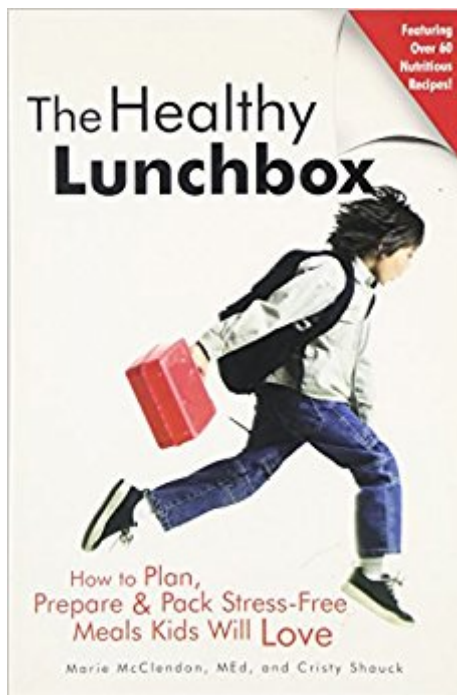




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# The Healthy Lunchbox: How To Plan, Prepare & Pack Unique Meals Kids Will Love



## Synopsis

Dozens of easy menus and tips to help you give your children healthy lunch-on-the-go alternatives. This upbeat guide is full of healthy alternatives to junk food–laden lunches. Drawing on her years of experience as both an educator and a mother, Marie McLendon has created a book loaded with recipes, menus, tips, and suggestions. This resource rescues you from the mundane and stressful task of figuring out how to pack a healthy lunch that your kids will actually eat.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Marie McClendon, M.Ed., a mother and a teacher, has packed thousands of lunches and seen thousands of children's lunchroom antics. Cristy Shauck is a journalist for the Denver Metro publication Kids' Pages.

This was a great book to inspire me as my eldest starts Kindergarten. I want to make his lunch, as school lunches these days are often less than nutritious. The book had lots of good recipe ideas, many I will be trying (some with adjustments), and some great tips for planning and packing lunches. My reservations are: a pervasive theme in the book is recipes that call for "low-fat" or "fat-free" ingredients, or use "tub margarine, melted", or use strictly egg whites, you get the idea. I do not normally consider those foods healthy for children. Children need healthy fats, and a lack thereof has been shown to cause cravings that are often satiated by the easy to find, terribly unhealthy, trans-fats. Skip the processed fat-free stuff, just use real food. 2% or Whole milk and

yogurt are best for kids not battling certain serious health issues. And why use margarine (which often has unhealthy fats and oils), when it needs to be melted into it's oil form anyway? Use real butter, or a healthy oil, such as olive, coconut, canola, etc., depending on the recipe. And why are we keeping egg yolks from our kids? The nutrients in them cannot be replaced elsewhere, and I'm not aware of a trend toward high cholesterol among normal children. But my biggest concern is the lack of whole grains. Oats are used, and some whole wheat is included, but plain white flour seems to be the dominant player. In one recipe, a lentil tortellini dish, the authors note that because it contains lentils and (plain white) tortellini pasta, it contains complete proteins. Last I checked, complete proteins required a legume and a \*whole\* grain, except in certain specific cases. There are many notes for diabetics and those avoiding gluten (which I think is great!), but in a number of cases the adaptations of the recipes are distracting and confusing for those of us not avoiding those items. They do not always explain how to make them if you are NOT avoiding those foods (I mean, we are all avoiding too much sugar, but I am very picky about what sweeteners I'm willing to substitute, usually I just use less, but raw, sugar and my kids are fine with that). In an effort to make these lunches a bit healthier, the authors have missed the mark a bit. To make healthy meals, we all need to use more whole foods, including whole grains, more fruits and vegetables, reduce our intake of processed foods and refined grains, and reduce the sugar overall (which is often increased in foods with low- and no-fats foods to keep the flavor). Think REAL FOOD! A parent who is thoughtful about these issues will figure out the adjustments and substitute accordingly, but I think the authors could have had a discussion about their recommendations for low-fat, sugar substitutes, flour substitutes, etc, etc., early in the book, and kept recipe ingredients to "1c. yogurt", etc. As it is, recipes seem to be written for the diabetic, celiac child, with serious weight issues, which is a bit distracting. \*BOTTOM LINE - Decide what your own child needs to be healthy, and adjust the recipes, please. Be careful of avoiding healthy whole foods! Think REAL FOOD! That said, for a mom who couldn't think of much to make beyond PB&J, it has many good ideas for planning and packing lunches and the recipes are a good starting point. Adjust them, and search the web to expand in areas that the book is light on (I would have like more whole-grain salads, among other things).

This book was great in that it helped me to think outside the box for packing my son's lunches for school. It doesn't have to be a sandwich, carrots & fruit. My son is a very picky eater and now I feel like I have a good amount of options to make for some variety. I also found how to better involve him, which I'm hoping will increase the odds he will eat what is packed. Some of the recipes in the

back were great, but I'm not too sure yet about others. I won't knock'em till I try them though. The book was a very easy and enjoyable read and I would recommend this book to anyone.

This book is great. Easy, simple ideas to improve the quality of lunch. Don't be stuck in a rut when it comes to lunch for your kids. Read and use this book instead!

I didn't find much new here. If you've read any other lunchbox packing books and have even a little knowledge of nutrition, don't bother with this book.

It had some good ideas, but not nearly as useful as I thought it would be. I think I used it a few times but now it just sit on my bookshelf.

I just want the different options to pack the lunch box. In this book you read and read but where are the options?

The Healthy Lunchbox provides a solid basis for parents to provide their children with healthy lunches that pack up quickly and easily. The book is divided into four parts: Part One, "Get Ready!", outlines the nutritional needs of kids; Part Two, "Get Set!", helps parents with the logistics of packing lunches (how to keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold, menu suggestions, ideas on how to get your children to eat what you pack, not trade it away, alternatives to junk food, etc.); Part Three, "Go!", where all the recipes are housed; and Part Four, "More Food for Thought," where the authors give parents further resources. I read the first two parts (after looking at all the recipes!) and the information was solid and written in a conversational tone. My reason for buying the book, of course, was the recipes and I was not disappointed. There was a wide variety of foods (from your standard english muffin pizza to japanese style california rolls) presented under three headings: Sandwiches, Salads, Soups, Casseroles, and Other Main Dishes; Fruit and Veggie Side Dishes and Snacks; and Snacks and Desserts. As promised, the recipes are quick and easy, and each has its own nutritional index covering calories, total fat (further broken down into saturated fat, polyunsaturated fat and monounsaturated fat), cholesterol, sodium, carbohydrates (further broken down into dietary fiber and sugars), protein, and exchanges. Serving size, total servings, prep time and cook time are also included. Indeed, this book is very comprehensive. Additionally, the recipes in this book can appeal to adults and children alike, so that weekend lunches and adult lunchboxes can benefit, too. My particular favorite is the Turkey Lurkey Jerky - it's easy (although time-intensive) and tasty and now I

can make my husband's favorite snack without any preservatives or other nasties. In fact, the first batch I made was eaten the same day (much to my chagrin)! This recipe alone was worth the cost of the book to me!

This book is what every mom needs to keep handy in the kitchen! I have used it for my kids' lunches and for my husband's! This "resource" book is easy to reference and the nutritional research has been done for you! A must for moms!

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