

## . . . LUNCHES TO BE PACKED AND CARRIED

Crisp raw fruits and vegetables not only carry well but are sources of vitamin C and other nutrients, and they help to clean the teeth at the end of the meal. Those which are good sources of vitamin C include oranges, tomatoes, sturmer apples, lettuce, swede or white turnips, radish, cress, and parsley; less valuable as sources of vitamin C are carrots, celery, other varieties of apples, and pears, but as they add variety and help to clean the teeth they are useful alternatives to the first group.

Adults need a pint of milk daily and school children  $1\frac{1}{2}$  pints, but sometimes it is difficult to consume sufficient unless a milk drink is taken at lunch time. Children receive milk at school, so milk need not be included in their lunches, but adult lunch carriers should ensure that a milk drink is a regular feature.

**Sweets, iced cakes, sweet pastries, and other foods high in energy value but deficient in minerals and vitamins should be avoided, as their excessive consumption is a predisposing factor in tooth decay, as well as tending to lower the consumption of minerals and vitamins below the level essential for good health.**

### Packing the Lunch Tin

Paper bags and cardboard boxes are not suitable for carried lunches. To put a paper bag of food in a suitcase or school bag with heavy books is to invite disaster; cardboard boxes cannot be washed and soon become stained and redolent of the flavours of past lunches. Lunch tins which can be painted attractive colours are easily washed, inexpensive, and light and convenient to carry.

Differently flavoured foods and sandwiches should be wrapped carefully and separately in waxed or grease-proof paper to prevent flavours mingling and help to keep food fresh. Newspaper should never be used.

Plastic bags and sheets of plastic specially treated for using with food are now available and represent a considerable saving because they can be used repeatedly, are simply washed, and are better than waxed or grease-proof paper for keeping sandwiches and other foods fresh.

For carrying stewed fruits, fruit jellies, custards, orange sections, vegetable aspics, or other soft foods which should be included as an occasional surprise, small, light, plastic, screw-top jars and plastic spoons are available. They are more durable and of a more useful size than glass ones.

### Choice of Fillings

A good supply of sandwich fillings which keep well is a useful adjunct to the lunch packer's provisions. Stored in a separate cupboard and replenished when necessary, they ensure against the occasional appearance of a "scratch" lunch.

Sandwich fillings should be easily spread, sufficiently moist to prevent the sandwiches coming apart, and well seasoned. Fillings which stain the bread or soak into it and make it soggy should not be used unless they are special favourites of the lunch

carrier. Peanut butter, pickles and relishes, mustard (for adults' lunches), nuts, cheese and home-made cheese spreads, small tins of fish, meat, peas, or beans, salad dressing, meat or vegetable extract, and dried fruits are fillings which keep reasonably well and ensure plenty of variety. In families where they are popular as sandwich fillings, jams—especially varieties which jelly firmly and do not soak through the bread—and honey are useful.

### Preparation of Foods

Leaving the preparation of lunches until the last moment before the children leave for school or the family for work is unwise. Sufficient amounts for 2 or 3 days of such sandwich spreads as liver or cheese paste can be prepared at a convenient time, covered, and stored in a refrigerator or cool safe. That does not necessarily mean that the lunches will be monotonous: A cheese spread may be sprinkled with chopped celery one day, with lettuce the next, and grilled bacon or a whole tomato may be used as an accompaniment on the following day.

For people who like to prepare sandwiches on the previous evening plastic lunch bags are most useful, as they keep sandwiches fresh overnight. However, sweet and savoury sandwiches, fruits, and biscuits must all be wrapped separately to prevent the flavours from mingling.

Time is saved and lunches arrive at work or school with a fresher flavour if lunch boxes and vacuum flasks are unpacked immediately they arrive home, washed, and left open to the air until the lunch is ready to be packed.

For children who do not receive school milk, or for adults who cannot easily obtain a hot or cold drink at work, a vacuum flask in which to carry hot soup and hot drinks in winter and chilled milk or fruit drinks in summer is almost a necessity, as it ensures that beverages are kept in the best possible condition.

### Planning the Menu

On the opposite page are some suggested lunch menus for school children, for outdoor workers, and for office workers, who, though they may not develop such hearty appetites, have just as great a need of an attractive, nutritious lunch.

Something they can eat quickly and easily is probably the first requirement of younger school children, who do not want to spend their precious play-time arranging things for themselves. Anything in sandwich form is therefore popular, especially with boys. They like something which can be traded or shared with a friend, and they do not like to be bothered with jars, spoons, or mugs which must be carried home. On the other hand, older children, and particularly secondary-school girls like an occasional little surprise packed in with the everyday sandwiches, and savoury eggs, fruit salad, aspic or fruit jellies, custards, stuffed baked apples or pears, and other gelatine desserts, which are easily carried in small screw-top jars, are popular.

The menus given are for sample winter lunches, with some alternative suggestions where ingredients may be unobtainable. Because bread is often stale and unpalatable on Mondays, lunches which make use of other foods are included. However, bread may be freshened quite easily by brushing the crust lightly with water, standing it on a rack in the oven over a baking dish of hot water, and baking it in a cool oven (250 degrees F.) for about half an hour.

Lunches that can be packed into a small space are preferred by office workers; a small flat tin which fits into a shopping basket or brief-case is often more popular than the ordinary lunch box or tin. They like interesting foods, satisfying but not too high in energy value, and sticky or sweet sandwich fillings are usually less popular than savoury fillings.

Where there are school children and office workers in the same family, lunch menus can, of course, be adapted to reduce preparation times.

### Other Sandwich Fillings

Here are some sandwich fillings which can be used as alternatives to those in the suggested menus:—

#### For Summer Lunches

Tomato with cheese, tinned fish and lemon, hard-boiled egg and parsley, or cucumber.

Cucumber with lettuce and salad dressing or with cottage cheese.

Creamed sweet corn.

Asparagus.

Sliced radish with lettuce and salad dressing or with cottage cheese.

#### For Winter Lunches

Peanut butter with relish, chopped celery, currant jelly, raisins, or shredded carrots.

Tinned fish, mashed with lemon juice or vinegar, salt, and pepper to taste.

Cottage cheese with dates or other dried fruits, celery, onion, salad dressing, or grated raw carrot or chives.

Baked beans mashed, alone or with sliced sausages or meat loaf, tomato sauce, bacon, or lettuce and salad dressing.

Cheese and chopped chives.

#### Sweet sandwiches

Mashed banana, alone or with raspberry jam, a tart fruit jelly, lemon juice, raisins, figs, or prunes.

Chopped dried fruits and grated apple.

Mince-meat (equal quantities of minced dried fruits moistened with lemon juice and stewed apple, and flavoured to taste with ground mixed spices and ginger).

#### Breadless Sandwich

Cut two thick slices of cold meat loaf or Aberdeen sausage. Fill them with 2 tablespoons of left-over potato salad and lettuce leaves or pickle, and wrap the sandwich firmly in grease-proof paper.

### Recipes

The recipes which follow are for items marked with an asterisk in the suggested menus.