

Extension

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Sandwiches Make Quick, Easy and Nutritious Meals!

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Easy to make and eat, sandwiches can be a fun food for children to help prepare. Sandwiches are easy to take with you when the family is off to the next event or you are short on time. The ingredients in a sandwich can be combined to offer a tasty and nutritious alternative to a full meal.

Typically a sandwich starts with the bread. Try a different variety such as light rye, dark Russian rye, or honey whole wheat. Choose whole grain bread when possible; look for "whole grain" or "whole wheat" listed as the first ingredient. Additional options include a pita pocket, bagel, bun, sandwich wrap, tortilla or a pair of whole grain waffles. If you are wanting to reduce the amount of carbohydrates you eat, a large lettuce leaf can be wrapped around the filling, in place of the bread.



The sandwich filling is the star of this meal. Children can really get creative when combining foods for the filling. Offer them foods from several of the food groups, a protein (sliced meat, nut butter, egg, beans, cheese, or fish), a variety of vegetables (lettuce, spinach, sliced cucumbers, zucchini, pickles, tomatoes, avocado, olives, celery, sauerkraut, peppers, onions, mushrooms or grated carrots.) and a spread or dressing (mayonnaise, plain yogurt, mustard, cream cheese, hummus or salad dressing) to hold it all together. Some sandwiches taste great with the sweetness of fruit as part of the filling. For example; bananas and peanut butter, thin apple slices with cheese, chopped grapes in a chicken salad or pineapple with ham.

Making your own sandwiches saves money by helping you avoid more expensive fast food. Using up leftovers as sandwich filling ingredients also saves money and keeps food from going to waste.

Consider making and freezing sandwiches ahead of time to save both time and money. Common sandwich fillings that freeze well include:

- Canned tuna fish and salmon
 - Cooked roast beef, chicken and turkey
 - Hard cheeses like Swiss and Cheddar
 - Peanut butter and other nut butters, but not the jelly. Jam and jelly can make the bread soggy.
- Important Tip: Spread both sides of the bread with peanut butter, then spread the jelly or jam in the middle. This keeps the jelly from soaking into the bread.

Ingredients that do not freeze well and should be added after thawing include:

- Hard cooked egg white (gets rubbery)
- Raw fruits and vegetables such as tomatoes, lettuce, spinach, pickles, onions, apples, grapes, etc. These foods become limp and watery when thawed. Put these ingredients in the sandwich after it has thawed.
- Mayonnaise can separate and become watery when thawed

Important tip: Salad dressings such as Miracle Whip freeze better than mayonnaise, but has a sweeter and tangier taste.

Food safety: Wash and rinse hands, counter tops and cutting boards before assembling sandwiches. Pack and store wrapped sandwiches in an insulated tote. Use an ice pack, gel pack, frozen juice box or frozen water bottle to keep sandwiches cold until ready to eat. Peanut and nut butter sandwiches do not need to be kept cold, but should be eaten within a day or two, or mold could start growing on the bread.

Let's Talk

Children will enjoy getting to help make their own sandwiches. Explain the importance of washing their hands before they touch any of the ingredients. Talk about the food groups and offer them a few choices of what they can put inside their sandwich. If they decide not to put any fruits or vegetables in the sandwich, take a few with you to offer as sides with the sandwich meal, such as carrot and celery sticks, sliced apples, etc. Let children know that by making and taking sandwiches instead of buying fast food your family is saving money that could be used in other fun ways.

Recipe for Health: Turkey in the Garden Sandwich

Ingredients:

- 2 slices bread (whole grain is best)
- 2 teaspoons sandwich spread
 - 1 teaspoon mustard & 1 teaspoon Mayonnaise mixed together
 - Or
 - 2 teaspoons Ranch style dressing
 - Or
 - 2 teaspoons hummus
- 2 slices cooked and chilled turkey
- 1 slice cheese, optional (Cheddar, American, Swiss or other)
- 2 thin slices of tomato
- 4 thin slices cucumber
- 2 romaine lettuce leaves or spinach leaves



Directions:

Spread one side of each piece of bread with the sandwich spread of your choice. Lay ingredients on one slice of bread next to the sandwich spread. Place the other piece of bread, sandwich spread side down on top of the ingredients. Cut in half. Enjoy!