

# THE ULTIMATE KIDS' LUNCH BOX

How To Create Healthy & Delicious  
Recipes Your Children Will Love



SARAH J. TAYLOR

# **The Ultimate Kids' Lunch Box**

**How To Create Healthy & Delicious  
Recipes Your Children Will Love**

***By Sarah J. Taylor***

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## Kids Health 101

Parents have much to worry about, and their kids' health is a big concern. Since kids depend on nutrients they get from food to grow healthy and strong, parents are responsible for providing their children with foods that will benefit growth and development. But many parents don't know how much they should be feeding their children, or they're not aware of specific nutritional guidelines for their kids, which makes them either give their kids too little or too much of certain food groups.

What you may not realize is that providing your children with healthy and wholesome meals is simple and easy to do. You don't have to be a nutrition specialist to feeding your kids healthy foods or get them to develop healthy eating habits. Basically, what you should do is provide a variety of foods in your children's meals each day. Don't stick to giving them carrot sticks for a snack or cereal for breakfast every day. Variety is key here to ensure that your kids get the most out of their meals and snacks. Here's a breakdown of the food groups you should be including in your kids' meals each day (not all together for every meal):

- **Carbohydrates** (e.g., breads, pasta, rice, cereal, potatoes)
- **Fruits and vegetables**
- **Proteins** (e.g., nuts, beans, seeds, fish, meat, poultry)
- **Dairy**
- **Healthy fats** (e.g., olive oil)

To more more in depth about nutritional guidelines, here is a helpful age chart that will tell you how much you should be feeding your child. (The numbers underneath the food groups are the number of servings you should be feeding your child per day.):

<u>Age</u>	<u>Veggies</u>	<u>Fruits</u>	<u>Carbs</u>	<u>Proteins</u>	<u>Dairy</u>
2-3	3-4	2	3-4	2	4-5
4-6	2-3	2	3-4	2	3-4
7-10	2-4	1 ½	4-6	1-2	3-4

To give you a better idea of what serving sizes are for foods in the main food group, here's a chart to help you out:

<u>Cooked Meat</u>	<u>Eggs</u>	<u>Fruits</u>	<u>Veggies</u>	<u>Cheese</u>	<u>Milk</u>
2.5 – 3 ounces	2	½ cup of diced or canned fruit; 1 fresh, whole fruit	½ cup of cooked veggies; ½ cup of fresh/raw veggies; 1 cup of leafy green salad	1 ounce	½ – 1 cup
<u>Yogurt</u>	<u>Juice</u>	<u>Peanut Butter</u>	<u>Nuts</u>	<u>Bread</u>	<u>Pasta</u>
¾ cup	½ cup	2 TBSPs	1 ounce	1 small roll (tennis ball sized); 1-2 slices of bread	½ cup
<u>Dry Cereal</u>	<u>Oatmeal or Hot Cereal</u>				

¾ cup – 1 cup	¾ cup				
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The calorie intake for children in different age groups vary, and to give you an idea of how many calories children in certain age groups should be getting, take a look at the list below:

- **2-3 years old** – 1,200 to 1,400 calories per day;
- **4-6 years old** – 1,500 to 1,750 calories per day;
- **7-10 years old** – 1,700 to 2,000 calories per day.

Boys usually need more calories than girls as well, so keep this in mind when you make meals for your sons. These are the basic nutritional guidelines for your children that you can follow. Remember to watch your kids' weights when you start to add more to their meals as they grow older. Make sure that they're within the healthy weight range for their age and height. It's important for you to continue monitoring your children's weights so that you can keep track of their health. This will also help them develop good eating habits. However, don't pressure your kids to be a certain weight. Talk about food and weight in a healthy way. This is also a time to develop excellent self-esteem for your children and reduce the risk of eating disorders later on in life.

*Please note: Always talk to your doctor about specific diet guidelines for your child before trying any diet.*

## **Successful Tips and Tricks for Healthy, Lifelong Eating Habits**

Now that you know the basic nutritional guidelines for kids ages 2-10, let's review the best ways you can help your children develop healthy eating habits that will last a lifetime. Kids love routine, so establishing healthy eating routines will affect your children's mindset about food and eating. For instance, if you order take-out every night for dinner, you let your kids know that it's okay to order take-out every night. If you cook homemade meals without watching portions, you're showing your kids it's okay to overeat. Every decision you make about meals will affect your kids later on in life, so take the strategies listed below and consider applying them to your family's eating routine to guide your kids on the path to health:

**1. Make time for breakfast every morning.** Breakfast is the most important meal of the day. It's where everyone in your family gets the nutrients they need to get through their morning. Wake up earlier to provide your family with nutritious morning meals to get their engines going. Make breakfast a staple in your family's diet, and plan ahead to make sure breakfast is on the table before everyone goes to school or work.

**2. Be sure your children get 6-8 glasses of water per day.** It may be hard to do since you may love giving your kids juice and milk throughout the day, but water is an important beverage that needs to be part of your children's diet. Since young kids are much more active, be sure to always hydrate your children with water after every activity they do that requires a lot of physical movement.

**3. Don't use food as a punishment or reward.** If you are or you plan to use food as a punishment e.g., not providing your child a meal for

displaying bad behavior, this can affect your child's health greatly. Food isn't a privilege. It's a necessity, so don't punish your kids with food.

Another thing to note about punishment: Don't punish your kids and restrict desserts or other treat foods for bad behavior. An unhealthy relationship with food can develop from this.

Also, don't use food as a reward, whether it's candy or more portions of their favorite food. Although food is one element of an enjoyable family meal environment, it's not something to reward with. This can actually backfire and cause your kids to develop overeating habits. It can also cause them to put more value in certain foods compared to others. For instance, if you say that you'll reward your kids with dessert after dinner if they eat their vegetables, it makes it seem like veggies are bad for them. Be careful about rewarding your children with certain foods.

**4. Keep food visually attractive, interesting, and fun to your kids.** This is a fantastic tip to use with picky eaters at your table. For lunches, you can make a bento for your kids with their favorite colors, foods or characters. Purchase pancake pans that are in various shapes or character forms to have a more enjoyable breakfast.

There are many ways for you to make food fun for your kids and encourage them to enjoy their food. Offer a variety of foods in your kids meals and make it colorful. Studies have shown that colorful food makes people eat more. (Think about those bright, colorful candy brands, such as Skittles and M&Ms.) Arranging food to make it fun and attractive to your kids will also help them develop a healthy, positive view about food.

**5. Go homemade every time you can.** Nothing beats amazing homemade cooking. Not only will your children have fond memories, but homemade meals are much healthier than store-bought ones. If you're tight on time, you can find healthy recipes that only require five ingredients or take 30 minutes to make. You can also find healthy, freezer-friendly recipes that you can prepare over the weekend and cook over the week. Don't get lazy about your family's health, and be active in making more homemade meals.

**6. Stick to a regular eating schedule.** From snacks to meals and all the running around you do during your day, the time you feed your kids can be random if you don't have a schedule in place. Use a timer to keep track of the times you feed your kids. Create an ideal schedule for your family to eat meals as well as snack times for your kids.

**7. Don't force your children to eat something if they're showing a lot of resistance toward it.** Instead, enforce the two-bite rule. This rule requires your kids to take two bites of a food they don't like; then, if they don't like it, tell them to set it aside and don't force them to eat it all. If they do, encourage them to eat all of it. If your kids don't eat something after the two-bite rule, continue offering it in other meals over time; eventually, they may take a liking to it. A variety of food options are available, so your children can get the necessary nutrients from other sources.

You've been prepped with the basics of children food health and healthy eating strategies! Let's move on to yummy recipes for your kids. You'll find amazing, simple recipes you for all meals in the next few chapters. Enjoy!

## Breakfast Recipes

### Banana-Blueberry Muffins

#### *Ingredients:*

- ½ cup of unsweetened applesauce
- 2 large eggs
- 2/3 cup of organic milk or other milk
- 2 medium-sized bananas, mashed
- ½ cup of melted butter or vegetable oil or other fat that can be used in baked goods
- 1 ½ cups of all-purpose flour
- 1 ½ cups of whole-wheat flour
- 1 cup of white or light brown sugar
- 2 tsp of salt
- 1 TBSP + ¼ tsp of baking powder
- 1 tsp of cinnamon
- 1 ½ cups of fresh blueberries

Yields: 24 muffins

#### *Directions:*

1. Preheat your oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit. Prepare a muffin pan for 12-24 regular- or large-sized muffins.
2. Mix the first five ingredients together in a large bowl or large storage/freezer bag. Make sure that the ingredients have been thoroughly mixed together. Set aside.
3. Whisk the flours, sugar, salt, baking powder, and cinnamon together in a separate bowl. Fold dry mixture into the wet ingredients gently if wet ingredients are in a bowl. If wet ingredients are in a storage bag, gradually add the dry mixture to the wet mixture until thoroughly combined. Add the blueberries to the mixture.
4. Pour the mixture into the prepared muffin tin. Snip about an inch off one corner of the storage bag if using one to hold ingredients. You can squeeze out the mixture into the muffin tin this way. Spoon in the muffin mixture if all ingredients are in a bowl. Bake for 20-25 minutes until done. Let cool in pan for 3-5 minutes, then remove and transfer to a wire rack to cool completely. Serve and freeze the rest for later.

### **Healthy Morning Chocolate Pudding**

*Ingredients:*

- 6 ripe, medium-sized bananas, chopped into large chunks
- 4 medium-sized avocados, pitted
- ¾ cup of high-quality cocoa powder, unsweetened
- 2 tsp of pure vanilla extract
- A couple TBSPs of sugar, optional
- 2/3 cup of almond, coconut or other milk, optional
- 4-6 TBSPs of peanut butter or other nut butter, optional
- Pinch of cinnamon or freshly grated nutmeg, optional
- Chopped raw nuts or fruits as toppings, optional

Yields: 8 servings

*Directions:*

1. Blend bananas and avocado in a blender or food processor until completely smooth.
2. Add the cocoa powder, vanilla extract, milk (optional), sugar (optional), peanut butter (optional), and cinnamon or nutmeg (optional) to the blender or food processor. Blend all ingredients together until completely combined.

3. Pour mixture into a large bowl or eight separate bowls (evenly divided), and chill for at least 30 minutes. When ready to serve, top with nuts or chopped fruits.

This is a great overnight recipe, too, so your family can enjoy this breakfast treat right away in the morning.

### **Fruit and Yogurt Breakfast Pops**

*Ingredients:*

- Popsicle molds (preferably the large popsicle molds)
- Non-fat or organic yogurt of your choice (Flavored is okay.)

*Directions:*

1. There are two ways you can arrange the fruit and yogurt breakfast pops:

1. Put a spoonful of yogurt in the

- A variety of fresh fruit slices (e.g., strawberries, kiwi, oranges, peaches) or diced fruits
- Homemade or healthy, store-bought granola

yogurt mold. Slide a few pieces of fruit on the sides of the mold so that the fruit slices show on the sides of the popsicle when ready.

2. Mix yogurt and fruit together, and spoon the mixtures into the popsicle molds.

2. Freeze the popsicles until completely firm and frozen.

3. Get out some granola, and pour some in a small bowl for each child. Then, let the child lick the top of the popsicle until it starts to melt. Tell your kids to dip the tip into the granola bowl for a healthy topping. Your kids can do this over and over to get a nice crunch in with the mix of yogurt and fruit.

### **Whole-Wheat Pancake Breakfast Pizza**

*Ingredients:*

Whole-Wheat Pancake Batter:

- 1 cup of whole-wheat flour or ½ cup of all-purpose + ½ cup of whole-wheat flour
- 1 tsp of baking powder
- ¾ tsp of baking soda
- ¼ tsp of salt
- 1 TBSP of sugar or honey

*Directions:*

1. Mix the dry ingredients of the pancake batter in a bowl with a whisk. Make a hole in the center of the dry mixture.
2. Mix the wet ingredients together, and pour it into the center of the dry mixture. Then, use the whisk to mix all ingredients together until just combined. Don't over-mix.

- 1 large egg, beaten
- ½ – ¾ cup of organic milk (Add less or more depending on desired consistency; don't make batter too runny.)
- 1 TBSP of melted butter and extra for cooking pancake

Breakfast Pancake Pizza Toppings:

- Chopped fruits
- Chunky fruit sauce (Add chopped fruits (e.g., strawberries, raspberries, blueberries) to a saucepan with a little water. Mash with potato masher or fork. Stir until a chunky sauce forms. Remove from pan and set aside.
- Yogurt
- Chopped nuts
- Coconut flakes ('cheese' part)

3. Heat butter in a large skillet or griddle over medium heat until melted. Add the pancake batter until it covers the skillet. If using a griddle, make a large, 10-12-inch pancake. (You can also make individual, smaller pancakes to have several breakfast pancake pizzas.) Flip pancake over when other side is done (when bubbles float to the top). Cook until done and browned. Remove from skillet/griddle.

4. Place the huge pancake on a cutting board or large plate. Spread some chunky fruit sauce or yogurt on the pancake. Sprinkle with nuts, fruits, and coconut flakes. Cut into slices, and serve to your family. Let your kids help you make the breakfast pizza, or let everyone decorate their own with individual pancakes.

**Fruits and Nuts Oatmeal Breakfast Cookies**

*Ingredients:*

- ½ cup of butter, softened
- ¾ – 1 cup of unsweetened applesauce
- ½ – ¾ cup of light brown sugar or maple syrup
- 2 large eggs
- 3-4 tsp of pure vanilla extract
- 2 cups of whole-wheat flour

*Directions:*

1. Preheat your oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit. Prepare 1-2 baking sheets for cookies.

2. Place butter, applesauce, and sugar or maple syrup in a bowl. Beat until smooth. Beat in the eggs, one at a time, and incorporate into the mixture. Add in the

- 4 cups of whole-wheat, old-fashioned or quick-cooking oats
- ½ cup of ground flaxseed
- 1 tsp of baking soda
- 1 tsp of salt
- 2 tsp of cinnamon
- ½ cup of shelled, raw pistachios
- ½ cup of slivered almonds
- ½ cup of dried cranberries
- ½ cup of raisins

Yields: 40 2-inch cookies

vanilla extract. Set bowl aside.

3. In a separate bowl, use a whisk to mix flour, oats, ground flax, baking soda, salt, and cinnamon together. Gradually add the dry mixture to the wet one until completely combined.

4. Fold in the nuts and dried fruit. Form 2-TBSPs worth of dough into balls. Place on cookie sheet. Save any extra dough in the fridge or freezer if desired.

5. Bake cookies for 15-20 minutes until browned and done. Let cool on baking sheet for 3-5 minutes. Transfer to rack to cool more. Serve with milk and a small side of fruit.

## Lunch Recipes

<b><u>Chicken Spring Rolls with Peanut Sauce</u></b>	
<i>Ingredients:</i>	<i>Directions:</i>
<p>Spring Rolls:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spring roll wrappers/rice paper (found in Asian markets or Asian section in your grocery store)</li> <li>• Cooked, shredded chicken strips</li> <li>• Lettuce leaves</li> <li>• Julienned or shredded carrots</li> <li>• Julienned cucumbers</li> </ul> <p>Peanut Sauce:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 cup of creamy peanut butter (You can add more later if you'd like.)</li> <li>• 2/3 cup of warm water</li> <li>• 5-6 TBSPs of hoisin sauce (Add more or less to desired taste.)</li> <li>• ½ cup of low-sodium soy sauce</li> <li>• 2 TBSPs of sugar</li> <li>• 3-4 TBSPs of chili-garlic paste</li> <li>• 1 tsp of sesame oil</li> </ul>	<p>1. Wet spring roll wrappers/rice paper in warm water. Don't let it get too soft as it'll scrunch up and tear easily.</p> <p>2. Arrange your spring rolls as desired, and make as many as you need for your family. For kids, 2-3 small-medium spring rolls should be enough. Watch this video to see how to roll a spring roll correctly:  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lf11wMeDXhg">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lf11wMeDXhg</a></p> <p>3. Mix all the peanut sauce ingredients together thoroughly. Spoon onto plates or in dipping dishes. Serve with spring rolls.</p>

<b><u>Classic Chef's Salad</u></b>	
<i>Ingredients:</i>	<i>Directions:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 TBSPs of dressing of your kids' choice</li> </ul>	<p>1. Place all ingredients in a bowl.</p>

- 2 slices of thin meat, such as ham, roast beef, turkey, etc., sliced into thin strips
- 2 slices of cheddar, swiss, pepperjack or other cheese, sliced into thin strips
- 2 cups of shredded or chopped romaine lettuce or other spring salad mix
- A handful of grape tomatoes, halved
- 4 boiled eggs, roughly chopped
- 1 TBSP of golden raisins or other dried fruit
- 2 tsp of nuts or seeds
- 1 cup of shredded carrots
- 2 celery sticks, chopped

Yields: 2 servings

2. Use two wooden spoons or tongs to toss the salad ingredients together.

3. Put the salad into separate containers, bowls or bento boxes.

### **Turkey Meatballs and Carrot Fries**

*Ingredients:*

Turkey Meatballs:

- 1 pound of lean ground turkey
- ½ cup of Japanese breadcrumbs (Panko)
- 2 TBSPs of finely diced carrots
- 2 TBSPs of finely diced zucchini
- 2 TBSPs of finely diced onion

*Directions:*

1. Preheat your oven to 450 degrees Fahrenheit. Prepare a baking sheet with aluminum foil and cooking spray.

2. For turkey meatballs, mix all ingredients – but the olive oil and chicken stock – together. Heat olive oil in a skillet over

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 large egg</li> <li>• 1 TBSP of Italian seasoning</li> <li>• ½ TBSP of sea salt</li> <li>• 1 TBSP of extra virgin olive oil</li> <li>• ½ cup of low-sodium or homemade chicken stock</li> </ul>	<p>medium-high heat. Add meatballs to the skillet and cook all over until browned, approximately 8-10 minutes. Add half of the chicken stock to the skillet, and reduce the heat to low. Cook until liquid has evaporated. Add the rest of the chicken stock to the pan. Turn heat higher to medium. Cook until rest of the liquid has evaporated. Remove turkey balls from pan to cool.</p>
<p>Carrot Fries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4-5 medium-sized carrots, peeled and julienned or cut into thick strips</li> <li>• 4-5 tsp of extra virgin olive oil</li> <li>• Salt and pepper to taste</li> </ul>	<p>3. Toss carrots in salt, pepper, and oil. Spread on baking sheet in single layer. Bake for 12-15 minutes until desired crispiness has been achieved. Serve with turkey meatballs.</p>
<p>Yields: 3 servings of turkey meatballs; 8-10 servings of carrot fries</p>	

<b><u>Mac &amp; Cheese with a Healthy Twist</u></b>	
<i>Ingredients:</i>	<i>Directions:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 cups of whole-wheat elbow pasta</li> <li>• 4 cups of shredded sharp cheddar cheese</li> <li>• ¾ – 1 cup of plain Greek yogurt</li> <li>• 4 cups of green spinach</li> <li>• 2 cups of cooked peas</li> <li>• ½ tsp of onion powder</li> <li>• ½ tsp of garlic powder</li> <li>• Salt and pepper to taste</li> </ul>	<p>1. Cook pasta according to the package instructions. Before draining the pasta, place spinach leaves in a strainer. Drain pasta over the spinach leaves, allowing the heat from the hot water to wilt the spinach leaves. Save about 1 cup of pasta water, and pour it into a separate bowl. Put the wilted spinach and cooked pasta back into the empty pot.</p> <p>2. Add ½ cup of pasta water into the pot</p>

Yields: 6-8 servings

and sprinkle the cheese in. Heat the pot if necessary to melt the cheese. The hot pasta water may be enough, though, without you having to heat the pot.

3. Mix in the Greek yogurt, peas, and seasonings into the pot. Stir all ingredients together until smooth and creamy. If necessary, stir in the rest of the reserved pasta water. Don't make the pasta mixture too thin, though. Serve pasta right away.

### **No-Can Alphabet Soup**

#### *Ingredients:*

- 2/3 cup of sweet onion, chopped
- 2/3 cup of carrots, diced
- 2-3 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 1/3 cups of low-sodium or homemade vegetarian or chicken broth
- 2 cups of water
- 2/3 cups of beans of your choice, drained and rinsed
- 8-ounce can of diced tomatoes, low-sodium and no other flavors added
- 2/3 tsp of Italian seasoning
- 1/8 tsp of cayenne pepper
- Salt and pepper to taste

#### *Directions:*

1. Combine onion, carrots, garlic, broth, and water together in a soup pot. Bring pot to a boil.
2. Add the beans, tomatoes, and seasonings to the pot. Bring back to a boil, then reduce heat to a simmer. Cover and let simmer for 30-60 minutes. The longer, the better tasting the soup will be.
3. Turn off the heat, and remove the beans out of the soup into a separate bowl. Put the rest of the soup in a blender. Remember to let the hot air out while you blend the soup. Blend until smooth, and put the soup back into the pot. Return the

- 2/3 cup of alphabet pasta

Yields: 4 servings

beans to the soup. Add the pasta.

4. Boil soup until pasta is al dente (soft but firm, not mushy). Serve right away.

## Dinner Recipes

### Wholesome Sloppy Joe Sandwiches

*Ingredients:*

- ½ pound of lean ground beef, chicken or turkey
- ½ a sweet onion, diced
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 small-medium bell pepper, diced
- 8-ounce can of red kidney beans or other beans of your choice, drained and rinsed
- ¾ cup of salt-free tomato sauce
- 1 TBSP of tomato paste
- ½ TBSP of red wine vinegar
- ½ TBSP of molasses
- ½ TBSP of Worcestershire sauce
- ½ tsp of mustard powder or 1-2 tsp of yellow mustard or Dijon mustard
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 4 whole-wheat burger buns, hoagie rolls or other bread, toasted if desired

Yields: 4 servings

*Directions:*

1. Heat olive oil in a skillet over medium-high heat. Add the onion and garlic. Stir until onion has become transparent and garlic has become fragrant, about 3-4 minutes. Add the meat, and break it up with a wooden spoon, cooking it until browned. Drain any excess fat.
2. Add pepper to the skillet, and cook for 5-7 minutes. Stir occasionally.
3. Add the rest of the ingredients to the pan, and mix everything together. Reduce heat to low, and let all ingredients simmer for 5-7 minutes. Turn off heat. Put ½ cup of sloppy joe meat onto each bun and serve.

### Baked Fish Sticks

<i>Ingredients:</i>	<i>Directions:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 tilapia or salmon fillets, halved down the middle lengthwise</li> <li>• 1 egg, beaten</li> <li>• ¾ cup of Panko/Japanese breadcrumbs</li> <li>• Salt and pepper to taste</li> <li>• Flour</li> <li>• 2 TBSPs of grated Parmesan cheese</li> </ul> <p>Yields: 6 fish sticks, 2-3 per person</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Preheat your oven to 450 degrees Fahrenheit. Prepare a baking sheet, and place a wire rack on top. (This is for the fish to get crispy on both side without you having to turn it over halfway.)</li> <li>2. On a cutting board, place halved fish fillets on top. Sprinkle with salt and pepper on both sides as well as a little flour. Don't cover the fish in seasonings or flour.</li> <li>3. Dip the fish halves into the beaten egg with one hand. Press the halves into the Panko breadcrumbs with the other hand. Put the fish on the wire rack on the baking sheet. Bake fish for 10-12 minutes until golden-brown and crispy. Serve with favorite homemade sauce and a side salad or coleslaw. This can easily turn into a fish tacos as well.</li> </ol>

### **Veggie Nuggets**

<i>Ingredients:</i>	<i>Directions:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 large russet potato or 2 small-medium potatoes or sweet potatoes, peeled, chopped into chunks, cooked, and mashed</li> <li>• 1 medium carrot, peeled, chopped into chunks, and cooked</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Prepare a baking sheet with parchment paper.</li> <li>2. Place the cooked carrot chunks, broccoli or cauliflower chunks, and corn in a food processor. Pulse it until finely chopped. Pour</li> </ol>

- ½ cup of broccoli or cauliflower florets, chopped into chunks and cooked
- ½ cup of corn, drained if from can; defrosted and cooked if frozen
- Salt and pepper to taste
- ¼ – ½ tsp of garlic powder
- ¼ – ½ tsp of onion powder
- 2 TBSPs of whole-wheat, gluten-free, or all-purpose flour
- 1 large egg, beaten
- ½ cup of Panko breadcrumbs

Yields: 20 nuggets

into a bowl.

3. Add the seasonings and the chopped veggies to the mashed potatoes. Mix all ingredients together. Spread the mixture onto the baking sheet with parchment paper. Freeze for 1-2 hours.

4. Preheat oven to 450 degrees Fahrenheit. Prepare a baking sheet with aluminum foil and sprayed with cooking spray.

5. Put flour, egg, and Panko in separate bowls. Get the potato mixture out from the freezer. Use cookie cutters to cut out fun veggie nugget shapes, or use a small, round shot glass or other glass to cut out rounds of nuggets.

6. Cover nuggets in flour. Then, dip into beaten egg. Next, put egg-soaked nuggets into Panko, and gently press Panko onto nuggets until completely covered. Place nuggets on baking sheet. Bake for 12-15 minutes until crispy. Serve with a bowl of fruit.

### **Chicken Melt Sandwich**

*Ingredients:*

- ¾ cup of leftover cooked chicken, chopped
- 4 slices of Swiss cheese or 3 ounces of shredded Swiss cheese

*Directions:*

1. Preheat a toaster oven. You can also use a skillet to melt the cheese and toast the bread.

- 2 slices of tomato
- 1 medium celery stalk, finely diced
- 1-2 TBSPs of mayonnaise
- ½ – 1 TBSP of sweet relish
- Black pepper to taste
- 4 slices of whole-wheat bread

Yields: 2 sandwiches

2. Place one cheese slice on each bread slice. Place the tomato slice on one bread slice per sandwich. Toast in the toaster oven for 6-8 minutes until cheese has melted and bread slices are toasted.

3. While the bread is toasting and cheese is melting, mix the chicken, chopped celery, mayo, and relish in a bowl. Sprinkle with black pepper and mix again. Take the bread slices out of the toaster oven onto individual plates.

4. Scoop half of the chicken mix and place it on top of one of the bread slices for each sandwich. Top the chicken mix with the other bread slice. Cut sandwiches diagonally and serve with fruit.

### **Healthy Veggie and Meat Deluxe Lasagna**

*Ingredients:*

- 10-12 lasagna noodles, cooked (Use 2-3 later to fill any gaps in the lasagna.)
- Marinara sauce or tomato sauce, low-sodium
- 1 TBSP of extra virgin olive oil
- ½ cup of sweet onion, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- ½ pound of cooked lean ground

*Directions:*

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit. Prepare a baking dish for the lasagna (9x9 would be good). Coat the bottom with tomato sauce. Place 2-3 lasagna noodles on top.
2. Heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the onion and garlic. Stir until onion is translucent and garlic becomes fragrant, about 3-4 minutes. Add zucchini, squash, and carrot cubes. Sprinkle with a pinch of salt and mix. Stir occasionally and cook for 8-10 minutes until edges

chicken, beef or turkey

- 1 medium zucchini or cucumber, cut into cubes
- 1 medium squash or eggplant, cut into cubes
- 1 carrot, peeled and cubed
- 1-2 cups of baby spinach
- ½ cup of corn, drained if canned; defrosted if frozen
- 14-ounce can of diced tomatoes
- Small handful of fresh basil leaves
- Half of a 15-ounce container of ricotta cheese or cottage cheese
- 1 large egg
- 1 ounce of Parmesan cheese, grated
- 4 ounces of shredded mozzarella cheese
- Salt and pepper to taste

Yields: 5-7 servings

of veggies start to brown. Add the tomatoes and corn. Stir all ingredients together, and let the mixture simmer over low heat for 8-10 minutes until liquid has evaporated. Add basil and spinach. Season with salt and pepper, and mix together. Simmer until spinach and basil leaves have wilted, about 2-4 minutes. Set aside and turn off heat. Add the cooked turkey meat to the mixture and mix.

3. Mix the cheeses, egg, and salt and pepper to taste in a bowl.

4. Arrange lasagna like so: ½ cup of veggies and meat mix, 2-3 lasagna noodles, ½ cup of cheese mixture, 2-3 lasagna noodles. Repeat this arrangement until all ingredients are done. Make sure you end with a generous sprinkle of cheese on top of the noodles. If you have leftovers, save them for another meal. Bake with aluminum foil over lasagna for 15-20 minutes. Remove foil, and bake for another 10-15 minutes until edges are nice and crispy. Let lasagna rest for 10-15 minutes before serving.

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