can of low-sodium V8 equals one serving of vegetables. The best part? No prep necessary.

12-ounce V8, \$2; supermarkets

HEALTHY SNACKS

Like to snack? Pack something healthy so you’re not tempted with a bag of greasy chips. Soy chips have protein and come in sweet or salty flavors to satisfy all your cravings. You could also pair a piece of fruit with string cheese or low-fat Laughing Cow cheese. “You should try to get a little protein and fiber in there,”



Newman’s Own Organics Soy Crisps, \$3; Whole Foods

says Heather. Sliced apples with peanut butter make a sweet and savory snack. But make sure to sprinkle the apples with lemon juice to prevent discoloration.

PACK IN STYLE!

Forget plastic bags – these are eco-friendly and fun!

Built Tortuga Lunch Tote (\$22; builtny.com), Raya 12 Can Tote (\$11, shopthermos.com), Food Jar with folding spoon (\$25; shopthermos.com)

