

Food for Thought

September 2025

Stocking Your Kitchen for Back to School

As the school year starts many families start a new routine. This often includes planning daily meals and snacks. Making sure everyone has something nutritious to eat can be challenging.

With busier days many families want quick and easy options for busy mornings and afternoons. Start by making sure you have a stocked pantry, fridge, and freezer to make it easier to prepare healthy meals and snacks. Here is a go to list to make this easier:

In the Pantry

- nut butter (or nut-free options like sunflower butter)
- whole-grain crackers, rice cakes, tortillas, or sandwich bread
- pretzels
- trail mix
- nuts
- popcorn
- low-sugar granola bars or protein bars
- instant oatmeal packets
- low-sugar cereals
- applesauce or fruit cups packed in 100% fruit juice
- canned beans or lentils
- pasta, quinoa, or brown rice



In the Freezer

- frozen fruit
- frozen vegetables
- frozen whole-grain waffles or pancakes
- pre-cooked rice or quinoa
- make-ahead items like mini quesadillas and homemade popsicles

In the Fridge

- sliced cheese or cheese sticks
- yogurt
- hard-boiled eggs
- deli meats or cooked chicken strips
- hummus or guacamole
- fresh fruits and vegetables, washed and cut



Some tips to make it easy for kids to choose and build their own snacks include:

- Pre-portion items like trail mix, nuts, or popcorn for quick snacks. Try to keep portions around 130 calories.
- Show kids how to pair items that will keep them energized. Choose lean proteins and fiber-rich carbohydrates, such as cheese sticks and fruit.
- Set up the pantry and fridge in a way that makes it easy for kids to make their own snack combinations.

Oatmeal Chocolate Chip Cookies

2 bananas (very ripe)
1 cup oats (quick or old-fashioned)
½ tsp cinnamon
½ tsp vanilla
½ cup chocolate chips



1. Wash your hands with soap and water.
2. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
3. In a medium bowl, mash the bananas with a fork until mostly smooth.
4. Add oats, cinnamon, vanilla, and chocolate chips. Mix well.
5. Drop spoonfuls of dough onto a lightly sprayed or oiled baking sheet. Flatten with the back of a spoon or bottom of a drinking glass.
6. Bake 10–15 minutes. Remove from the oven and let cool before serving.

Tips:

- The texture of these cookies is best right after baking.
- Instead of chocolate chips, try dried cranberries or chopped nuts.

Fruit Sushi Roll

1 whole grain tortilla
1–2 Tbsp nut butter (peanut, almond, cashew)
1 cup fruit (like bananas, apples, or strawberries), sliced

1. Wash your hands with soap and water.
2. Spread the nut butter onto the tortilla.
3. Add any fruit combinations.
4. Roll the tortillas.
5. Slice into bite-sized pieces.



Sources: [https://extension.msstate.edu/blogs/extension-for-real-life/back-school-how-stock-the-kitchen#:~:text=nut%20butter%20\(or%20nut%2Dfree,tortillas%20or%20sandwich%20bread;](https://extension.msstate.edu/blogs/extension-for-real-life/back-school-how-stock-the-kitchen#:~:text=nut%20butter%20(or%20nut%2Dfree,tortillas%20or%20sandwich%20bread;https://extension.msstate.edu/publications/healthy-snacks-for-kids-the-go-or-home)
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Eat Smart Idaho can help you learn how to eat well for less. For Information on Eat Smart Idaho classes, contact the Nutrition Instructor in your county:

Panhandle: Benewah, Bonner, Boundary, Kootenai & Shoshone Counties
208-292-2525

North Central Idaho: Clearwater, Idaho, Latah, Lewis, & Nez Perce Counties
208-883-2267



To contact the Eat Smart Idaho Coordinator: Kali Gardiner, RDN, LDN
Phone: 208-292-2525 E-mail – kalg@uidaho.edu Web: www.eatsmartidaho.org

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