

Echo Horizon School Speaker Series presents **Lisa Fontanesi**

**Chef/founder of "Kidding Around The Kitchen"
and Program Manager for Jamie Oliver's Food Revolution in the US
shares her favorite "kid friendly" recipes!**



How to Survive School Lunches

The challenge for parents is to create lunches that are reasonably healthy and extremely tasty. The more you involve your children in planning and preparing their school lunches, the more likely they will be to eat them. Begin at the grocery store, where you can involve your kids in the food selection, a process that may require a little compromise at first. Browse with them through some kid-oriented cookbooks as well and let them try recipes that appeal to them. This is also a great way to expand the variety of foods your kids will eat. Experiment together at home, but pack the sure things for school. Also try brainstorming a rough list of lunches that you both agree on and, post this list of favorite foods on the fridge and don't forget to include a few fun items that your kids can help prepare. My kids made an agreement to eat what I pack, as long as it's on the list. When kids do the planning and at least some preparing for their own school lunch, they are less likely to complain. Once in a while, be sure to pack a lunch-box surprise, like a note or sticker. It's a simple gesture that will let your kids know your thoughts are with them even when they are at school.

I have had the greatest lunch box success when I have packed small amounts of a variety of foods. A special lunch might include a cheese tortilla wrapped well in foil to keep it warm, a few taquitos or Italy Girl Chicken Bites, some leftover Spanish rice, and a hand full of sweet cherry or grape tomatoes (the kids pretend they're candy and have persuaded other kids at the lunch table that they're popping sweet treats). If I include cookies or our homemade brownies, I usually throw in a few extras for sharing with friends. Remember, you are arming your kids for social success!

LUNCH IDEAS

Add In

Add some veggies or fruit into their sandwiches. Kids generally like the taste of sweet fruit or veggies, but they don't always like the thought or look of them. Try slicing thin cucumbers, carrots or sweet red or yellow peppers and adding them to sandwiches. It provides great crunch--and nutrients. These items can be packed in a separate bag and added by the kids just before eating so it doesn't make the sandwich soggy. **(A big pet peeve in our house!)**

LUNCH IDEAS (Cont'd.)

MINI BAGELS

Cut a few mini bagels in half, spread with plain cream cheese and add thin slices of red or green apples with a dash of cinnamon and a drizzle of honey.

SUSHI ROLLS

Most kids LOVE California sushi rolls. The imitation crab meat is sweet, the cucumber crunchy, and the avocado makes it creamy. If you prefer, you can roll the "crab meat," cucumber and avocado in a flour tortilla instead of the rice. You can substitute tuna or salmon for the crab as well. Cut into pieces as you would a regular sushi roll and wrap tightly.

PERFECT PITA POCKET SALAD

One of the tastiest ways to give your children their favorite vegetables is in a pocket bread. When you return from the market with an assortment of lettuces and their favorite vegetables, have the kids wash all the veggies and prepare them before putting it away. After you have enjoyed your dinner salad, pack away the leftover salad without dressing in a pita pocket. Add your favorite cheese or tuna or chicken salad to really make this pita perfect. Pack dressing separately. Pour over salad just before eating.

CHILI PIE

Take your favorite chili recipe, with or without meat, heat it through, and send it to school in a thermos with a cup top. In separate plastic bags, send along some baked tortilla chips and shredded Monterey jack or cheddar cheese.

Have your children arrange some crumpled crisps along the bottom of the thermos cup, then add shredded cheese and top with warm chili. The chili melts the cheese, and kids adore it!

Following are some easy snack recipes that go to school or work well.

Monkey Mix

A great grab and go snack that the kids can make themselves...

INGREDIENTS:

3 cups cheerios-like cereal unsweetened

1 cup of assorted dried fruits: papaya, mango, apricots, peaches, pears apples -- whatever you like - diced into bite size pieces

1/4 cup each sliced almonds and sunflower seeds or your favorite nuts

Optional : 1/4 cup dried coconut and/or banana chips (if you like it)

You can add raisins, cranberries or dried cherries ; or popcorn or pretzels for some added crunch.

Directions: Chop any of the dried fruit into bite sized pieces with a safety knife or scissors. Combine all ingredients shake it up like a little monkey and enjoy! Keep in a zip lock bag and let your little monkeys pack a handful for a school lunch treat or grab some as an after school snack.

Makes about 20 - 1/4 cup servings

Out of this Universe Tortilla Chips

Here's a tasty, toasty snack that will satisfy celestial lovers large and small. These crunchy chips bake up in minutes and are low in fat, too.

Use celestial-shaped cookie cutters (stars, crescents, circles etc.) to cut shapes from a large flour tortilla. Arrange the shapes on a baking sheet, lightly coat them with cooking spray, and sprinkle them with sea salt.

Bake at 350° for 5 to 7 minutes, and your chips are ready for a dip in salsa or guacamole. For a sweet treat sprinkle with cinnamon and sugar.

Banana Bites

These nutritious bites are easy to mass-produce and just as easy for kids to pop in their mouths when they need a boost. Great for a mid-game snack as well.

Ingredients:

1 small banana

½ cup peanut, almond or soy butter

½ cup toasted wheat germ or flaxseed

Finely chopped peanuts or almonds, mini-chocolate chips, crushed up graham cracker crumbs, or shredded coconut for coating

In a medium bowl, mash together the banana and the peanut butter. Stir in the wheat germ. Roll individual tablespoons of the mixture into balls, and then roll the balls in one, or a mix, of the coatings listed above. Chill until firm. You can freeze these as well. Makes 14 balls.

Variations: For a peanut-free version, substitute sunflower-seeds, almond butter or soy-nut butter for the peanut butter, and omit the peanuts and chocolate chips (which can contain traces of peanut)

Stick-wiches

How do you turn a sandwich into a fun lunch? Make it a stick-wich!

Ingredients:

Bread, cheese, lunch meats, grape tomatoes, lettuce, pickles

Cut up cubes of bread, cheese, and lunch -meat (we ordered 1/2-inch-thick slices of ham, chicken and turkey at the deli counter-**Look for low sodium cuts**)

Slide the cubes onto a skewer with other foods your child likes, such as a grape tomato, a piece of lettuce, a pickle, or an olive.

Send a side of mayo or mustard for dipping.

LET'S EAT A RAINBOW!

It can be challenging to get children to eat ANY vegetable or fruit – much less 5 a day! But it can be much more fun if they are involved in selecting, tracking, preparing, and “eating” a RAINBOW. (After all, who doesn’t love rainbows?) So, try this: When grocery shopping, make a game of calling out all the colors you see in the produce section. (“I spy an orange...carrot”) Then, ask your child to pick out his or her favorite fruit and vegetable from each color.

Encourage your child to record on a chart or calendar, using crayons or markers, whenever he or she eats a different color of fruit or vegetable. Try to make a rainbow by the end of each day, by eating each of the 5 colors: red, orange, yellow, green, and blue or purple.

Invite your child to participate in the preparation of some of the following kid-friendly recipes that will help your family “eat a rainbow” of fruit and vegetables every day.

Nutrition experts recommend eating at least 5 servings of vegetables and fruit a day. To maximize nutritional and disease-prevention benefits, they further recommend selecting a fruit or vegetable from each of the following 5 color categories, daily.

Color (Edible Portion)	2-4 Servings Of Fruit (Examples)	3-5 Servings Of Vegetables (Examples)
Red	Cherry, Cranberry, Raspberry, Red Grape, Strawberry, Watermelon	Beet, Radish, Radicchio, Red Bell Pepper, Tomato
Orange	Apricot, Cantaloupe, Mango, Peach, Nectarine, Orange, Pumpkin	Carrot, Orange Bell Pepper, Orange Tomato, Sweet Potato, Yam
Yellow / Light Green	Banana, Golden Apple, Golden Pear, Grapefruit, Lemon, Pineapple	Avocado, Celery, Corn, Cucumber, Squash, Yellow Bell Pepper, Zucchini
Dark Green	Grape, Honeydew Melon, Kiwifruit, Lime	Broccoli, Green Beans, Green Bell Pepper, Green Peas, Lettuce, Spinach
Blue / Purple	Blackberry, Blueberry, Fig, Plum, Prune, Purple Grape, Raisin	Eggplant, Purple Bell Pepper, Purple Cabbage, Purple Kale, Purple Onion

More Recipes From Lisa Fontanesi

Farmers Market Rainbow Stir-Fry

Use all the fresh colorful veggies that you can find at the market. These could include: broccoli, multicolored cauliflower and carrots, sweet peas, cabbages, bok choy, peppers, celery, and onions. Then you can add tofu, left over meats, fish or shrimp and some noodles and your homemade or store-bought stir fry sauce.

You'll need a little sesame oil and canola oil to stir fry all your ingredients.

Stir Fry Tips

Stir-frying was developed as a technique to save fuel. While a wok is traditionally used, you can use a heavy large skillet instead.

- Have all of the ingredients prepared ahead of time. There is no time to stop to chop or measure or mix once the stir-fry process has begun.
- Make sure that the sauces are mixed before you start cooking. Sauce is usually added last, stir it just before pouring in so all the ingredients are combined.
- Make sure that the food is cut into approximately equal sizes so they cook at the same time.
- Start with the longest-cooking foods, like the meat and hard vegetables like onions and carrots.
- The food must be moved continually around the hot skillet so it cooks evenly and doesn't burn. Don't stop cooking and don't walk away from the stovetop.

Stir Fry Sauce

Ingredients:

1/3 c. Argo cornstarch
1/4 c. Honey
1 tbsp. minced fresh ginger or dried ginger
2 lg. cloves garlic, minced or 2 tbsp powdered garlic
2 tbsp hoisin sauce
1 ½ tbsp oyster sauce
1/2 c. low sodium soy sauce
1/4 c. cider vinegar
2 cups. Chicken, veggie or beef broth
1/2 c. dry sherry (**optional**)
1/2 c. water if sauce gets too thick after cooking

Combine first 5 ingredients. Add soy sauce and vinegar. Shake or whisk until blended. Add broth, sherry and shake or whisk again. Put sauce in a non-reactive saucepan and heat on low heat for about 2 to 3 minutes stirring constantly as it thickens. If it gets too thick add a little water. Sauce can be stored in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks. It may be frozen for 4 months in ice cube trays then placed in sealed freezer bags.

Back to School Banana Nut Muffins

These get my kids to school when packed in their lunch box! Plus they love making them all by themselves!! Recipe perfected by Gaby and Gina inspired by Catherine Eliasberg.

Ingredients:

- ½ cup vegetable oil
- 1-¼ cups all-purpose flour or white wheat mix (you can substitute gluten free flour as well), plus more for the pan
- 6 very ripe bananas
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1/2-cup raw sugar
- 2 large eggs, lightly beaten
- 4 Tablespoons flaxseed (optional) **Good for you and tastes good too**
- ½ cup walnuts (optional)
- 1- cup granola Home made (see Attached recipe)

Makes 24 mini muffins or 12 large ones

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350°. Spray the cups of the muffin pan with a little non-stick spray, and sprinkle with flour, shake pan to remove excess flour or use paper muffin cups.

Peel the bananas, mash them in a large bowl with your hands for some messy fun, and beat them well with an electric mixer. Don't expect absolute smoothness; there will always be a few lumps. Set aside.

In a small bowl, combine the flour, baking soda, and salt. Add the sugar, oil, eggs, granola, flaxseed and walnuts to the bananas and mix well. Add the dry ingredients to the bananas and stir until the batter is thoroughly blended.

Spoon the batter into the muffin cups about two-thirds full. Bake for 15 minutes, and then check the muffins for doneness. A toothpick inserted into the center of the muffin should come out clean. If not, bake for 5 minutes more and check again. When the toothpick comes out clean, remove the muffins from the oven and let cool for 5 minutes. Run a knife around the edges of the muffins and remove them from the pan. Serve warm or cold.

You can make these muffins into a cake using the same recipe. Butter and flour two 9-inch round cake pans or 1 bundt cake pan. Bake for 25 minutes, or until the toothpick comes out clean. Cool the cakes for 10 minutes in their pans. Loosen the edges with a knife and then turn out the cake onto a platter.

FRUIT PARFAITS WITH HOMEMADE MAPLE GRANOLA

Granola Ingredients:

3 cups old-fashioned oats
1/4 cup almonds or favorite nuts, coarsely chopped or slivered **optional**
1/4-cup real maple syrup
2 teaspoons unsalted butter
1/3-cup raisins or cranberries

Parfait Ingredients:

Any fruits that you like or are in season sliced or diced including:
3 cups berries (about 1 1/2 one-pint baskets)
3 cups thinly sliced pitted peeled peaches, mangos, apples pears, bananas (about 6 medium pieces of fruit)
1 orange to squeeze over the fruit to keep it from turning brown
Nonfat/Low fat plain Greek style yogurt (you get more protein)
1-2 tablespoons real vanilla **(optional) add to yogurt**
1-tablespoon agave or maple syrup to 4 lbs container of yogurt (optional)

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350°F. Mix oats and almonds in 13x9x2-inch baking pan. Combine 1/4-cup maple syrup and butter in heavy small saucepan. Bring to boil. Pour maple syrup mixture over oat mixture; stir to blend well. Bake 10 -15 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add raisins to oat mixture; stir to blend. Bake until mixture is golden and crisp, stirring occasionally, about 8 minutes longer. Cool granola completely in pan. (Can be prepared 1 week ahead. Store in airtight container at room temperature.)

Gently toss all the fruits in large bowl to blend. Divide fruit mixture among 16 parfait glasses. Sprinkle each parfait with granola, dividing equally. Top each with yogurt and serve.

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Recipes by

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