

Ontario Home Economics Association

Ask a Professional Home Economist

For Immediate Release

Pack a Healthful Budget-friendly Lunch

by Maria Depenweiller, B.Sc., P.H.Ec.

Back-to-class or back-to-work spells back to lunch box planning amid news of rising food prices.

Tips for a home-made lunch to save money, reduce waste and boost nutrition:

- Choose local, seasonal produce. Carrots, broccoli, cauliflower, cucumber, grape tomatoes, apples, pears and plums are nutritious, economical and pack well. Check Foodland Ontario for availability: <http://www.ontario.ca/foodland/availability-guide>;
- Pack 'extra' fruits and veggies for the larger appetite or to satisfy hunger on the bus ride home;
- Pick the less-than-perfectly shaped fruits or veggies. They can be fun and less expensive;
- Homemade savoury scones, muffins or oatmeal cookies are inexpensive and a more healthful choice than pre-packaged crackers, chips and cookies. Sneak some veggies or beans into your baking for extra nutrition;
- Cook large batches of soups, stews or ragouts for dinner and plan for leftovers to go directly into reusable containers for a portable meal the next day or freeze for another occasion to avoid waste;
- Use an insulated container to keep food safe. (Hot food must stay hot / cold food must stay cold);
- Wrap newspaper around an insulated container to help maintain temperature. The coloured comics are fun;
- Hard-cooked eggs, cheese, meat, fish, poultry, yogurt, mayo and milk require a cold pack;
- A frozen reusable bottle of water or 100% juice doubles as a cold pack that's drinkable by lunch time;
- Reuse glass jars to carry food. They are wide-mouthed to accommodate a spoon, easy to clean in the dishwasher and can be microwaved safely with metal lid removed; but are not safe for kids;
- Use a new pencil case to carry reusable cutlery and a fabric napkin to reduce waste;
- Make your own lunch box. Repurpose a medium-sized cookie tin or gift bag or sew your own lunch bag;
- More lunch tips at: http://www.ohea.on.ca/uploads/1/2/6/0/12605917/fuel_up_on_nutritious_snacks.pdf.

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Ontario Home Economics Association (OHEA), a self-regulated body of Professional Home Economists, promotes high professional standards among its members so that they may assist families and individuals to achieve and maintain a desirable quality of life.

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