

Have You Heard?

By Doris Thomas
Lancaster Extension
Home Economist



ly one of each. Citrus fruits are good sources of vitamin C while deep green and yellow vegetables are excellent sources of vitamin A.

* A dairy product such as milk, yogurt or cheese — all good sources of calcium.

The simplest way to put it all together is to make a sandwich with a meat, cheese or peanut butter filling and add an apple and some carrot sticks. This can be topped off with cookies for dessert and a beverage.

For some children, this may suffice for awhile. Some will insist on the same thing day after day. But eventually even the most lovingly made sandwiches can become a bore and may end up in the trash can.

It isn't hard to find ideas to liven up the lunch box. Many popular women's magazines carry articles with suggestions for nutritious lunches. Cookbooks have sandwich recipes that are not just for tea parties. Here are some ideas for nutritious lunches gleaned from some of these sources:

For sandwiches, try hard-cooked eggs, chopped and mixed with mayonnaise or salad dressing. Spice them up with chopped onion, celery, green pepper, crumbled bacon or bean sprouts.

There are dinner pails and lunch buckets, lunch boxes and box lunches, designer bags, and plain brown paper bags, recycled margarine tubs and plastic totes with nests of smaller boxes shaped to hold a sandwich or a piece of cake.

No matter what the container, a mid-day meal brought from home has sustained generations of workers and school children. Today the practice of "brown bagging" has risen to new heights and taken on new dignity. Brown bags have, in a manner of speaking, come out of the briefcase and are appearing unashamedly on the desks of professionals and on board room tables during business lunches.

The lunch-box meal is often depicted by cartoonists as a limp meat or cheese sandwich and a thermos of soup or coffee taken ruefully from a black box with a high humped lid. What goes into

the box or bag is limited only by the imagination of the person who prepares it and the likes and dislikes of the one who eats it. Packing a lunch at home can have a distinct advantage — no surprises, no excess sodium or unwanted calories — if the packer packs with good nutrition in mind.

Whether it comes out of a brown bag or a tin box, the noon meal should be nutritious. A good lunch should include selections from the basic four food groups:

* A protein food such as meat, fish, cheese, eggs, nuts, dried beans, or the perennial favorite, peanut butter. Foods in this group supply fat, iron and other minerals, and some B vitamins, as well as protein.

* A grain product — bread or crackers (preferably whole wheat) or cereals. Grain products provide B vitamins and iron.

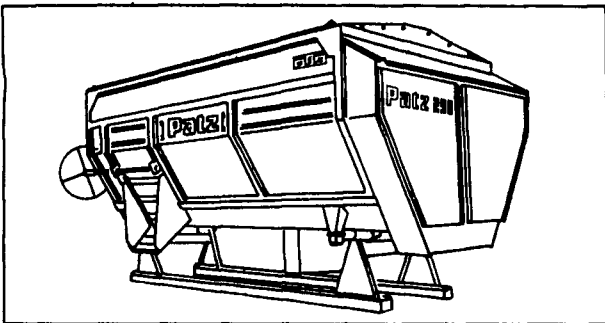
* A fruit or vegetable, preferably

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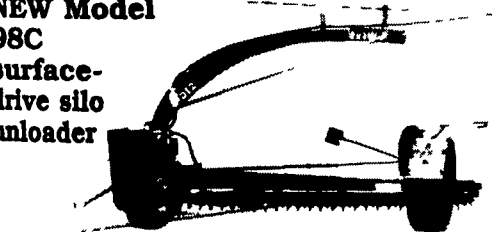
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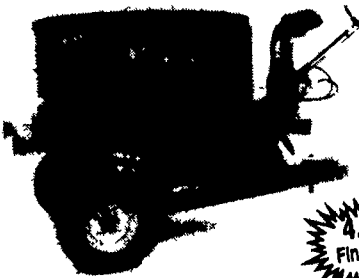
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Instead of using sliced cheese, grate it and mix it with salad dressing, chopped nuts, onion or crushed pineapple.

Left-over chicken, without the high-fat skin, can be sliced or chopped and mixed with mayonnaise or salad dressing and shredded raw vegetables.

Dress up plain old peanut butter with raisins, chopped nuts, bananas, apples, or pineapple, for a treat that is extra nutritious.

Protein does not have to come between two slices of bread. Chunks of cheese or ham, cottage cheese, a chicken leg or wing, chili or soup (in a wide-mouthed vacuum bottle) and peanut butter-filled celery stalks all will fill the bill. Instead of bread, try whole wheat crackers, homemade rolls or muffins, or pita bread filled with a favorite sandwich stuffing.

Raw vegetables — carrot or celery sticks, cauliflower or broccoli florets, cucumber slices, green pepper slices — are crisp and fun to eat, especially with a

homemade dip.

For some people lunch would not be complete without dessert. While prepackaged puddings, fruit pies or cupcakes are convenient, they are notorious for their excessive calories. Fruits or yogurt can double for dessert.

Packing lunch requires some care, since it may be standing at room temperature for several hours before being eaten. To make sure that it does not turn into a gastronomic disaster, use fresh or thoroughly cooked foods and avoid those that are likely to spoil easily, such as rare roast beef and homemade mayonnaise. Do not use leftovers that have been in the refrigerator for several days.

The same kitchen cleanliness rules for preparing at-home meals apply to brown-bag lunch making. Be sure that utensils, hands and work areas are clean. Wash food containers, including the lunch box itself, after each use. Do not reuse paper bags that have already carried food.

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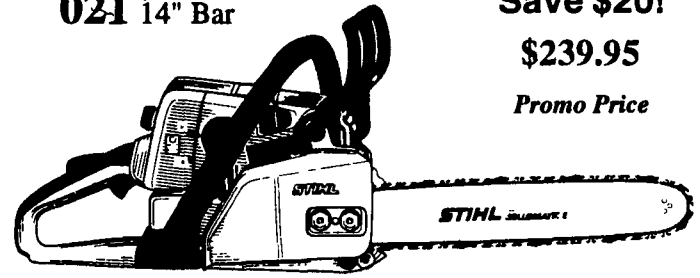
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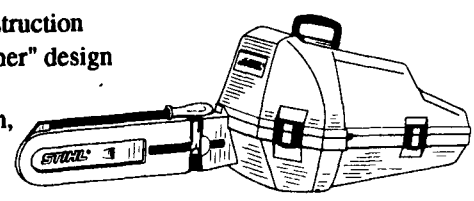
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