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6 Simple, Healthy Summer Lunches

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Hello Happily Whole Members!

Just in case you're stumped for lunch ideas for yourself or your kids this summer, I've put together a little present for you! Here's a simple guide to how I create healthy lunches. Plus, you'll see pictures and descriptions of six very healthy, nutritionally-balanced and easy-to-make midday meals for summertime. Now, let's be honest--these lunches are not as simple as PB&J with a side of chips and maybe a few fruits or veggies.....and certainly more work than those pre-packaged lunches which will remain nameless. But, when you have at least ten minutes to prep at lunchtime, these are totally doable. Even if you don't do something like this everyday, it's my hope to inspire you to enjoy eating

a greater variety of real, whole foods. (More on creating a REAL foods kitchen HERE.) [1]

You'll notice each lunch contains protein (often a plant source since we don't eat much meat and when we do, it's most often at dinnertime), fruits, vegetables and good fats. I almost always include a whole grain or some form of starchy carbohydrate. But it's not always necessary if I'm covering our nutritional bases without it.

At first I was going to label this 'Simple Summer Lunches for Your Kids' because I made them with mine in mind. Then I realized most of these meals can easily satisfy us adults, too!

Keep in mind: Everyone's nutritional needs are different. So, I'm not suggesting you copy these lunches in detail for you or your children. I'm just trying to help you and your family get creative and ***fall in love with REAL FOOD.*** (a little about my own journey to real foods HERE [2].)

If you cannot find or do not prefer to eat/serve something on the plate, simply substitute it for something in the same food group. Next week, our plates look will look a lot different based on the foods I find or choose to buy (due to seasonal choices, accessibility, cost, etc.). I just make sure the plates contain the QUALITY of foods I want to give my girls.

You might mix and match what's on the plates or you may just see one or two things to take into your eating repertoire. I don't aim to incorporate every single nutritional requirement into every single meal we eat. Instead, I try to ensure that I cover my bases over the course of a day (and sometimes within a week when I'm a little less organized!).

MY SECRET to creating healthy meals on a whim: Preparation. I am NOT a fantastic meal planner. So, what I'm sharing with you here is the result of a normal shopping trip where I simply make sure to buy lots of colorful produce, healthy protein sources and super-healthy grains. Once I get home or on one afternoon, I prep my food by cleaning produce, chopping, shredding cheese, soaking beans, etc. That way, I'm prepped and ready to create easy, healthy meals on a whim.

I labeled these meals 'lunches' but in keeping with my current theme of 'simplicity in the summer', I just might serve this type of thing at dinnertime, too!

So, here we go! Under each photograph, I've listed what's on the plates.



Lunch 1

- Garbanzo beans (same thing as chick peas). My girls love just eating them as a finger food, which works out nicely since they are often the protein source of the meal!
- A halved avocado stuffed with small pieces of organic ham (Applegate Farms) and covered with raw cheddar goat cheese. I scored the avocado, stuffed it and stuck them in the toaster oven. YUM!
- A couple pickled button mushrooms (my girls adore anything pickled…weird, huh?)
- A beautiful green from my mixed greens bag and a few micro-greens from the farmer's market.
- Some tri-colored carrots and sugar snap peas



Lunch 2

- Chickpea Salad (another use for those beans I soaked!). I mixed some chickpeas, chopped tomato,

cubed avocado and a bit of feta cheese and stirred it up. They liked it!
- Green apple
- Steamed spinach with a touch of real, grass-fed butter and a shake of salt
- A fig (my girls love a good fig or Medjoule date from time to time)



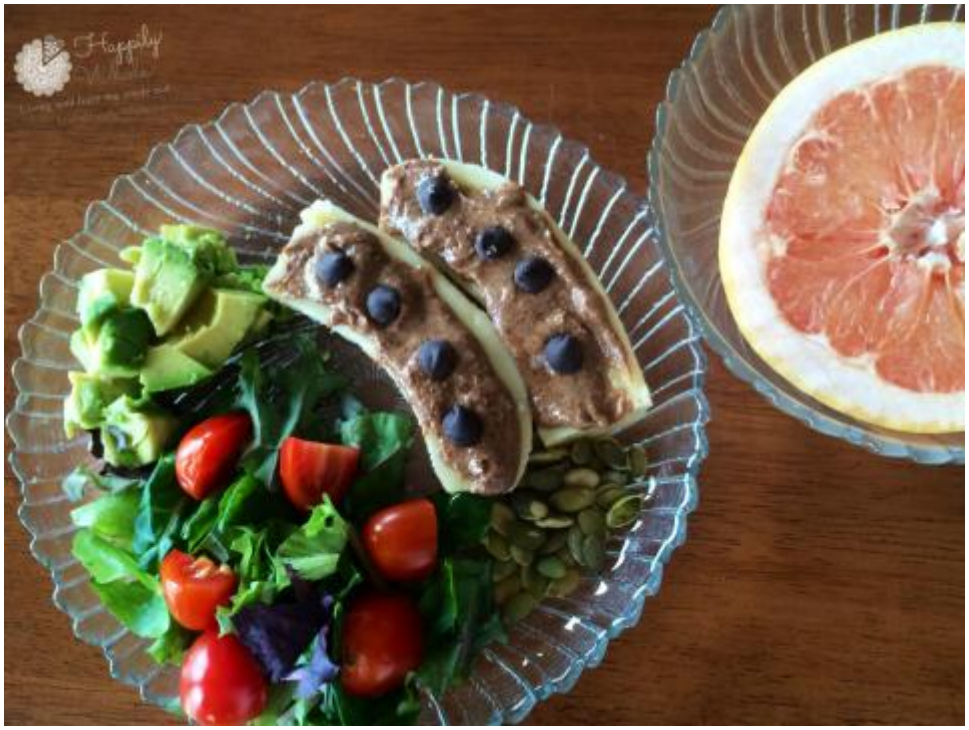
Lunch 3

- Quesadilla on black rice (gluten free) tortillas. I filled the tortilla with some shredded raw cheddar cheese and a few avocado slices, put just a touch of coconut oil in the pan and cooked until a touch crispy and cheese was melted. They've been asking for this again ever since!
- Fresh, organic strawberries
- Tomatoes and some micro-greens (any green will do!)
- Sugar snap peas and a couple yellow carrots



Lunch 4

- Sandwich on a homemade sprouted wheat bun. Organic Swiss cheese, some of those micro-greens I got from the farmer's market again and grass-fed butter and organic brown mustard on the bun (yes, they like butter on everything and so we always eat grass-fed/pastured butter). More info on what kinds of grains we choose HERE. [3])
- Roasted and lightly salted pumpkin seeds in the shell
- Mango
- Homemade hummus (recipe HERE [4]) to dip the tomatoes and purple cabbage in



Lunch 5

- A salad with mixed organic greens and tomatoes (one girl likes salads without dressing, the other likes organic ranch). If you want a nice subtle summer salad, look HERE [5].
- Some avocado slices (if you see a theme here, I use avocado lots for their good fats and to get some more calories in)
- Raw unsalted pumpkin seeds
- A banana halved long-ways, spread with some natural almond butter and a few dark chocolate chips (Enjoy Life brand, 69% cacao)
- A half of a grapefruit (I slice between all the triangles so it's easy to scoop…kind of tedious)



Lunch 6

- Half of an Ezekiel English muffin (my FAVORITE sprouted grain English muffin. THIS ARTICLE [3] explains why we eat sprouted grains.). Topped with mercury-free tuna (mixed with a small amount of organic ranch) and a couple of slices of raw, cheddar goat cheese. I pop those in the toasted oven and they are ready to eat!
- Tomatoes, purple cabbage and sugar snap peas (gotta finish up those veggies for the week before they get bad!)
- A few Way Better brand black bean tortilla chips
- A side of frozen organic berries (I, of course, prefer fresh berries but for when we run out, I always keep some in the freezer. We also eat frozen berries in the off season since fresh are so expensive then.)

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Links
[1] https://www.livinghappilywhole.com/content/kitchen-clean
[2] https://www.livinghappilywhole.com/content/my-real-food-revelation
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