



Food For Thought

Healthy, fast, fuss free lunches and snacks





Easy and healthy lunches

- Hints and tricks for preparing fast healthy snacks and lunches
- Meals that can be prepared in advance
- Hidden salt in our diet – how we can increase flavour without salt



Hints and tricks - Coping in the kitchen

- Be mindful of what you buy
- Know what is in your pantry
- Cook extra portions of basics, so you have them on hand
- Make use of leftovers
- Be creative – who said you can't mix pesto with yoghurt
- Set aside time to cook, plan your menu



Be mindful of what you buy

- Buy good quality – but be aware of a good deal
- If you want to avoid snacks – don't buy them
- Have a good variety of foods on hand – fresh fruit and veg, seeds and nuts, pulses and legumes
- Buy in season when you can

Seasonal foods

Autumnfresh
Top tips, great kid's meals, quick dinners, best buys and nutritional advice about fruit and vegetables



Lebanese Eggplant

To buy Select firm, slender, glossy-skinned eggplant that feels heavy for its size. Avoid those with brown spots or wrinkling skin.

To store Handle with care as eggplant bruises easily. Refrigerate in the crisper and use within 5 days.

Cook's tip Lebanese eggplant does not need salting before cooking. Cut lengthways into thin strips, brush with olive oil and char-grill or barbecue until tender. Drizzle with lemon juice to serve.

Nutrition A good source of dietary fibre, eggplant has a sprinkling of most vitamins and minerals.

Baby Carrots (Dutch Carrots)

To buy Choose firm, bright-orange bunched carrots with fresh-looking green tops. Avoid spindly pale carrots.

To store Cut off green tops and store carrots in a plastic bag in the crisper section of the fridge. Use within 3-4 days.

Fresh for Kids Kids love sweet little carrots! Wash and scrub well, no need to peel. Rapidly steam, boil or microwave until just tender. Toss with a little extra virgin olive oil to serve.

Nutrition Baby carrots are a rich source of beta carotene (which the body converts to vitamin A) and alpha-carotene, an important antioxidant. Carrots also provide dietary fibre.

Granny Smith Apples

To buy Choose firm, even-coloured, glossy green apples. Avoid bruised fruit.

To store Refrigerate apples in the crisper section of the fridge. Chilled apples will maintain their crispness for up to 1 month.

Fresh for Kids Pop a Granny Smith apple into the kid's school lunchbox. Eating an apple after a meal increases the flow of saliva and helps prevent dental decay.

Nutrition A good source of dietary fibre, apples provide a range of vitamins and minerals, plus energy-giving carbohydrates.

Grapes

To buy Grapes do not ripen off the vine, tasting a grape is the best indicator of flavour. Choose plump, firm grapes by the bunch. Avoid grapes with split skin or bruising.

To store Wash just before eating. Store in a plastic bag in the fridge, and use within 3 days.

Fresh for Kids Choose seedless grapes such as Menindee Seedless, Thompson Seedless (sultana), Ruby Seedless and Flame seedless. Toss grapes into a chicken salad or add to a jelly.

Nutrition Grapes are good for vitamin C and dietary fibre. They also contain some vitamin B and potassium.

springfresh mushrooms with lagging, check that slimy.

Summerfresh Berries

Summerfresh Sweetcorn

Winterfresh Parsnips

Autumnfresh Imperial mandarins

Chokos

Guava

Quinces

Beetroot

shiitake mushrooms

mushrooms with lagging, check that slimy.

ackaging. Store cloth bag on the underside of berry is not squashed or coloured firm berries

removed from their ed, in a single layer over with plastic Use within 2-3 days.

soaps, stir-fries, stems to

Use within 1-2 days.

berries with a little er toasted panettone

celtorn. Peel the husks wrap the cob with the alk cobs in cold water a grill, baring often, mets are tender. Pull a drizzle of olive oil,

crisper section

and root. Chop, halve looking.

Small or halved oil until golden parmesan and sted meat.

Fresh for Kids Freeze mandarin segments in a small plastic bag - they make a terrific after sport snack.

Nutrition Mandarins are good for vitamin C, beta carotene (which converts to vitamin A), folate and fibre.

those fresh garlic green stems still ind sweeter in

garlic in a plastic

slump, even-coloured neties are Mariposa, Lewis and Satsuma.

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ery by placing the water in the fridge d use as desired.

hokes in a paper for up to 2 weeks.

ive skins on for Thiny peel using

y spread celery sticks Vegemite for a quick to cheese, egg and

bed Jerusalem den crust. Or sh until smooth

To buy Select small to medium sized firm parsnips. Avoid large parsnips

To buy Select glossy fruit that feels heavy for its size as this indicates good juice content. In peak season from April to July, Imperial mandarins are virtually seedless and are very easy to peel.

To store Store mandarins in a cool, well-ventilated place or keep in the crisper section of the fridge. Best used within 1 week.

Fresh for Kids Freeze mandarin segments in a small plastic bag - they make a terrific after sport snack.

Nutrition Mandarins are good for vitamin C, beta carotene (which converts to vitamin A), folate and fibre.

To buy Select plump, firm-skinned grapes in full bunches. Stems should be supple and not withered. Grapes do not ripen further once picked.

To store Wash grapes just before eating. Store unwashed grapes in an airtight container or plastic bag in the fridge. Use within 3 days.

Fresh for Kids Seedless grapes are ideal for kids. Pop whole grapes into jellies and add a small bunch to the school lunch box.

Nutrition Grapes are good for vitamin C and supply fibre and potassium.

To buy Choose small chokos (about the size of a medium pear) with vivid green, firm skin. Avoid chokos with soft or withering skin.

To prepare Using a small sharp knife, halve choko lengthways and remove the skin and core. Slice or chop as desired.

Cook's tip Quickly stir-fry sliced chokos. Boiling can reduce their flavour. Team chokos with soy sauce, garlic and chilli or add to a curry.

Nutrition Low in kilojoules, choko contains some vitamin C and small amounts of other vitamins and minerals.

To buy Select richly perfumed, unblemished, firm guava. Skin and flesh colour varies from white to pink depending on variety. Avoid those with soft spots or signs of bruising.

To store Leave guavas to ripen in a single layer, at room temperature out of direct sunlight. Strawberry guavas (with pink flesh) are eaten when soft whilst white guava remains firm like an apple.

Fresh for Kids Make a vitamin C-rich strawberry guava smoothie.

Nutrition Guava is a top source of vitamin C and lycopene, a valuable antioxidant.

To buy Select even-coloured golden quinces with a perfumed aroma. Avoid fruit with brown spots on the skin. Handle with care as although quinces feel firm they easily bruise.

To prepare Quince skin and flesh is very firm. Use a small sharp knife to peel and core the fruit. Peeled and cut fruit discolours quickly so place immediately in a bowl of water with fresh lemon juice added to prevent discoloration.

Cook's tip Quinces require long, slow cooking for their pale flesh to develop a rich rosy-pink colour.

To buy Select firm, deep purple beetroot with fresh-looking leaves still attached. Buy bunches with even-sized beets so they take the same amount of time to cook.

To prepare Trim the leaves, leaving at least 5cm stalks attached. Place unwashed beets into a plastic bag and store in the fridge. Use within 1 week.

Cook's tip Do not peel or damage skin and leave at least 2-3cm stalks attached to the beet to prevent loss of its rich red colour during cooking. Boil beets or individually wrap in foil and roast for



Know what is in your pantry

- Have a good variety of foods on hand – fresh fruit and veg, seeds and nuts, grains, pulses and legumes (tinned and dry)
- Have oils and vinegars for making dressings
- Pickled vegetables, relishes and chutneys for added flavour
- Miso pastes, tahini, mayonnaise, yoghurt



Recommended pantry items (examples)

Oils

Olive oil - salads
Rice bran/canola/veg oil – cooking
Sesame oil

Vinegars

Apple cider/white wine
Balsamic

Pulses/grains

Quinoa
Cous cous
Brown lentils – dried/tinned
Cannellini beans – dries/tinned
Farro, bulgur
noodles

Seeds/nuts

Almonds
Pepitas
Sunflower seeds
Sesame seeds

Fermented veg/pickles/Sauces/chutneys

Olives
Capers
Cornichons
Soy sauce/tamari
Siracha sauce/sweet chilli sauce
Pesto
Mustard
Miso

Dairy

Parmesan cheese
Yoghurt
Feta/haloumi
Mayonnaise

Spices

Ground Coriander
Ground Cumin
Curry mix
Oregano
Thyme
Cajun spice

Canned foods

Tomatoes
Tuna
Beans/pulses
Coconut milk/cream

Spreads

Tahini, peanut (nut butters)

Other items

Nori/seaweed
Fish sauce
Meats – fresh and preserved



Cook extra portions of basics, so you have them on hand

- Soak and cook beans, lentils and legumes, quinoa
- Soak grains such as burghul, freekeh and keep in the fridge
- Steam extra rice for use in lunches
- Make extra portions of curries or other wet dishes
- Toast of extra seeds and nuts to add crunch to your salads



Make use of leftovers

- Hot soup, curry or braises in winter
- Coleslaw, potato salad, cold meats in summer
- Use smaller amounts in dressings or as sandwich fillings
- Bread which is past its best can be toasted, made into croutons or fried breadcrumbs, or included in Fattoush
- Roast veg can be made into a salad
- Cold noodles can be used in lunch soup meals



Be creative

- Make use of small amounts of dips, cream cheese, pastes etc to include in dressings
- Combine flavours
- Taste your food, add seasoning
- Make use of spice mixes, pickled vegetables for added zing



Set aside time to cook, plan your menu

- Take time to consider your menu for the week, even if you have a limited repertoire, write some ideas down.
- Make things you like and are good at
- Include other family members – especially kids old enough to cook
- Prepare a weekday meal on the weekend, especially if you are short of time during the week
- Incorporate your pantry list with supermarket “click and collect” services



Build a salad

- Choose an element from each column
- Stack in a wide jar or Tupperware container
- Start from the heaviest (grains) to the lightest (leaves)
- Make the dressing in a separate jar – use 1 of the dressing bases and add 1 tsp olive oil, 1 tsp lemon juice or cider vinegar and seasoning

Base	Add 1 or 2 favorite vegetables	Add some leaves	Add some crunch	Add some flavour	Add some dressing
Quinoa	Avocado	Rocket	Toasted almonds	Sun dried tomatoes	Yoghurt
Pearl Barley	Carrot	Spinach	Sesame seeds	Capers	Pesto
Cannellini / kidney Beans	Snap peas	Cos	Pumpkin seeds	Chopped cornichons	Mustard
Cooked Rice	Corn kernels	Pea shoots	Toasted breadcrumbs	Feta Cheese	Horseradish/wasabi
Millet	Tomato	Mustard greens	Sprouted seeds	Pickled vegetables	Soy sauce/maple syrup
Bread – torn	Roasted root veg	Kale	Crushed crackers	Olives	Harissa



Salt in our diets



Salt - pros

- Preserves food
- Promotes growth of beneficial bacteria, eg lacto bacillus
- Helps muscle function eg electrolytes

Salt - cons

- High blood pressure
- Hypertension
- Fluid retention
- Kidney stones



Granulated table salt

Standard table salt often contain additives, including silicon dioxide (glass, ceramics) and aluminium to prevent them from absorbing water.

They are usually dense crystals and so don't dissolve well.

Not recommended for cooking as the additives can affect the taste and appearance of food



Salt varieties

Iodised salt

Flake salt

Kosher salt

Unrefined sea salt

Fleur de sel



Iodised salt

Salt which has iodine added.

Iodine deficiency can lead to intellectual and developmental disabilities

Iodine can be found in most fish and seafoods, seaweed, dairy foods





Flake salt

Characterized by their dry, plate-like crystals.

Their structure is a result of differing growth rates between the faces and edges of the crystal

Most form as thin, flattened out crystals with a large surface area and low mass which gives them a crunchy texture and dissolve fast



Kosher salt

Coarse salt without additives such as iodine

Used in cooking it consists mainly of sodium chloride and may include anti-caking agents

It has a purer flavor than table salt

Used widely for brining and preserving foods





Unrefined sea salt

Salt which contains naturally occurring the minerals and elements

Can be pink or grey in colour





Fleur de sel

"flower of salt" in French

Salt that forms as a thin, delicate crust on the surface of seawater as it evaporates

Has a higher moisture content and is unrefined, giving it a lingering, complex flavour



Salt and human health



How much is too much?

- The human body needs only 1 gram of salt per day
- According to betterhealth.vic.gov.au up to 5 grams of salt a day is considered ok, and
- The average Australian consumes almost 9 grams per day

Salt and human health

- Sodium and chlorine ions are essential in maintaining a healthy body function
- Increased salt intake can cause increase blood thickness and so high blood pressure, heart disease and stroke
- Helps maintain fluid balance
- Help neuron function

SALT
Is it a Healthy or Harmful to Health?

Health Problems Due to Increase of Salt!

- * Heart Diseases
- * Obesity
- * Stroke

Maladies Due to Deficiency of Salt!

- Damage to Nervous System
- Cerebral Edema

The infographic features a woman in the top left corner looking thoughtful. A central image shows a pile of white salt crystals. The background is a light yellow with a subtle grid pattern. The text is in various colors: red for the title and box headers, black for the main text, and green for the bullet points.



Controlling salt intake



Cilantro



Pepper



Cumin



Cayenne Pepper



Balsamic Vinegar



Garlic



Lemon



Paprika



Basil

- Avoid adding salt at the table
- Check food labels for salt content – widely used to preserve foods
- Use herbs, spices, garlic, citrus to add flavour
- Add brined or pickled ingredients instead of salt (capers, feta, olives), tamari seeds
- Use salted and processed meats sparingly
- Use fresh produce where you can



Soup in a jar

Soup in a Jar – thanks to Anna Jones

50 g	Vermicelli, udon, ramen or noodles of choice
1 knob	Fresh ginger, a small one
1 Tbsp	Coconut cream
1 Tbsp	White miso paste
1 splash	Sesame oil
1 Tbsp	Soy sauce, or tamari
1/2	Carrot, grated
1	Spring onion
1	Red chilli
1 handful	Leafy greens
½	Zucchini, grated
1 handful	Sugar-snap peas, snow peas or green beans
3 sprigs	Coriander, or basil
1 Tbsp	Sesame seeds, toasted

1. Cook noodles as per packet instructions (ideally use left overs from a stir fry)

2. Peel the ginger and grate. Prepare all vegetables

3. Layer the ingredients into a screw top jar. Noodles, vegetables, miso, coconut cream, sesame oil, soy sauce

4. To eat, pour boiling water in to the jar to cover the noodles and veg and mix well.

5. Garnish with the remaining chopped chilli and spring onion, a little coriander and some toasted sesame seeds.

