

How to Bring Your Lunch to Work: Easy Tips and Recipes

Eating lunch in the office can get pretty expensive if you're buying your lunch every day. Not to mention, it can get pretty boring. Really, what are your choices for lunch: soup, salad or sandwich? If that's all you've got to pick from, you might as well pack your own soup, salad or sandwich and save a lot of money at the same time.



Once you take into account how much you're paying for lunch in a year, that number alone might convince you it's time to start packing. Here are easy-to-follow tips on how to make packing your lunch a breeze. And being budget-conscious doesn't mean eating boring dishes, so you'll find there are some great healthy recipes to choose from below, too.

Utilize Some Prepared Foods

Planning your lunch ahead doesn't have to take up all of your time. A store-bought rotisserie chicken for topping salads or filling wraps, a container of healthy hummus for dipping veggie sticks, a pre-washed box of mixed lettuces for making salad — these are all great ways to cut down on prep and cook time when putting together a work lunch. **This Chinese Chicken Salad With Red Chile Peanut Dressing** uses shredded rotisserie chicken (<http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/bobby-flay/chinese-chicken-salad-with-red-chile-peanut-dressing-recipe-1942661>).



Plan Ahead, Cook Big Batches

Whatever you're cooking on the weekend, make a double batch and freeze portions for future lunches. Your frozen lunch won't even need an ice pack for transport — let it defrost in your office fridge and you'll have a nice lunch the next day. Double up on this **California Turkey Chili recipe** (<http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/giada-de-laurentiis/california-turkey-chili-recipe-2014996>) and stock your freezer for future lunches.

Also see Big Batch Dinner Recipes for Busy Nights:

(<http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/packages/recipes-for-kids/kids-weeknight-dinners/big-batch-dinner-recipes-for-busy-nights>)

Pack Foods That Reheat Well

Soups and stews are some of the best foods for reheating in the office microwave because they taste just as good the next day as the first day you made them. Try any of these **easy soup recipes**: (<http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/packages/cooking-from-the-pantry/meal-worthy-soups--from-the-pantry-->).

Pack Foods That Can Be Eaten Cold

This is especially true if you need to grab and go and don't have time to reheat your meal. Stick to salads, sandwiches, cold pasta or grain salads, like this **Mediterranean Farro Salad** (<http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/giada-de-laurentiis/mediterranean-farro-salad-recipe-1946544>).

Say No to Sogginess

No one wants a soggy salad or sandwich. Pack your dressing separate from your salad, and pack your bread separate from the sandwich fillings. It's an easy step to take for making sure your lunch tastes fresh. Get the

recipe for the **Ultimate Ham**

Sandwich (<http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/food-network-kitchen/ultimate-ham-sandwich-recipe-2105834>) and check out

these **simple salad recipes** (<http://www.foodnetwork.com/how-to/packages/help-around-the-kitchen/photos/simple-salad->) recipes and

easy **lunch sandwiches** (<http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/photos/top-sandwich-recipes>) for more ideas.



Pack Filling Dishes

Don't find yourself hungry an hour or two after your lunch break. Legumes and grains will help keep your hunger at bay. Pack dishes made with beans, lentils, brown rice, quinoa and other fiber-rich foods. This recipe

for **Quinoa Pilaf in Lettuce Cups** (<http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/winner-aarti-sequeira1/quinoa-pilaf-in-lettuce-cups-recipe-1921702>) is healthy, refreshing and filling.



Leftovers Are Your Friend

Lots of leftovers from dinner last night? Think, free lunch! Imagine what you'll save eating those leftovers instead of spending money on lunch. Not to mention, those leftovers might have ended up in the trash if no one ate them.

Leftover **Meatballs and Spaghetti** (<http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/in-a-garten/real-meatballs-and-spaghetti-recipe-1946027>) are great for lunch the next day.