

Back to School 4-week lunchbox meal planner



ONE HANDED COOKS

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One Handed Cooks and Bega Cheese are excited to bring you an inspiring 2016 meal planner ready just in time for the new school term. With multiple recipe ideas and nutrition notes to help with what-to-pack-when, we have created simple and realistic lunchboxes that you will love to pack and kids will want to eat.

So whether you follow the planner every day or pick and choose the ideas for inspiration, we hope that your children will be excited to open their lunchbox every day and enjoy a variety of nutritious foods that helps them to grow, play and learn.



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Nutritious learning

At school, an inspiring classroom full of variety, colour and life can bring out the best in your child. The same can be said for their lunch box, with a little planning and inspiration you can create simple, appealing food that won't come home uneaten.

Packing a lunchbox that includes key nutrients such as quality carbohydrates, protein, calcium, iron, zinc, and omega-3 fatty acids in addition to a nutritious diet at home will ensure they have the nutrients to grow and develop, the concentration to listen and learn while in the classroom and the energy to run and play with their friends.



Steps to packing a nutritious lunchbox

1. Choose quality carbohydrates:

Wholegrain breads, wraps, pasta, crispbreads and cereals, brown rice, quinoa and legumes are higher in fibre, B vitamins and folate and provide longer lasting energy than white and refined varieties, helping to keep children satisfied and be able to concentrate in the classroom.

2. Include protein:

It's important for satisfying hungry little appetites and helping kids to feel full, allowing them to concentrate on learning and remembering. Lean red meat slices or meatballs, chicken, lean ham, canned fish, eggs or cheese fillings are great on sandwiches. Cheese slices or sticks, yoghurt tubs, regular or flavoured milk, nuts (depending on age and school rules) or wholegrain muesli or nut bars are also sources of protein and great for snacks.

3. Pack vegetables:

They provide a variety of important nutrients, and add fibre and bulk to their diet. Depending on the age of your child, pack cherry tomatoes, carrot, capsicum, celery sticks or even snow peas as snack options and include salad fillings on sandwiches such as lettuce, grated carrot and cucumber.

4. Provide fresh fruit:

It's a more nutritious, nutrient rich, higher fibre and satisfying option compared with juice or processed fruit snacks, and lower in sugar and energy compared with dried fruit.

5. Include water as a drink:

It's essential for keeping hydrated. Pack frozen water bottles or add ice cubes to their drink bottle if your child prefers colder water - especially on hot days. Try to avoid juices, cordials and soft drinks.

Think variety

The most nutritious lunchbox in the world doesn't mean much if it isn't enjoyed and doesn't get eaten. Many children prefer the consistency of routine of eating the same type of sandwich and same snacks day in and day out. Making big changes to their lunchbox all of a sudden can be a source of anxiety and stress, so it's usually helpful to take small, and often slow, steps to introduce a varied lunch box.

A varied lunch box is one that appeals to children by giving them choice, simple packaging and a giggle doesn't hurt either. We love using fresh and seasonal whole foods that offer quality nutrients. Packing a fun and enticing lunch is a cinch, take a look at the 4-week meal planner and get creative using Bega Natural Cheese Slices or 100% natural crowd pleaser snacks such as Bega Stringers® and Bega Farmers' Tasty Natural Sticks. The kids will love the effort you've made and be thrilled to try something new.

Read more of our helpful recipes and tips and tricks throughout the menu planner for some great ideas on how to maximise variety in your child's lunchbox and encourage acceptance and enjoyment.

Want more?
Click through links
for the full recipes!



Create a fun and appealing lunch box



1. Having a lunch box they are proud to bring out is the first step to eating what's inside.
2. Select some 'tools' to help create fun meals in a flash. Simple everyday kitchen items such as shaped cookie cutters, skewers and silicone baking cups are your best friend. Try using Bega Stringers®, Farmers' Tasty Natural Cheese Sticks and Natural Cheese Slices to create the cute ideas in the recipe section of this eBook.
3. Include brightly coloured fruit and veggies for natural colour and create patterns through the layering of ingredients in sandwiches.
4. Give food life by adding edible eyes or teeth. Play around with food such as cutting Bega Natural Cheese Sticks into cubes and threading them on a skewer or cut jagged teeth out of a Bega Natural Cheese slice to transform the simplest sandwich. Adding personality to food will give your kids so much joy.
5. Pack your foods securely and neatly, and be sure to include any ice packs or frozen drink bottles to keep the food fresh and edible.

Lunchbox food safety

The number one rule when packing a lunch box is that all food is handled and stored safely. Being confident in how to safely pack your child's lunchbox will allow you to include a wide variety of nutritious homemade food for your children safely without having to resort to the highly

processed and packaged snack foods. Bacteria responsible for causing food spoilage grow between 5-60°C. Storing and handling food safely will reduce the risk of the growth of any harmful bacteria and ensure your child's lunch stays fresh and remains safe to eat.

Tips for safe food preparation and storage:

- Make sure you have clean hands when handling food.
- Invest in a good quality insulated lunchbox or cooler bag.
- Defrost any food from the freezer in the fridge overnight.
- Only include leftovers that have been cooked no more than 24 hours prior and that were placed in the fridge immediately after cooking.
- Place a small, frozen bottle of water or small ice pack in your child's lunch box next to the food that needs to be kept cold.
- Encourage your child to keep their lunchbox out of the direct sunlight and away from heat if possible.
- If you are packing your child's lunchbox in advance, keep it in the fridge until they are ready to leave for school.
- At the end of the day be sure to throw out any perishable food that doesn't get eaten.
- Remember the golden rule: if in doubt, throw it out.

4-Week lunchbox meal planner

With NEW cheese recipes,
nutrition notes, lunch packing tips
and a whole lot of fun for the kids.



Week 1

Munchtime Monster using Bega Farmers' Tasty Natural Cheese Slices

Makes: 1 sandwich

1 lunchbox serve = 1 monster sandwich depending on your child's age and appetite.

Preparation time: 10 minutes

Ingredients

- 2 slices multigrain bread, crusts trimmed
- 1 tbsp hummus
- 30g shredded roast chicken
- 1 cos lettuce leaf
- 1 Bega Farmers' Tasty Natural Cheese Slice
- 2 sliced rounds of cucumber
- 2 sliced rounds of carrot
- 1 blueberry, halved

Method

1. To create the monster sandwich take one slice of bread and cut out a rectangle shape near the bottom - this will be the mouth opening, set aside. Take the second slice of bread, spread with hummus and top with the roast chicken. Trim the lettuce leaf to resemble the monster's spiky hair and arrange with 1cm of the 'hair' poking out the top. Place the remaining slice of bread on top.
2. Take the slice of Bega cheese and carefully cut in half. Use a knife to trim one half into spikey monster teeth. Place the remaining half in the sandwich. Carefully tuck the teeth under the bread mouth so the teeth are showing.
3. Finally, arrange the eyes on your monster by layering one slice of cucumber, carrot and then the blueberry half. You can use some extra hummus to stick the eyes down on the bread if desired.

Storage: wrap your assembled monster in plastic wrap to hold it together. Pack a small ice brick or frozen water bottle in the lunch so it stays fresh until lunchtime.

Serving suggestion: pack the 'Munchtime Monster' sandwich with rainbow fruit skewers (two small skewers featuring a range of fruit such as melon and berries), a small tub of yoghurt and corn on the cob.

Top tip:
Cutting sandwiches into shapes can transform the simplest of sandwiches and may be just the thing to inspire them to take a bite and give it a try.



Don't forget water: Freezing a small water bottle helps kids keep cool and refreshed on hot days. By packing the frozen waterbottle (or small ice pack) alongside their lunchbox in your child's lunch bag it will keep cold foods cold and prevent the growth of harmful bacteria.



Morning Tea



Lunch

Primary school aged children aged 4-11 require 2-3 serves of dairy every day for good health. (1 serve = 250ml milk or 200g tub yoghurt or 40g cheese).

Monday

- 🍏 Yoghurt
Chopped watermelon
- 🍴 Rocket sandwich skewers using **Bega Stringers®** & **Farmers' Tasty Natural Cheese Slices** [pic 2]
Preservative free dried apricots



2

Tuesday

- 🍏 Nut free muesli bar
Banana
- 🍴 Pizza rounds with **Bega Easy Melt Colby Natural Cheese Slices** [pic 3]
Strawberries



3

Wednesday

- 🍏 **Bega Junior Natural Cheese Stick**, veggie sticks with a homemade dip e.g. tuna, hummus, tzakiki, carrot
- 🍴 Chicken and salad pinwheel wraps
Grapes

Homemade veggie based dips are a nutritious option and a fabulous way to introduce a range of flavours and textures in a non-confronting way, especially vegetables. Enjoy them with veggie sticks, crackers or as a spread on sandwiches.

Thursday

- 🍏 Rainbow fruit skewers
Yoghurt
- 🍴 Hummus, shredded chicken, lettuce and cucumber multigrain Munchtime Monster using **Bega Farmers' Tasty Natural Cheese Slices** [pic 1]
Corn on the cob



Friday

- 🍏 Nut-free trail mix
Bega Stringer®
- 🍴 Beef and vegetable sausage rolls
Cherry tomatoes
Snow peas
Apple



4

When including leftovers in your child's lunch box make sure the food was refrigerated immediately and no longer than 24 hours after it was cooked.

Week 2

Cheesy Lamb & Quinoa Moon Balls using Bega Easy Melt Colby Natural Cheese Slices

Makes: approx. 25-30 meatballs
1 lunchbox serve = 2-4 meatballs depending on your child's age and appetite.
Preparation time: 30 minutes

Ingredients

500g organic diced lamb (or lamb mince)
1 brown onion, chopped
1 clove garlic, crushed
1 egg (optional)
1 cup cooked quinoa (or use 1 cup breadcrumbs)
1 tbsp Worcestershire sauce
1/2 cup chopped button mushrooms
1/4 cup chopped parsley
1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil to fry
1 Bega Easy Melt Colby Natural Cheese Slice

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C. Line a baking tray with baking paper. Cook your quinoa according to pack instructions.
2. Using a food processor, process the lamb until finely chopped. Add the mushrooms, onion and garlic and process to combine.
3. Transfer the lamb mixture to a bowl. Add the egg, cooked quinoa, Worcestershire sauce and parsley. Use your hands to thoroughly mix the ingredients together. Shape into small golf-ball sized meatballs, gently flatten slightly and set aside. If you have time refrigerate the meatballs for 30 minutes before cooking.
4. Heat the oil in a large fry pan over medium. Add the meatballs in batches and fry for around 2-3 minutes either side. Once browned, transfer to the baking tray and bake in the oven for around 10 minutes to ensure the meat is cooked through.
5. Cut the cheese slice into 4 even quarters (or cut into cute shapes) and place over 4 of the hot meatballs and allow the cheese to melt. Store in the fridge until ready to be packed in lunchboxes

Serving suggestion: pack the cheesy lamb and quinoa meatballs with Multigrain crackers, Bega Country Light Natural Cheese Slice, orange segments, natural popcorn, cherry tomatoes and snow peas.

Top tip:
You can freeze any uncooked meatballs that you aren't likely to eat at this point, simply wrap in individual portions and freeze for up to 2 months. Leftover cooked meatballs can be store in the fridge for up to 1-2 days or in the freezer for up to 2 months.





Morning Tea



Lunch

Keep your fridge, freezer and pantry well stocked with homemade snacks, fresh food and nutritious staples so healthy items are readily available.

Monday

- 🍏 Cucumber sticks
Homemade banana & choc chip mini muffin
- 🍴 Chicken, Spinach and Cheese Quesadillas using Bega Easy Melt Colby Natural Cheese Slices [pic 2]
Fresh apricot



2

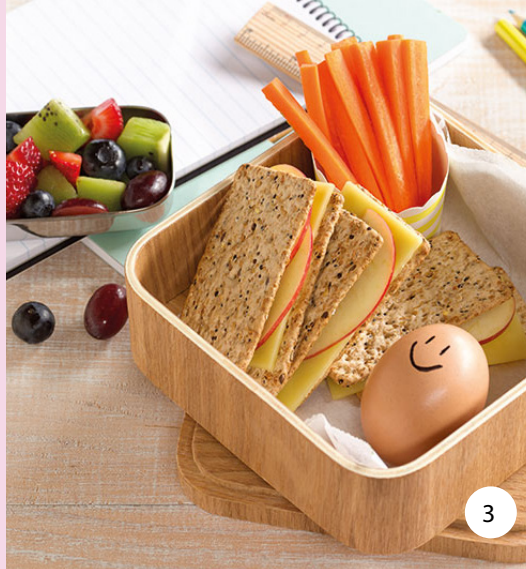
Tuesday



Fruit salad
Yoghurt



Cheese & Apple with Crackers using **Bega Farmers' Tasty Natural Cheese Slices** [pic 3]
Carrot sticks
Boiled egg



3

Wednesday



Chickpea, cheese and cucumber snack pack using **Bega Farmers' Tasty Natural Cheese Sticks** [pic 4]



Small spiral pasta and tuna salad with capsicum and corn
Kiwi fruit

Some kids prefer the texture of things that crunch. Wholegrain crispbread and crackers are a great alternative to sandwiches when packed alongside nutritious ingredients such as cheese, egg, vegetables and fruit.

Thursday



Bega Stringer®
Nectarine



Egg, avocado and lettuce sandwich
Cucumber and celery sticks



Friday



Frozen orange segments
Multigrain crackers
Bega Country Light Natural Cheese Slice



Cheesy lamb & quinoa moon balls with melted **Bega Easy Melt Colby Natural Cheese Slices**
Snow peas
Cherry tomatoes



4

Frozen fruit can be very appealing for kids who love to eat cold things. They're also refreshing for kids on a hot summer's day. Keeping the lunchbox in an insulated lunch bag will help the fruit stay cold for as long as possible.

Week 3

'Sushi' Sandwich Rolls using Bega Stringers®

Ingredients

- 4 slices of wholemeal bread, crusts removed
- 4 slices of shaved turkey
- ½ an avocado, thinly sliced
- ½ a carrot, peeled and grated
- 4 Bega Stringers®

Method

1. Place the slices of bread onto a chopping board or flat surface, and then flatten the bread slightly using a rolling pin.
2. Arrange the turkey, avocado, carrot and Bega Stringers® in rows on the four slices of bread, leaving a 1cm strip along one edge.
3. Carefully roll the bread from the opposite edge of the clear strip to enclose the filling.
4. Cut each roll in half and pack into a lunch container tightly to hold the sandwiches together and keep them fresh until lunchtime. Use an icebrick or frozen drink bottle to keep your lunch cool.

Serving suggestion: pack the 'Sushi' sandwich rolls with fresh raspberries, red grapes, yoghurt and water.

Top tip:
For little ones who are stuck in a 'sandwich everyday for lunch' rut give them a simple makeover by rolling the bread slices into sushi rolls. Use their favourite fillings and this may be just the trick to get them to try something new.



Remember to check your school's policy on nuts when packing your child's lunchbox. Read food labels carefully too and avoid any products that state 'may contain nuts'.

Monday

- 🍏 Grapes
Yoghurt
- 🥄 'Sushi' Sandwich Rolls using **Bega Stringers**® [pic 1]
Fresh raspberries



Tuesday

- 🍏 Homemade banana & choc-chip mini muffin
Bega Farmers' Tasty Natural Cheese Stick
- 🥄 Homemade salmon and potato cakes
Chopped rockmelon and watermelon
Cucumber sticks



Wednesday

- 🍏 Nut free muesli bar
Bega Stringer®
- 🥄 Ham, Cheese & Coleslaw Airplane Sandwich using **Bega Country Light Natural Cheese Slices** [pic 2]
Celery sticks
Fresh peach slices

Making your own 'sometimes' foods such as banana choc chip mini muffins or pikelets to include in lunchboxes allows you to stay in control of the ingredients and portion sizes and keeps things exciting for your children.

Thursday

- 🍏 Multigrain crispbread with **Bega Farmers' Tasty Natural Cheese Slice**
Green beans
- 🥄 Falafel and salad wrap
Mandarin



Friday

- 🍏 Homemade pikelets
Mixed berries
- 🥄 Mini pizza bagels using **Bega Stringers**® [pic 3]
Cherry tomatoes



Pizza bagels make for a great afternoon snack and leftovers can be used the next day in lunchboxes. Store in the fridge and pack with a cool pack to keep fresh and safe.

Week 4

Lunchtime Caterpillar using Bega Farmers' Tasty Natural Cheese Sticks

Makes: 4 caterpillars
1 lunchbox serve = 2 caterpillars depending on your child's age and appetite
Preparation time: 10 minutes

Ingredients

2 Bega Farmers' Tasty Natural Cheese Sticks
1 small tomato + 4 cherry tomatoes
1 small cucumber
½ small yellow capsicum
1 tsp whole egg mayonnaise, optional
4 x wooden food skewers

Method

1. First, slice 1 x 2mm pieces of cheese off the end of each Bega cheese stick. Use the end of a drinking straw to press into the cheese slice to create 2 small round 'eyes', repeat with the second slice and set aside for later.
2. Next, slice each Bega stick into 6 cubes. De-seed the tomato and cut the firm flesh into 8 cubes equal in size to the cheese. Cut the cucumber and capsicum into 8 equal cubes.
3. Thread each skewer in a pattern of cheese, tomato, cucumber and capsicum leaving room at the end for the cherry tomato head. Repeat, and finish with a cube of cheese. Push a cherry tomato on the top to cover the end. Cut the tip off the sharp end of the skewer. Repeat with the remaining skewers and remaining ingredients.
4. To create the face, completely dry the cherry tomato with paper towel and use the end of a skewer to dot on two spots of mayonnaise. Carefully stick the cheese rounds onto the mayonnaise to create your eyes - you can stick optional cucumber eyes on top to create a more realistic looking critter!

Serving suggestion: pack the caterpillar sticks with a mandarin flower, tuna, avocado and salad pita pockets and passionfruit.

Storage: store caterpillars in an airtight container in the fridge until ready to use. Place snugly in the lunchbox to stop them from moving around. An icepack placed in a cooler bag will help to keep these fresh.

Top tip:

You can use whatever fruit or vegetables are seasonal or that your child likes best. Softer vegetables are easier to thread on the skewer.



Monday

- 🍏 Pear
Boiled egg
- 🍴 Corn fritters with avocado wedges
Cherry tomatoes
Bega Farmers' Tasty Natural Cheese Slices



2

Meeting the recommended serves of dairy can provide calcium to support strong teeth, which is important for being able to bite and chew a wide variety of nutritious foods.

Tuesday

- 🍏 Berries
Nut-free muesli bar
Yoghurt
- 🍴 Owl Sandwich using Bega Farmers' Tasty Natural Cheese Slices [pic 3]
Sultanas



3

Wednesday

- 🍏 Lunchtime caterpillar using Bega Farmers' Tasty Natural Cheese Sticks [pic 1]
Mandarin flower
- 🍴 Tuna, avocado and salad pita pockets
Passionfruit

Adding some eyes, mouth and a nose to a sandwich instantly adds some personality and character to their lunchbox. It can make the other lunch box elements appear more interesting too.

Thursday

- 🍏 Natural popcorn
Bega Junior Natural Cheese Stick
- 🍴 Zucchini slice
Cucumber sticks
Grapes



Friday

- 🍏 Plain milk
Apple
- 🍴 Rainbow wraps with Bega Country Light Natural Cheese Slices [pic 4]
Blueberries



4

Include a variety of naturally vibrant and colourful fruits and vegetables in their wraps, sandwiches and as snacks to help stimulate their senses, make food appear appealing and maximise the nutrients on offer.



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