



Summer Snack Survival Guide

Greetings

Summer is packed full of fun and excitement for families, kids especially. School is out, schedules are relaxed, and routines often fly out the window.

However, for kids struggling with overwhelming emotions, impulse control, inability to focus, or unexplained aggression — summer's lackadaisical script can be a recipe for distress and emotional outbursts.

I created this guide so parents can help their children stay on top of their emotions and keep their cool, figuratively and literally.

I understand how hard it is to balance healthier eating and a busy schedule. In addition to being a nutritionist, I'm a mother to four great kids with intense schedules all summer long. I hope you find the suggestions and recipes in this guide helpful for keeping your kids' tummies full and emotions under control.

To get started, keep meal times as consistent as possible and have a balanced selection of snacks on hand to maintain consistent blood sugar levels - this guide is full of snack ideas!

Hotter weather and increased activity leaves some kids desperate for additional food and fluids and this can often show up as short tempers, inconsolable whining or sibling bickering. Being prepared with a variety of snacks will give you one more tool to combat the crankiness.





Make Snacks in Advance

Reduce your time in the kitchen with a few make ahead snacks. These snacks can be as simple or elaborate as you want. I select from these three categories and try to make at least 2 a week — 3 when I'm feeling like a rockstar!

- ☐ **Dips and Sauces:** These help stretch your other snack offerings even further. Sliced bell peppers can be served with hummus, fresh berries paired with a sweet coconut dip, and deli meat rollups dressed with a honey mustard sauce. They are often a good source of fat which helps to avoid spikes in blood sugar levels that can lead to roller coaster mood swings.
- ☐ **Super Salads:** Think beyond traditional green salads. Hearty bean salads or chopped fresh fruit salads make a great addition to the menu and can last for several days in the fridge. These can turn a basic snack into a special occasion.
- ☐ **Baked Treats:** Kids are always game for baked goodies. Instead of purchasing store bought items, control the ingredients and sugar content by making your own. One large batch doled out over the week (see page 4 for tips on making treat snacks last longer) really enhances the snack selection. These usually freeze wonderfully - take one day at the start of the summer and batch prepare 2-3 recipes to have enough for the entire season.

SNACK TIME BINGO

Veggie	Veggie + Protein	Veggie + Fruit	Veggie + Grain	Veggie + Sweet
Protein	Protein + Fruit	Protein + Grain	Protein + Sweet	Protein + Veggie
Fruit	Fruit + Grain	Fruit + Sweet	Fruit + Veggie	Fruit + Protein
Grain	Grain + Sweet	Grain + Veggie	Grain + Protein	Grain + Fruit
Sweet	Sweet + Veggie	Sweet + Protein	Sweet + Fruit	Sweet + Grain

GO FOR BINGO: UP, DOWN, DIAGONAL, ACROSS

This SNACK TIME BINGO card encourages children to eat a variety of foods. Challenge them to get a BINGO by marking off a square each time they grab something to eat.

Snack category combinations are outlined to help you make sure they're eating a variety of foods to help keep their blood sugar balanced and mood stable.

There is an example card with snacks my kids love, on page 10. Or you'll find a blank card on page 11 to add your kids favorites.

Kids can play on the same card for multiple days or the entire week!

Make Snacks Last

Are your kids like mine - they opt for the sweetest and most convenient snacks first? If I've baked muffins, they'll gobble them up before eating anything else.

To tackle this problem, set up a hierarchy of snacks or require kids to select their snacks with a SNACK TIME BINGO card (see the details on the left).

When there are highly prized snacks that you want to last more than 5 minutes - set up a checklist of items that kids have to eat before devouring the most desired snack.

Your checklist can include specific snack categories or requirements to make a snack like celery with nut butter and raisins before grabbing something more convenient.

I'll share little secret - in the summer, dinner is often a glorified snack time. I make sure our "dinner" includes snacks with a good amount of fat and protein to make sure the kids are full until morning. This saves me from heating up the kitchen at the end of the day when we are all exhausted and ready to relax.

Did you eat a...

... veggie snack?
... protein snack?
... fruit snack?
... grain snack?

Yes? Enjoy a parfait!



Wild Berry Picking

Did you know that there are several wild berries you can often find if you look closely? You may find these in your yard, at a local park or near rural roadsides. Foraging (the art of searching for wild food) for fresh berries is a fun activity to do with the kids. Mulberries, wild raspberries and wild blackberries are fun and tasty to gather.

Be sure you properly identify wild berries before consuming! Also, seek permission before picking and verify plants have not been sprayed with any chemicals (very important along roadsides or park walkways).

Summer Fruits & Veggies

Plain fresh fruits and veggies are one of the simplest snacks you can provide your kids. If your budget is limited - designate the cheapest options as free access snacks and restrict higher-cost fruits and veggies as ask-first only to make them last a little longer.

Summer is an excellent time to try a new fruit or veggie, you never know what your kids might like!

- ✦ Berries
- ✦ Cherries
- ✦ Peaches
- ✦ Nectarines
- ✦ Melons
- ✦ Oranges
- ✦ Grapes
- ✦ Mangos
- ✦ Plums
- ✦ Figs
- ✦ Lychees
- ✦ Kiwifruit
- ✦ Starfruit
- ✦ Pineapple
- ✦ Papaya
- ✦ Tomatoes
- ✦ Cucumbers
- ✦ Avocados
- ✦ Zucchini
- ✦ Beets
- ✦ Salad Greens
- ✦ Kale
- ✦ Lima Beans
- ✦ Peas
- ✦ Radishes
- ✦ Green Beans
- ✦ Bell Peppers
- ✦ Spinach
- ✦ Eggplant
- ✦ Sugar Snap Peas



Guacamole Love

My kids love corn chips and often ask to eat them for snack. I don't hesitate to say yes when we have fresh guacamole on hand because I know they are getting the good healthy fats that their brain needs!

Don't have time to make guacamole? There are several supermarket brands you can buy that contain only ingredients you would use if you made it at home. These can be purchased in family or individual sized servings. Also - guacamole freezes wonderfully so you can store extras away for later.

Fats and Proteins

Several servings of quality fat and protein will help your kids maintain steady blood sugar levels and prevent sugar crashes from derailing their emotions. These items will also help kids feel full longer, preventing them from coming back and asking for another snack within minutes.

Pair one of the suggestions below with fruit or veggie snacks to fill their bellies and keep them happier.

- ✦ Assorted Nuts
- ✦ Yogurt
- ✦ Avocados
- ✦ Nut or Seed butters
- ✦ Seeds
- ✦ Hummus
- ✦ Bean Dip
- ✦ Guacamole
- ✦ Roasted Chickpeas
- ✦ Dried Jerky
- ✦ Deli Meat
- ✦ Bean Salad
- ✦ Edamame
- ✦ Grilled Chicken
- ✦ Canned Sardines
- ✦ Protein Smoothies

Black Bean Dip

- 2 cups black beans, cooked **or** 1 15-oz can, rinsed and drained
- 1 cup cooking liquid from beans **or** plain water if using canned
- 2 tsp garlic powder
- 1 ½ tsp cumin
- ½ lime, juiced
- 1 tsp salt, to taste

Place beans in food processor and add ½ cup of liquid. Process until smooth, approximately 30-60 seconds. Check consistency and, if needed, add additional liquid to reach a smooth but not runny texture.

Transfer processed beans to a bowl and stir in the garlic powder, cumin, lime juice and salt to taste. Let sit for 10-15 minutes before serving.

Serve with veggies like bell pepper wedges, carrot chips, celery sticks, cucumber slices or corn tortilla chips.

Coconut Fruit Dip



- 2 cans coconut milk*, refrigerated overnight
- 1-2 tbs maple syrup or honey, to taste
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

Scoop out the cold coconut cream that has solidified at the top of the can (reserve the water for smoothies later) and place the cream in a mixer.

With beaters or whisk attachment, whip for 1-2 minutes until light and fluffy. Drizzle in the sweetener and vanilla during the last 30 seconds.

Refrigerate dip until ready to use.

This makes about 2-3 cups of dip. To serve, place 2 tablespoons in a mini-condiment-container or silicone muffin cup and serve with fresh fruit.

* You need the cans of full-fat coconut milk where the cream separates to the top to make this recipe.

RECIPES

Super Salads

Crunchy Silly String Salad

- 2-3 beets
- 2 sweet potatoes
- 1 bunch scallions **or**
1/4 red onion
- 1/4 cup slivered almonds
- 2 tbs balsamic vinegar
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste

Yes, this salad uses uncooked veggies - they taste great and have a great texture.

Use a spiralizer to cut the beets and sweet potatoes into skinny noodles. Don't have a spiralizer? Use a vegetable peeler to cut the veggies into ribbons or a knife to chop into matchsticks.

Roughly chop noodles into manageable lengths - but not too short, kids love the crazy long ones.

Slice scallions or red onion into super thin slices. Add the vinegar, oil, salt, and pepper and toss to coat.

Serve cold! Makes a fun, crunchy addition to deli meat roll ups too!

Summer Bean Salad

- 1 can pinto beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 can kidney beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 small yellow squash, diced
- 1 small zucchini, diced
- 1/2 red bell pepper, minced
- 1/2 red onion, minced
- 2 cloves garlic, pressed
- 2 tbs apple cider vinegar
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste (salt builds flavor!)
- 1 lime or lemon, juiced



Mix everything in a large bowl, stirring to coat evenly - it will taste better after sitting for at least 30 minutes. Refrigerate salad until ready to use.

Feel free to toss in any herb mix that sounds good to your family. Also, play around with the included veggies or beans to change up the flavor.

Serve with cucumber slices, rice chips, or as-is.

Blender Muffins

- 2 1/2 cups rolled oats
- 1 cup yogurt, dairy-free works great
- 2 eggs
- 1/2 cup hemp seeds, optional
- 2 ripe bananas, great for ones too ripe to eat
- 2 tbs honey, optional
- 1 1/2 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1 tsp vanilla
- coconut oil



Preheat oven to 400-degrees. Oil muffin tins with coconut oil (or other fat). If using paper or silicone liners, oil those too! These muffins will stick!

Put all ingredients in a blender and blend just until everything is combined - it will be wet. Fill muffin cups 3/4 full; makes about 12 muffins.

Bake at 400-degrees for 20-25 minutes until toothpick comes out clean.

High Protein Granola

- 2 cups pecans
- 2 cups sliced or slivered almonds
- 1 cup walnuts
- 1/2 cup hemp seeds
- 1/4 cup sunflower seeds
- 3 tbs chia seeds, optional
- 1 1/2 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp ground nutmeg
- 1/2 tsp of sea salt
- 1/4 cup coconut oil, melted
- 1/4 cup maple syrup
- 1/4 cup dried currants or blueberries

Preheat oven to 350-degrees. Line baking sheet with parchment paper or silicone baking mat.

Mix all nuts (not seeds) in a large bowl. Add cinnamon, nutmeg, melted coconut oil and maple syrup. Stir to coat evenly.

Bake for 15 minutes. Stir in seeds and dried fruit and bake 10-15 more minutes. Watch carefully for burning - once it's beautifully brown, take it out and cool.

Snacking Checklist

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Enjoy _____!

SNACK TIME BINGO

Carrot Sticks	Bell Peppers + Hummus	Cucumbers + Grapes	Salsa + Corn Chips	Celery + Nutbutter
Hardboiled Egg	Jerky + Grapes	Black Bean Dip + Rice Crackers	Protein Packed Smoothie	Summer Bean Salad
Watermelon	Avocado + Toast	Berries + Coconut Dip	Peaches + Tomatoes	Pear Slices + Sunbutter
Popcorn	Blender Muffins + Almond Butter	Tortilla Roll-Ups	Granola + Yogurt	Granola Bar + Chia Jam
Chia Jam Pudding	Green Smoothie	Black Bean Brownies	Raw Coconut Macaroons	Overnight Oatmeal

GO FOR BINGO: UP, DOWN, DIAGONAL, ACROSS

Snacking Checklist

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Enjoy _____!

SNACK TIME BINGO

Veggie	Veggie + Protein	Veggie + Fruit	Veggie + Grain	Veggie + Sweet
Protein	Protein + Fruit	Protein + Grain	Protein + Sweet	Protein + Veggie
Fruit	Fruit + Grain	Fruit + Sweet	Fruit + Veggie	Fruit + Protein
Grain	Grain + Sweet	Grain + Veggie	Grain + Protein	Grain + Fruit
Sweet	Sweet + Veggie	Sweet + Protein	Sweet + Fruit	Sweet + Grain

GO FOR BINGO: UP, DOWN, DIAGONAL, ACROSS

I hope this helps!

I hope this guide has given you some tips and ideas for how you can use snacks to help your kids have a great summer with less anxiety or tantrums. I love hearing from parents that like my suggestions or have any comments, please don't hesitate to reach out via email at karen@simplenutritionist.com or you can connect with me on social media at Facebook.com/simplenutritionist or Instagram.com/simplenutritionist.

My goal is to help parents spend more time enjoying their children whether that means going on outings without fear of meltdowns or hanging out at home without constantly delivering consequences. I want you to feel relaxed at the end of the day instead of mentally inventorying everything that went wrong.

Through one-on-one nutrition counseling, I provide parents with simple nutrition strategies to help their children overcome behavioral, emotional and learning challenges. If you would like to know more about working with me, please email me at karen@simplenutritionist.com.



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