



Gluten-Free School Lunch Ideas from Kitchen Stewardship

Packing a lunch without a sandwich? It almost feels un-American, but going gluten-free is more and more popular (& healthy). GF bread is pricey; you can pack a lunch without it! Many of these ideas are also grain-free (primal/paleo).

Main Course:

When you can't pack a sandwich, what can you pack? Think outside the bread. Turn the sandwich inside out and **present the contents in a new way** (bread is just a carb-filled vehicle for the good stuff inside anyway).

egg salad (Wrap it in a sturdy lettuce leaf or include [Nut Thins](#), gluten-free crackers, or cuke or red pepper slices. Make it with [pastured eggs](#) and [homemade mayo](#).)

tuna salad (Just include pickles and a fork.)
corn tortilla wrap or cold [homemade refried beans](#) with corn chips (almost any sandwich can be redone in a good corn tortilla – nitrate-free lunchmeat and cheese, leftover chicken, PBJ, or a cold burrito)

grain-free crepes also make any sandwich into a wrap (Try coconut flour crepes from Health Home & Happiness's [menu planner](#) - they don't taste like coconut at all)

your favorite soup in a thermos (heated on the stove for lasting hotness.)

meat, cheese and a dip (think Lunchables without the crackers and additives.)

a dressed up salad (salads aren't the most immediately kid-friendly meal, but if you add enough goodies: veggies, nuts, dried fruit, cheese, frozen peas, meat, ETC. and a great dressing, you might have a winner.)

quinoa or millet salad (cook any whole grain and add a favorite vinaigrette, beans, veggies, and even meat to make it a main course. Check out our favorite [cold grain salad](#) and just sub GF grains.)

[Mexican beans and rice](#) and tortilla chips (warm and send in a thermos)

hard-boiled egg (cut in half is easier to handle; often a good part of a picnic style meal with cheese, nuts and other finger foods to eat)

[grain-free crackers with toppings](#) (basic cheese slices are great, or try mini sandwiches with natural peanut butter, [yogurt cheese](#), jelly, raw [honey](#), or some combination of those.)

leftovers: (use a thermos OR ask your kids what they might eat cold.)

Fruits and Veggies:

The easiest way to skirt around just about any food sensitivity or allergy is to stick with real fruits and vegetables.

Veggie ideas: *cherry tomatoes, carrots, pea pods, cucumbers, cauliflower or broccoli spears, celery, fresh green beans, colored peppers – cut fun shapes to encourage dipping*

Dip ideas: *hummus, [homemade yogurt](#) with spices or [yogurt cheese dip](#), [ranch dressing](#), even ketchup if it'll get them to eat their veggies!*

Frozen peas are simple and tasty!

Apple slices with natural peanut butter, sunbutter or almond butter to dip

Whole fruits: *bananas, oranges, apples, pears, plums, melon, grapes, cherries, strawberries, peaches, nectarines...consider slicing for easier eating/less waste, & try to stick with what is more or less in season and watch the [Dirty Dozen list](#).*

Dried fruits: *these [organic dried fruits](#) are one way to avoid chemical additives common in most dried fruit. I have a ton of [homemade strawberry fruit rolls](#) waiting for school lunches, too.*

Freeze-dried fruits: *ideal for toddlers, these lightweight wonders are pricey, but super fun and last halfway to forever.*

Other Side Dishes:

- **homemade yogurt** with vanilla and honey, fresh or frozen fruit, applesauce or [homemade granola](#)
- **cottage cheese** with various fun mix-ins
- **trail mix** (Do it yourself with [crispy nuts](#) and even [home-dehydrated fruits](#))
- **[potato salad](#)** or GF pasta salad
- **grain-free coconut flour muffins** (from [Healthy Snacks to Go](#))
- **[grain-free apple flax muffins](#)**
- **[granola bars](#)** with GF flour
- **[homemade granola](#)** (or grain-free from HSTG) with a thermos of [milk](#) on the side
- **homemade pudding**
- **[green smoothie](#)** (freeze first and it should thaw to spoonable consistency by lunchtime)
- **[almond power bars](#)**
- **[Larabars](#)** (splurge) or homemade date and nut bars (15 varieties in [Healthy Snacks to Go](#))