

Quick and Easy Lettuce Wraps

A top-down view of a wooden table. In the upper right, a blue bowl contains cubed, browned chicken. In the upper left, a grey bowl is filled with shredded orange carrots. In the center, a white plate holds three lettuce wraps, each filled with chicken, carrots, and green onions. To the left of the plate, a small dark bowl and a pair of wooden chopsticks are visible. The text "QUICK & EASY LETTUCE WRAPS" is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font across the middle of the image.

QUICK & EASY LETTUCE WRAPS

LIVE WELL UTAH

Celebrate Family Mealtime Month and prepare one of these quick, healthy lettuce wrap ideas for your next family dinner.

As you are probably aware, lettuce wraps are trending right now in the food department. They are fun, easy, and most of all, delicious. Even kids have a fun time eating their veggies with wraps. There are many types of lettuce you can use to change things up a bit. Here are some ideas that may be just the ticket for your next quick, easy and nutritious dinner:

Chicken Club Wrap

Bacon bits, cooked shredded chicken (can use leftover grilled chicken too), chopped tomatoes, avocados and ranch dressing (I make my own with buttermilk and reduced fat mayo).

Quinoa Basil Wrap

Fresh basil leaves, grated Parmesan cheese, lemon juice, olive oil, 4 cloves garlic, minced, 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper, 2 cups cooked quinoa, 1 15-ounce can no-salt-added red kidney beans, rinsed and drained.

Taco Wrap

You guessed it...use the lettuce as the shell...the rest is taco meat, cheese, sour cream, salsa, etc. Whatever your favorite taco fillings are, they are perfect in a lettuce wrap!

Tasty Tuna Wrap

Make tuna salad as you like it. I like to make the dressing with plain Greek yogurt, mustard and lemon pepper seasoning. Add shredded carrots, chopped celery, and diced green onion. Chopped apple or sliced grapes are also a nice addition. You can also use chicken or hard boiled eggs to change up your salad filling.

Cheeseburger Wrap

Brown ground beef, add chopped onion and seasoned salt to taste. Melt cheddar cheese on top, place in lettuce and top with tomatoes, pickles, ketchup and other cheeseburger favorites.

Hawaiian Pineapple Wrap

Place sliced ham, cheese, and pineapple chunks inside lettuce. Top with chopped celery and chopped green onions. Drizzle with your favorite teriyaki sauce.

Asian Shredded Pork

Place cooked shredded pork, chopped water chestnuts, chopped celery, chopped green onion, shredded carrots and teriyaki glaze in a lettuce leaf. Enjoy! We also like sesame seeds, coconut and drained, crushed pineapple on ours.

There are so many other ideas, from a Greek/Mediterranean twist, to a smoked salmon filling, to a Thai with peanut sauce filling. The sky's the limit! Wraps are fun to experiment with, and are a great way to stretch leftover meat. Whole cooked grains like cracked wheat, barley and brown rice also make a great addition. Or what about couscous? Have fun!

This article was written by Teresa Hunsaker, USU Extension family and consumer sciences educator, Weber County

Quick, Kid-Friendly Lunches on a Budget



Make lunches your kids will love!

How to Win the Battle

Now that school is in full swing, mornings are filled with getting ready, making lunches and heading out the door in a timely fashion.

When it comes to busy mornings, healthy lunches are one of the first things that get removed from the radar! Have you thought much about the food you toss in your child's lunch box each morning? Is the meal balanced with a variety of nutrient dense foods your child loves?

Right now you are probably saying "My kids won't eat healthy foods! And I don't have time or money to make healthier lunches!" Well, we have some tips to make this mealtime a bit healthier and less stressful without breaking the bank.

Here are a few tips for making healthy lunches for children on a limited food budget!

1. Plan lunches before the week starts to make sure you have all the ingredients you need to make healthy lunches. This prevents unplanned visits to the grocery store, which saves time and money. Also consider what you will be eating for dinner that week so you can use leftovers!

2. Involve your kids by inviting them to help you make a list of grains, proteins, dairy products, and fruits/veggies they would enjoy eating at lunchtime. To save some money, have children look through the grocery ads and circle the items from each food group they would like in their lunches that week. They will enjoy getting to help create their own lunches and it helps make sure your not spending money on food that will go to waste later.

3. Make preparing lunches a family activity. Preparing daily lunches for your kids doesn't just have to be a task you do by yourself. Spend a few minutes each night together gathering items they picked out from each food group to create a unique lunch for them to have the next day. Try giving your children options. Cheese stick or yogurt. Carrot sticks or cucumber slices. This way, they get a say in what they will eat which increases the likelihood they will actually eat it and less food will be wasted. This allows you to prepare a healthier meal for your child without having to sacrifice time during your busy morning.

4. Make healthy lunches fun for kids by cutting foods like fruit, veggies, cheese, and bread into fun shapes like stars or hearts. Use cookie cutters to save time. Try making an open face sandwich with different veggies as the eyes, nose, and mouth. You can also let your child pick out a lunch box at the beginning of the year so they are excited about bringing lunch each day! Making food look fun is one large step towards helping your children eat healthy foods at lunchtime.

5. Make it tasty! Still having a hard time getting your kids to eat fruits and vegetables? Try adding a special dipping sauce like a salad dressing, hummus, or fruit dip to increase acceptance. Having something to dunk fruits and veggies into makes them fun and tasty!

Here is one idea of a quick and simple lunch to put together for you kiddos.

Sandwich Kabobs

This kid friendly recipe takes simple foods and puts them together in a unique way. All you need is meat, cheese, lettuce, bread and tomato (or any other veggie your child likes). Cut the foods into 1 in sections and slide them onto a skewer for a kid friendly kabob! Add a side of grapes, pretzels, carrots and celery to make a meal. Within minutes you have yourself a fun and healthy meal for your child's lunch.

To get your children involved in this recipe, have them pick out and wash the produce. They can also help put the food on the skewer in whatever order they want!

This article was written by Mateja Savoie Roskos MPH, RD, CD, CNP and Sheri Winn



