

Healthy Snacks to Go, 2nd Edition

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Introduction

It's time to run out the door to practice/church/Grandma's house and you need to grab some snacks for the car, fast. You open up the cupboard and . . . all you see are ingredients.

It's a common problem for those of us who try to avoid processed foods. When you have to "process" everything yourself, eating away from home can be tricky. You can't pack ingredients! *Healthy Snacks To Go* to the rescue! With over 45 healthy snack recipes, including traditional granola bars, iron-packed Popeye bars, *plus* over a dozen "larabar" style variations, it is my hope that this eBook can reduce your travel stress and help your family eat more nourishing foods, no matter where you are.

Why Healthy Snacks?

When you're out and about, it's so tempting to run through fast food or buy something packaged that has less-than-ideal ingredients and often costs more than what you could make at home. You need simple, nourishing snacks that can handle being packed in a lunch or even hanging out in a diaper bag or desk drawer for days (weeks?). No one wants their food budget jacked up because of processed snacks, healthy or otherwise. Even at home, you need to be able to have something ready quickly to prevent hungry children from melting down at snack time.

How to Use an eBook

An eBook is designed to be used *either* on the computer screen or as a printed work. You can print out the entire eBook and staple it together or put the pages in a 3-hole binder. There are larger margins on the left to accommodate holes. Many of the recipes fit on a double-sided page with recipe notes, so it's easy to pull one out while you prepare the food. I recommend printing double-sided if you can.

To reduce your printing costs, the photos in *Healthy Snacks to Go* are all in one section. You can see the photos on your computer to get an idea of what you're making, but when you print, you can skip those pages and save ink. (pages 81-83)

One additional benefit of an eBook over paper is that there are clickable links to resources and even other recipes for you to enjoy.

Can I Share?

As with any cookbook, feel free to share a recipe or two with friends. If someone wants to borrow the entire book, however, please direct them to purchase their own copy at www.KitchenStewardship.com. Thank you for refraining from passing the entire eBook to other people. It is also poor etiquette to post an entire recipe verbatim on a website. If you post a recipe from *Healthy Snacks to Go*, you must write your own method description, and please credit appropriately.

Three Tips to Trick your Tongue

Sugar tastes great. It's also addictive. We all should try to cut down on the sugar or use an alternative, natural sweetener whenever possible. The ultimate goal is to cut out the sweeteners entirely, but that's a tough one!

You can cut down and still be kind to your sweet tooth by increasing three foods in your recipes that help make you think you're eating sweeter dishes than in reality:

1. Cinnamon
2. Vanilla
3. Coconut Oil

It's easy to add a teaspoon or more of cinnamon to waffles, pancakes, quick breads, and even some cookies while cutting down on or cutting out the sweetener. You can put vanilla in your plain yogurt or add some to power bars (date and nut bars) as seen on page 23.

Virgin coconut oil, the kind with full coconut flavor and aroma, is a good substitute for sugar in your morning oatmeal (I add cinnamon, too) or coffee, tastes great in smoothies (see p. 76), and is the star "hint of sweetness" in Take-Along Spelt Biscuits (p. 49) and Katie's Homemade Granola (p. 9).

Katie's Kitchen Supplies for From-Scratch Cooks

I avoid aluminum and non-stick surfaces when I can because of possible health hazards. I loooooove baking with my [baking stone](#), which I purchased through Pampered Chef. For ease of mind *and* clean-up, I choose to line my old cookie sheets with a silicone baking mat, like [this one](#), although I've since learned more about [silicone's potential dangers](#). If you don't have either of those, for things like crackers (p. 42), you'll want some parchment paper.

Many *Healthy Snacks To Go* recipes benefit greatly from a food processor but are possible with a blender (preferably glass). I think both are worthwhile investments, or get one machine that does both. You'll want some muffin tins and a selection of glass baking dishes (I love that mine have lids) for optimal snack production, too.

We send a lot of snacks to school and keep trail mix in my purse with our reusable bags – fun patterns and zippered closure options at our eBook sponsor, Mom4Life, right here: <http://bit.ly/wBrGeL>.

That said, most of the recipes can be made with *no* special supplies or talent. Believe me, you don't need much talent to be a healthy cook, just motivation and commitment!

Yes, You Can Plan Snacks

If you're not a meal planner at all, you're going to struggle with real food preparation. Hopefully you already have a system in place – my challenge for you (and for myself!) is to start to add some snack plans in there.

I don't necessarily mean to plan out your snacks day-to-day, but to plan an opportunity once or twice a week to prepare some snacks.

Make crackers. Whip up some power bars. Boil some eggs. When the snacks are already prepared, you are ready to run out the door!

Ingredients Notes

Some ingredients from my real food kitchen might be new visitors in your kitchen, and that's okay. Be bold! Try something new. Here's a little cheat sheet to help you figure out what's going on:

- **Butter:** I don't get too picky about brands and origins, but mostly I use unsalted butter, and never, EVER the fake stuff.
- **Coconut oil:** “Refined” coconut oil is more processed and has no odor or flavor, while “unrefined” has both the smell and taste of coconuts. Some recipes call for one or the other for a reason, but many recipes could use either. Be sure to find well-processed coconut oil, pressed at low temps and mechanically, not chemically, extracted. Both forms of the oil are solid below 76F and liquid above.
- **Unsweetened coconut:** I never use sweetened coconut in any of my baking. That's what you generally find at a grocery store, but the sugar and random filler ingredients are atrocious, and besides that, the sweetened stuff doesn't even taste like real coconut. My whole life, I thought I didn't like coconut, until I tried unsweetened coconut and unrefined coconut oil. Now I absolutely adore the flavor. Find unsweetened shredded coconut at a health foods store or [online in bulk](#).
- **Flour options:**
 - All recipes should work with both freshly ground or storebought flours.
 - *Whole wheat flour* – traditional “hard red” wheat (the norm in a grocery store)
 - *White whole wheat* – “hard white” wheat if grinding your own; white whole wheat has no fewer nutrients than traditional whole wheat. It's simply a different strain of wheat plant, not anything about the way it's processed. King Arthur is a great brand to purchase.
 - *Whole wheat pastry flour* – from “soft white wheat” berries; this flour is good for cakes, muffins, biscuits and crackers, but terrible for breads or cookies.
 - *Spelt flour* – an older cousin of wheat, spelt does contain gluten, although less than traditional wheat. Spelt often lends a hint of sweetness to a recipe.
- **Sweeteners:** Read about [sucanat/rapadura](#), [raw honey](#), and [real maple syrup](#).
- **Unrefined salt**


What if I Don't Like Coconut?

Some folks have pointed out to me that a lot of these recipes call for shredded coconut or coconut oil. If you're allergic to coconuts or don't like it, you can fiddle with the recipes:


- Use refined coconut oil for some options like muffins, or just melted butter.
- Coconut *flour* doesn't taste like coconut; don't worry. If you want to dabble in grain-free or even gluten-free living, a bag goes a long way. It's my first recommended GF flour purchase, and I use [this brand](#) (also at [Amazon](#)).
- Just leave it out in granola recipes, or sub in flax, chia seeds, or extra nuts/seeds.
- For most power bars, like Sunny Vacation or Mediterranean, you can just leave it out completely or try subbing in equivalent flax meal or sesame seeds just for bulk. Coco-shew is the only version that absolutely needs the coconut to survive.
- Sub in ground flax, chia seeds, sesame seeds, or skip in popeye and protein bars.
- For peanut butter kisses, try ground flax meal instead of coconut.


Features of the Text

Use these simple icons to figure out how difficult a recipe is, special allergy or dietary ingredients, cost, storage, and “how sweet it is!” There is also an ingredients key on the back cover for easy reference.

 Sugar Free


 Gluten Free


 Casein (Dairy) Free


 No Added Sweetener


 Grain Free


 Nut Free


 Raw Food (live enzymes)

 Soaked Option

 Frugal snack

 Pricey but still less than processed

 Diaper bag/backpack friendly

 Some refrigeration needed

Work Intensity:

I don't tell you how much time a recipe will take. It really depends if you have to run to another area of the house for an ingredient or balance a fussy toddler or serve the kiddos an afternoon snack in the midst of your efforts. I'll just tell you the level of difficulty compared to something you might have already done, like baking cookies.





Easy: As easy as slicing packaged cookies and baking them.

Medium: About as much work as baking cookies from scratch.

Hard: A lot of work, more like making cut-out sugar cookies and frosting from scratch.

With each recipe, you'll also find:

 Timesaver Tips

 Added Bonus Facts

Healthy Upgrades

May include less sugar options, soaked versions, or alternative sweeteners.

 FAQs

Snack Bar Manifesto

After I published the first edition of *Healthy Snacks to Go*, I remained amazed at the popularity of *bars*. **People just love snack bars**. The original granola bars at Kitchen Stewardship have consistently been the most popular recipe on the site, and people are constantly telling me, “We just love your granola bars; we make them all the time.”

While homemade yogurt might be great for my family to snack on when we're home, the reality is that when people need snacks in our fast-paced culture, they're almost always on the go. **A bar delivers it all: a single serving, easy to hold, easy to serve children, easy to eat wherever you are.** It's no wonder this little book has 7 kinds of bars with a total of 21+ variations, a whopping 45% of the total number of recipes!

Everyone loves something different, too. There are the crunchy bar aficionados, the sticky sweet tooth types, and the give-me-as-many-food-groups-as-you-can-fit-in-a-bar nutrition nuts.

I've had a love-hate relationship with my own granola bar recipe since I posted it almost three years ago. At first, I was just excited to graduate from my previous recipe, which used puffed cereal, something I was trying to stay away from. When the recipe took off as a favorite at KS, it was fun to just go with the flow and keep up the excitement some more. I loved experimenting with soaked oats and the “no-bake” version. And then I published the book, still excited to share all this with the world.

Once that was off to the virtual presses, **I continued making both granola bar recipes** because my family, like many others, just loved them.

On my first “soaked” batch after the release of *Healthy Snacks to Go*, I created an utter fail. The bars wouldn't stick together unless I squeezed a chunk in my hand into a ball, and still, I'm pretty sure as many crumbs got on the floor than into my then 2-year-old.

Um.

What have I done? I can't even follow my own recipe? (This was before I utilized recipe testers for my eBooks.) I actually had to get back on my computer to check the photographs. Yep, there was proof, in full color: **I had made the bars before, completely successfully. What was I doing wrong?**

I had similar problems, although slightly more firm than “granola,” with the original baked recipe. Each batch seemed to degenerate further into crumb-dom than the last. I couldn't figure it out: why were thousands of people falling in love with a recipe that only sort of worked?

I've been working for the last two years to figure it out.

I'm thrilled to share the new and improved versions of both recipes, which have been tried and tested...and **they stay together.**

I've also added many style notes to the power bars now that I've been making them quite regularly for another year and a half, so they should be an easier task for even the novice cook.

What Bar to Choose?

If you're gazing at the table of contents in *Healthy Snacks to Go* and just don't know where to start, let me summarize the pros and cons of each “bar choice” you'll have:

Famous KS Granola Bars – oatmeal based and a close relative to a cookie bar, these are huge kid pleasers, your everyday granola bar. There is a gluten-free option.

No-Bake Granola Bars – more like the texture of a Quaker chewy bar, very sweet, includes a soaked option, and if it's hot and you don't want to turn the oven on, this is your winner. However – they stay together best with a re-toast in the oven. Naturally gluten-free (with GF oats).

Power Bars – made of dried fruit and nuts (like a Larabar). I prefer making balls because they're easy to carry and a great size for little ones. No grains, no sugar, but lots of sweetness from the dried fruit. Great for summer because there's no baking involved and they last forever in the backpack, but you do need a food processor or blender.

Popeye Bars – grain-free and iron-fortified with molasses. A perfect choice for the most nutrient-conscious, but not always kid-friendly. Must bake or dehydrate.

Protein Bars – the less expensive, more kid-friendly brother of Popeye Bars. Still grain-free but with peanut butter included; these also seem to last forever.

Almond Power Bars – the “grown-up” of the crowd. These bars seem more refined, like you could serve them as a fancy appetizer (or dessert!). However, they do need to be refrigerated to really stay together, so they're not as travel-worthy as many others. No baking, but a food processor is necessary.

Butternut Spice Bars – If you need more vegetables in your diet, this is the way to do it. These guys are grain-free and super easy to make, but do require both baking and refrigeration, so they can't be an emergency car snack (but make a great source of protein, fats, and vitamins for the 10 a.m. break at school).

The Perfection of a Granola Bar

Even though thousands love the KS granola bars, they had that annoying crumbly problem and used a whole cup of honey, which I hoped to cut down.

I tried adding an egg.

I tried reducing the honey and using applesauce instead, just to reduce the sweetener. Eh.

I tried fewer oats.

I tried various baking time and temperature changes, but nothing seemed to help quite *enough*.

I read about adding pureed dates, but getting out the food processor takes these from basic to complicated, and it was important to me to try hard to keep this a simple, everyday recipe.

Carrying on...

I tried less butter (that helps a bit).
I tried less flour.

I cut the flour entirely (that, by the way, makes granola. Nothing sticks together at all, which led me to...)

I could not believe what finally worked: more flour. It flew in the face of reason, because I always thought flour would make a baked good dry and crumbly. Not so. Adding a half cup of flour made the bars have more stick-together-ness than ever before.

For the no-bake bars, I just needed to make sure that the sweetener/fat mixture cooked to a high enough temperature that it reaches the “soft ball” stage, but I didn’t want folks to have to bust out a thermometer just to make granola bars. A handful of happy testers assure me I’ve done it!

And finally, thanks to a brilliant commenter at the original granola bar post from 2009, I learned this trick, which seals the deal on perfecting both versions:

The stick together trick

Toast any granola bar or the protein/Popeye bars from this book to help them stay together better: Just spread individual bars out on a baking sheet or stone, using parchment paper or a silicone mat if you choose, and bake at 350-ish for 5-15 minutes, depending on the bar. Toss them in after you’ve baked dinner to save energy (which is where that “ish” comes into play – 325-375F is a good range for the great bar toast).

Reports from my testers...

“I just tried the updated version of your granola bar recipe. I have been making your granola bars for quite some time now and we have always loved them. I love the updated version for toasting them in the oven. The crunch on the outside with the soft inside is delicious. Now I have to go toast the other half of the bars. I thought I would try some toasted and some not toasted, but I have to say that I am a fan of the toasted.”

I just wanted to let you know that the granola bars are holding up and keeping their shape really well. I can break them in half and I don’t get any crumbs that break off. Also, when my son brings his lunch box home for me to empty out his garbage, I have noticed very little crumbs from the granola bars in his bag. Less crumbs on the floor, too, when my little one is walking around the kitchen eating her granola bar. All in all I think that adding that extra 1/2 cup of flour and toasting them in the oven really did make a huge difference in the crumbliness.” --T

"I cut one for each of my boys and gave them to them for an after school snack. I told them I needed to know what they thought of them because I was testing the recipe for a friend and they said, "YES YES YES!! We love them! Can we have them every day for a snack?!?" So I think they're a hit!

I cannot believe I have not made your granola bars yet! I have another recipe that I have been using, but they are crumbly and take more time...These were easy as anything to mix up! I'm a convert. " --H

"I did the "crispier" option. I was very skeptical when they came out of the oven...they looked much less together than after they came out of the fridge...I was thinking I shouldn't have tried that part. But after they cooled they were perfect! Just like a Quaker bar in consistency! We even tested them out on a local zoo trip, and they passed the test on the go too!" --N

Honestly, I'm going to keep fiddling with them just to have more options than ever. My next three tests will be cutting the baking soda, adding a Tbs. flax meal mixed with 2 Tbs. water, and cutting the butter in half. We won't be hurting for snacks in the Kimball house!

Star Qualities



Best for backpacking...power bars or Popeye/protein bars

Best for school lunch...granola bars, re-toasted...or any other recipe in this book! Ha!

Best for emergency car snacks...KS granola bars or power bars

Best to serve others...almond power bars

Best for stick-to-your-ribs staying power...Popeye, protein, or almond power bars

Best for quick energy...power bars

Best for nutrients...butternut spice bars or Popeye bars (although many others close behind)

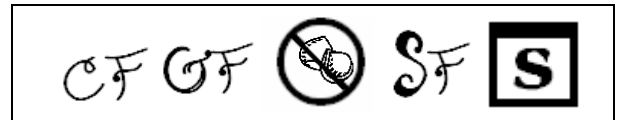
Best for budget...KS granola bars, no-bake bars or butternut spice bars

No-Bake Granola Bars



A gluten-free, soaked version of the famous KS granola bars? Yes, exactly. Although the ingredients are nearly the same, the taste is so very different because of the preparation. I think these guys are even closer to the ol' Quaker processed stuff!

Ingredients



- ½ c. sucanat
- ½ c. honey
- ¾ c. butter
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 4 c. rolled oats or [soaked and dried oats](#)
- 1 c. chopped nuts + 1 c. add-ins (see Variations)

Method

Cook the sucanat, honey and butter in a small pot over low to medium-low heat until slowly bubbling, stirring often. Leave on the heat for at least 10 minutes after boil.

In a large bowl, mix the oats, nuts, and any add-ins (leave chocolate chips out until the end to avoid melting them).

When the liquid is finished on the stove, remove from heat and add vanilla (and peanut butter, if using – see variations). Stir until melty and thoroughly combined.

Pour syrup over oat mixture and stir until uniform. If using chocolate chips, add them afterward once things have cooled slightly.

Press into a 9x13 pan (or any container, really, even plastic) lined with wax paper. Freeze 30 minutes (or refrigerate a few hours) and cut into bars. Can store at room temperature, but hold together *best* when cold.

Makes about 2 dozen bars, depending on how you slice them.

Variations

Add-in ideas:

- mini chocolate chips
- chopped nuts
- dried fruit
- shredded coconut
- ground flax seed (but I wouldn't recommend a whole cup)
- sunflower or pumpkin seeds
- 1 tsp. cinnamon or other favorite spices

Peanut Butter: Use ½ c. creamy natural peanut butter and ¼ c. butter in place of the ¾ c. butter.

Less sweetener: I haven't tried it, but I bet you could cut the sucanat in half and still have workable bars. Because the sugars are holding everything together, just be ready to create granola instead of granola bars, just in case! :)

Alternative sweeteners: Brown sugar is an acceptable (but not as healthy) substitute for sucanat, and maple syrup should work in place of honey but will change the flavor.

If you'd like to *avoid all granulated sweeteners*, use a whole cup of honey, no sucanat, and follow the directions as written, but if you want to store them at room temperature, you may have more trouble with them holding together. However – follow the “crispy” directions below with honey-only bars, and you're back in business.

Crispier bars: After refrigerating or freezing, cut bars apart then spread individually on a baking sheet or stone and toast again for ~10-13 minutes in a preheated 325-350F oven. Watch closely for overbrowning. You will think this trick didn't work when you take them out, but *don't touch! Trust me on this one.* I promise they're not the pile of mush they look like they have become. Let everything cool completely right on the cookie sheet, and you will have sturdy, crunchy granola bars to die for.



Soaked option: Use [soaked and dehydrated oats](#) in this recipe with great success.



Timesaver: Bake granola just before and reuse the same bowl and pot.



FAQs

- ✓ *How do I make this dairy free?* Use coconut oil in place of the butter.
- ✓ *Can I use crunchy peanut butter? Why not?* One of the testers loved it!
- ✓ *These are hard to cut apart!* If you use the freezer method especially, you may struggle to cut the bars. Either use a sharp knife or consider scoring them before freezing.
- ✓ *Fridge or backpack? What gives?* Don't be intimidated by the fact that these bars go in the fridge for a smidge. They are *definitely* backpack friendly. If you find one that has fallen apart, you can honestly smash it together in your fist and get a big old granola ball. Tasty! Also, try the toasting method for crispier bars. They really are still quite soft and chewy, just with more stick-together-ness than before.
- ✓ *Can I toast the oats first?* Toasting the oats beforehand adds another layer of flavor to the bars (and makes them look prettier).



Almond Power Bars



Work Intensity



Storage



Cost

Want a snack that passes for a dessert in taste but registers “way healthy” on the nutrition scale? Don’t let the pricey ingredients scare you; a little bar will satisfy because they’re so rich.

Ingredients:



½ c. virgin coconut oil
 2 c. almonds (raw or [crispy nuts](#))
 ½ c. flax meal
 ½ c. shredded, unsweetened coconut
 ½ c. unsalted almond butter
 ½ tsp. salt

1-2 Tbs. honey
 1 Tbs. maple syrup
 2-3 tsp. vanilla extract

a few squares dark chocolate, less than half a bar OR a handful of chocolate chips. (optional)

Method:

In a small sauce pan, melt coconut oil over very low heat. Meanwhile, process the almonds in a food processor until chopped small. Add the flax meal, shredded coconut, almond butter and salt and pulse briefly until combined. (If you’re starting with whole flax seeds, be sure to make them into a fine meal before adding to the mixture.)

Remove coconut oil from stove, and stir sweeteners and vanilla into oil. Add the liquid mixture to food processor and pulse until a coarse paste is formed. Press mixture firmly into an 8x8” glass pan.

Refrigerate for at least one hour until mixture hardens. Use the saucepan from the coconut oil and another larger one to make a pseudo double boiler by adding water to the larger pot and nesting the smaller inside it. Melt the chocolate over low heat, stirring continuously. Spread melted chocolate over the bars, then chill again until the chocolate hardens. To serve, cut into bars. Store in the refrigerator.

Makes 20 small bars



Timesaver: Use your food processor to chop nuts for baking and freeze them before you make the bars. Make power bars (p. 23) at the same time or another sweet treat like Chocomole (p. 73).



Added Bonus: If you don’t like or can’t eat whole nuts, these are perfect. The almond flavor isn’t overwhelming, and they’re a hit with kiddos, too!

 **FAQs**

- ✓ *Are there any substitutes for ingredients?* **You can sub peanut butter for almond butter**, which is less expensive and often more likely to be stocked in your pantry. The taste changes, naturally, but is still excellent. It's also possible to **sub butter for coconut oil**.
- ✓ *What is virgin coconut oil?* Low temp processed coconut oil with full flavor and aroma of coconuts. See [here](#) for more on coconut oil and some [FAQs](#).
- ✓ *Can I skip the chocolate?* These bars are still mouthwatering without the chocolate but certainly less indulgent. When using almond butter that is not roasted, you may find you really appreciate the flavor boost from the chocolate.
- ✓ *I don't have a food processor. Can I use a blender?* I haven't tried the blender, but you'd just have to get the nuts chopped really small, and perhaps remove the mixture for the final mashing together, because likely the blender won't be able to keep everything moving.
- ✓ *Be sure to take care with flax meal.* It needs to be stored properly. See this [flax primer](#) for info.

Adapted from [Elana's Pantry](#).

Chocomole (Pudding)



Work Intensity



Storage



Cost

This goodie has one of those ingredients lists that you might want to keep under wraps until after the family tries and enjoys the “pudding.” It still amazes me that it works so well!

Ingredients

1 medium sized avocado
 ¼ c. honey
 ¼ c. cocoa powder
 1 tsp. vanilla



Method

Scoop the avocado out of its shell and place all the ingredients in a blender or food processor. Puree well. Serve cold when possible; best within the first 12 hours.

Pit trick: To get the avocado pit out cleanly, whack it with a big old knife, right in the center. Rotate the knife like the hands of a clock, and the pit will usually pop right out. Visual [here](#).

Makes about 4 small servings.



Added Bonus: A great dairy-free, nut-free, grain-free dessert or snack for those with food allergies!

Variations

Banana-mole: Toss one very ripe banana into the mix. I recommend starting with half and tasting. ([Donielle](#) has some neat add-in ideas for this version.)

Coco-Choco: Add ¼ c. shredded coconut to the mix (but you have to be okay with chunky pudding). Try adding a few Tbs. unrefined coconut oil for something different without chunks.

Pistachio choco: See [Erin's recipe](#) for a double batch with coconut milk. Yum!

 FAQs

- ✓ *Will I taste the avocado?* Ideally, not at all. If you do, add a bit more cocoa, honey, or both. If you don't know it's in there, you really would never guess.
- ✓ *How do I get avocados frugally?* I always buy 3-4 avocados when they're on sale – you can leave one on the counter to ripen up and store the others in the fridge immediately. Take them out one at a time to ripen, and you'll have fresh avocado for this recipe, [guacamole](#), to put on top of salads or make [aioli dressing](#) for 10-14 days. Maybe buy 5 or 6 when they're on sale...
- ✓ *How do I know when an avocado is ripe?* Similar to a pear, pinch on the top gently, and if there's really any give at all, it's probably ripe. An overripe avocado is quite yucky, for lack of a better word. Unfortunately, once you cut into an under-ripe avocado, it's too late to do much about it, and they're not all that great either.
- ✓ *What if my avocado is ready before I am?* Put it in the fridge immediately! If you have an avocado on the counter ripening up and you'd rather wait a day or two to use it once you notice the tell-tale softness, get it right into the fridge. Typically it will wait for you for a few days.
- ✓ *How long can I store chocomole?* Not long, unfortunately. Avocados show their age quickly, and the pudding will taste “off” within a day or two.

Recipe adapted from [Ciao-Chow](#).

Reduced Waste Healthy Lunch Packing

Eating on the go can sometimes be unhealthy not only for your body, but for the earth. When you're making food from scratch, an added bonus is that you are in charge of the packaging. You can save money *and* the earth by checking out these lunch packing tips to

- ✓ Reduce Waste
- ✓ Increase Nutrition
- ✓ Simplify your Time

1. Reuse plastic baggies. When something is dry, especially if you are going to pack the same thing, like crackers, a few days in a row, ask your children to bring home their empty baggies and refill them for the next day's lunch. This saves time and money, too!

2. Use [glass storage containers](#) over plastic when possible. Glass is easier to wash in the dishwasher and doesn't leach any harmful chemicals. You can also seek out [stainless steel containers](#), which are lighter weight than glass.

3. Avoid single serving drinks. Use a water bottle like the [Klean Kanteen stainless steel water bottles](#) or a reusable glass bottle (like from Snapple).

4. Avoid baggies altogether. Use [cloth bags](#), stainless steel or even plastic containers for sandwiches and fruits/vegetables. Chances are you can reuse twice to avoid dishes.

5. Timesaver: package in single-serving sizes right away. When you're making something like granola bars or power bars, put some bars into baggies or wrap in waxed paper to store individually. You've got your own convenience foods ready to go!

6. Some purchased foods are good for lunches: Natural applesauce single cups, or better yet, jarred applesauce in your own cups; pita bread and hummus; string or pre-sliced cheese, baby carrots, whole fruits.

7. Institute this rule: "*Whatever goes to school, comes home, unless you have eaten it.*" This accomplishes two things: you reduce waste because you can reuse bags and leftover food, AND you know what your kids eat and don't eat. That helps you (hopefully together with the kids) pack better lunches in the future.

8. Use an assembly line. Line up the lunchboxes, line up the supplies, and work with a plan. Keeping your assembly space organized goes a long way.

9. Pack a napkin! Cloth, if you want to save the earth, but any old napkin will do so that your kid isn't the one saying, "I need a napkin!" That drove me nuts as a teacher, and now I always forget to include napkins, in a cruel twist of ironic fate.

10. Involve the kiddos. Kids should have a hand in both the packing and unpacking/putting away processes. Try making a list of various acceptable lunch foods in categories like *main course*, *fruit*, *veggie*, *snack*. Your child(ren) can choose one from each category and help you pack it. See more lunch packing tips [here](#).

Photos of Healthy Snacks To Go



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About Katie Kimball:

I'm Katie Kimball, a Catholic wife and mother of three who wants the best of nutrition and living for her family. My educational background is actually in elementary education and English, but as I began cooking for my children and reading about nutrition, I quickly became a home chef and researcher. In early 2009 I began my journey as an online writer, and I'm head over heels in love with the tangled web that is the blogging career.

I believe that God calls us to be good stewards of all His gifts as we work to feed our families: time, finances, the good green earth, and of course, our healthy bodies. KitchenStewardship.com seeks to share with others ways to balance all four and be prayerful in the call to vocation in the kitchen.

I'm far from perfect: my kitchen is often a mess, I lose my patience with family members, and I certainly spend too much time on the computer. But I do my best to provide optimal nutrition and health for my loved ones, which means I spend a lot of time in the kitchen. I make everything from scratch and talk about food all the time. I also strive to make things taste good, which is where you benefit. Thank you so much for your purchase of the second edition of *Healthy Snacks to Go*, and please let me know if there are any problems or if the text does not meet expectations (I'd provide a full refund).

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