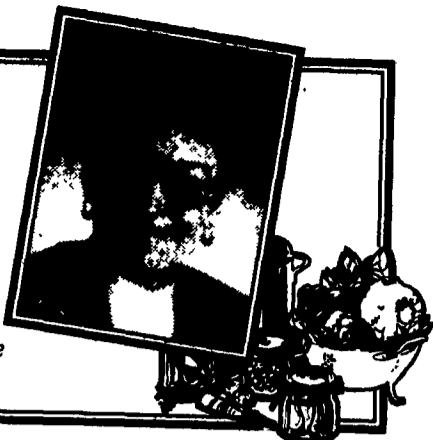


Consuming Thoughts

by
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Penn State Extension Home Economist For Berks Co.



Are you getting tired of bringing the same old lunch to work or school day after day? Brown bag lunches can be convenient and less expensive, but they can also be boring. You can add some variety and nutrition to your everyday lunch by following these helpful tips:

- Choose enriched and whole grain breads such as whole wheat, rye, or pumpernickel for added vitamins, iron, and fiber to your diet.
- Select breads such as pita pockets, sub rolls, or bagels for a variety of shapes and sizes to suit your appetite.

- Instead of a plain tuna fish sandwich, add chopped cooked or raw vegetables to it.
- Choose chopped meat or poultry that is lean instead of processed for less sodium and fat. Add some sliced vegetables seasoned with a little French dressing for a hearty salad.
- ... Choose beverages that contain vitamins, minerals, and energy (calories) such as lowfat or skim milk and fruit juices that are 100 percent juice.
- When packing your sandwich, make sure to do it properly to prevent any spoiling from occurring. The following tips can help:
 - Carry cold foods in an insulated lunch box or bag since they keep foods cold for a longer time than paper bags.
 - Use chilled ingredients when making your sandwich.

- If you have access to a refrigerator, then refrigerate your food. If you bring your lunch in an insulated lunch box or bag, remember to open it so that the cold refrigerated air can reach it.
- Freeze your sandwich the night before. Frozen sandwiches packed in the morning will be thawed by lunchtime. Freeze simple sandwiches such as those made with peanut butter, sliced meat, or poultry instead of those made with mayonnaise or hard cooked eggs.
- Keeping the brown bag lunch from developing food poisoning for you or your children takes a few precautions.
- When preparing the food, keep all utensils and countertops scrupulously clean. They need to be washed after contact with the raw

food and again before contact with any food that will not be cooked. Wash your hands the same way and teach family members that it is easy to cross-contaminate. Only cooking food to at least 165 degrees will kill bacteria.

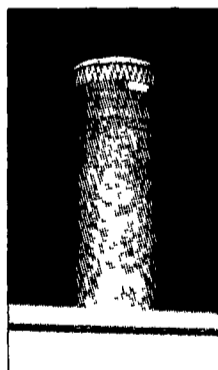
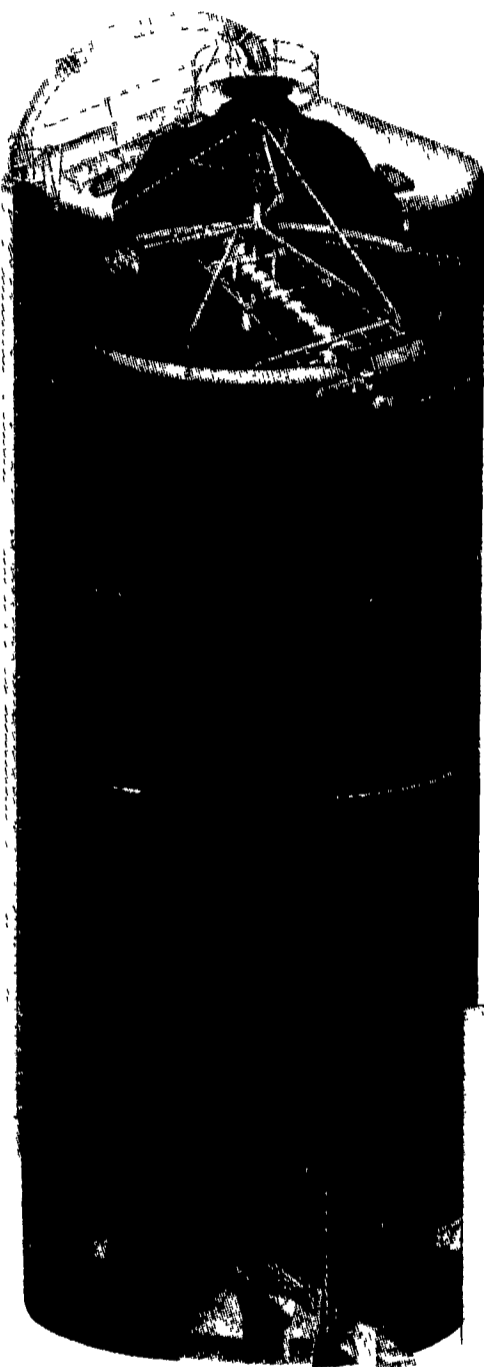
If you take these simple precautions, your brown bag lunch will be as safe as it is delicious.

For safety sake, don't let the lunch stand at room temperature for long periods of time — not more than two hours. Packing hot foods in sterilized vacuum bottles will help provide that tempting lunch. To keep food cold, refrigerate, and pack the lunch with a freeze gel product or make one by filling any empty plastic margarine tub with water and freezing it. You can also freeze a box of juice as your cold source or freeze sandwiches ahead for easy lunch packing.

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