

Easy Back-To-School Lunches

BY LAUREN CHATTMAN

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When my youngest child leaves for college in two years, I'll miss her. But I won't miss packing her lunchbox every day. If only I had had the foresight to assign this task to my kids when they entered kindergarten.

If you have little ones, don't make the same mistake. Have them pack their own lunches from the get-go, and you'll save yourself a lot of time and grief. You'll also give them the sense of empowerment that goes along with making their own decisions. When they take responsibility for their lunches, kids also learn something about food preparation and healthy eating.

Before handing them brown bags and telling them to get going, prepare them, and yourself, with these three tips:

1. SET NUTRITIONAL GUIDELINES

You don't want your kid throwing a Twinkie and a can of soda in a sack before heading for the bus stop. Before they pack their first lunch, explain that a balanced meal includes protein, carbohydrates, fruit or vegetables and a reasonable treat. Each category should be checked off mentally or on an actual checklist as they put the food in a lunchbox or bag.

2. STOCK THE FRIDGE AND PANTRY

There are no quick and healthy lunches without the right ingredients. Once or twice a week, restock your refrigerator and pantry with the protein, carbohydrates, fruits and vegetables and snacks that your kids like. Slice rolls in half before freezing, cut up vegetables, if necessary, stock a basket or drawer with chips, raisins and pretzels. Make a batch of trail mix or granola bars for the week.

3. MAKE PACKING SUPPLIES ACCESSIBLE

Keep small containers for snacks and sandwiches, plastic forks and knives, and paper napkins all in one place, near the lunchboxes and water bottles. Have several icepacks in the freezer to keep lunches cold all morning.

Some Easy Lunches

Making lunch doesn't have to mean a lot of slicing and dicing. Even a 5-year-old can put together one of the following protein and carbohydrate combinations, no chef's knife necessary.

TURKEY AND HUMMUS WRAPS

Hummus is easy to spread on a flatbread



IMAGE: METRO GRAPHICS

or tortilla. Top with a few slices of turkey and maybe some lettuce leaves, roll up and — *voilà!* — lunch is done.

PEANUT BUTTER AND ...

Another spread-and-go option. If your child doesn't like jelly, provide something like honey, banana (easy to cut with a butter knife), bacon (precooked by you in the microwave), pickles. There's a combination for everyone.

GOAT CHEESE AND SALAMI ON A ROLL

Slice crusty sandwich rolls before freezing them, so they're always on hand. Your child can spread goat cheese on one side, top with salami, wrap in plastic, and let the sandwich defrost in the lunchbox. For a vegetarian alternative, skip the salami and spread some pesto on the other side of the roll.

HAM, CHEESE AND MUSTARD ON WHOLE-GRAIN BREAD

Whole-grain bread, with lots of seeds,

gives any sandwich a nutritional boost. Keep a loaf in the freezer. A slice or two of ham and real cheese (I like Cabot's Cheddar slices) make a hearty filling.

GUACAMOLE, BLACK BEANS AND CORN CHIPS

Buy chips designed for scooping, so your child can pack them along with small containers of guacamole and drained canned black beans.

BOX-FREEZING AND PACKING HOMEMADE GRANOLA BARS

There's no comparison between the taste of store-bought and homemade granola bars. If you and your child work to make your own, you know exactly what's going into them and can customize them to your child's tastes. Use 3/4 cup of any combination of nuts and seeds that you'd like. Use whole-wheat flour instead of white flour. Swap in honey or molasses for the maple syrup. Substitute raisins, cranberries, dried blueberries or chocolate chips for the dried cherries.

Once your bars are cooled, cut them and wrap each one separately in plastic wrap. Put the wrapped bars in a zipper-lock bag or airtight container and place in the freezer. Bars can go straight from the freezer into the lunchbox, either the night before or the morning of a school day. (For a recipe for cherry and maple granola bars, see newsday.com/food)

CHERRY AND MAPLE GRANOLA BARS

- 3/4 cup old-fashioned rolled oats (not instant)
 - 1/2 cup chopped walnuts
 - 1/4 cup unsalted pumpkin seeds
 - 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
 - 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
 - 1/4 teaspoon salt
 - 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
 - Pinch nutmeg
 - 1/2 cup canola oil
 - 1/4 cup pure maple syrup
 - 1/4 cup firmly packed light brown sugar
 - 1 large egg
 - 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
 - 1/2 cup dried cherries
1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Line an 8-inch-square baking pan with heavy-duty aluminum foil, making sure the foil is tucked into all the corners and that there is at least 1 inch overhanging the top of the pan on all sides.
 2. Spread the oats, nuts and pumpkin sunflower seeds on a baking sheet and bake until they are lightly toasted, stirring once or twice with a spoon, about 10 minutes. Remove the pan from the oven and let the mixture cool completely.
 3. Combine the flour, baking powder, salt, cinnamon, and nutmeg in a small mixing bowl.
 4. Combine the oil, maple syrup and brown sugar in a large mixing bowl, and mix until smooth. Stir in the egg and vanilla. Stir in the flour mixture until it is just combined. Stir in the oat mixture until well combined. Stir in the dried cherries.
 5. Pour the batter into the prepared baking pan. Bake the bars until they are set, 25 to 30 minutes. Let them cool completely on a wire rack.
 6. Grasping the overhanging foil on either side of the pan, lift out the bars and place them on a cutting board. Cut them into 16 squares. The bars will keep at room temperature in an airtight container for up to 5 days. Makes 16 bars.

Ranch

From Page 1B

somebody's house is not a problem for me. For us, just to have the opportunity to go in and play in someone's barn — it will be a neat experience."

Wills and Goans will be sharing the stage next Friday, but this is not the first time they have worked together. Both artists have known each other for years and were featured on a Country's Family Reunion Cruise in February.

"We have known each other for a long time, but had never performed together," Goans said. "We got the opportunity to share the stage a little bit there and it was a perfect match. We are looking forward to doing a full show with the two of us."

"When Teea used to work for WSM (radio station in Nashville), she was at the Grand Ole Opry all the time,"

Wills said. "So Teea is a good friend. I love her. I think she is an incredible singer."

Now that the ranch has a long history of bringing in entertainers, Jan Schiferl says people pass the word along and suggest artists that will fit the particular barn setting. She makes sure that performers know what the environment is like.

"They know when I talk to them, (I tell them) from the get-go that they are in a barn," Schiferl said. "They know that they become part of our family for the day. They use our house for their dressing room, we feed them a meal and the grandkids are running around. They just know that they are a part of it and they have to be OK with that."

Both Wills and Goans welcome that atmosphere. "I feel like my show translates itself much better to an intimate set-up than it does trying to do a big venue," Wills said. "If you have 10,000 people in

a place, it's hard to talk to them individually. I like my shows to be smaller so I am directly relating to everyone in the room."

"That is actually my preference on types of places to perform," Goans said. "I think it makes for a more enjoyable experience — it's more like a group of friends sitting around at somebody's house playing music."

Teea describes her style as "classic country" that is not quite as prevalent in the music scene today. The '60s and '70s style of steel guitars and fiddles might not be what you'll hear from most country radio, but Goans knows that there is an audience for that sound.

"That has been my mission: to be the person that is still out there doing that type and also to introduce a new generation to the style as well — the kind of music that country music was really built on," she said.

Wills is truly a "country boy," incorporating that

atmosphere into his 20-year career.

"The music I put out revolves around the country lifestyle," Wills said. "It's a story-telling type of music that runs hand in hand with being in the country."

That dedication to the genre, along with her home-style performance surroundings, made Wills and Goans perfect candidates for the Schiferl's ranch.

"I have known of Teea's music for quite a few years," Schiferl said. "I thought that she has a phenomenal voice and was really impressed

with her. Mark was a recommendation from one of my other contacts who thought he would fit the venue well, too."

The WJ Ranch offers both general admission tickets and a VIP Wine Tasting Meet & Greet ticket for this concert.

The Meet & Greet will involve Hartington's Nissen Wines wine tasting, provided by KK93, an hour before the concert for fans to visit with the artist and VIP ticket holders are guaranteed a front-row seat to the performances.

"The best part is watching the people that come," Schiferl said. "It seems to make them smile and bring happiness. If we can provide that, that really makes us feel like we are using our resources well. It is something to offer that makes our community that much more unique."

See information at www.schiferlswiranch.com or call (402) 357-2102 to order your tickets.

Follow @alwooc01 on Twitter.

Festival

From Page 1B

When Wuestewald started his own band, the rowdy-folk group Onward Etc., and began touring the country, he became acquainted with other bands that also performed their own original music.

"I learned how to play with other people and it evolved into a big project where, everywhere I go, I have guest musicians come onstage and play," Wuestewald said.

These musical contacts came in handy when the Yankton native got the idea to create the Old Roads Music Festival a few years back.

"I usually came home on the Fourth and did a show with my band, so I decided to reach out to friends," he explained. "I said, 'Hey, I have this idea. Let's get as many of us together as we possibly can and see what happens.'"

"I decided I wanted to start a festival to bring something back to the community that's like a gift of mine for all the work I've done in the music industry," he said.

In addition to Onward, Etc. performing, other bands part of the festival include Kings of Oblivion, The Lugnuts and Kids & Chemicals. The music genres range from rock to honky tonk.

So far, each year has proven successful, drawing hundreds of people to see the bands perform.

"It was overwhelming and mind blowing with how many people came out and supported and enjoyed it," said Wuestewald.

It's due to the crowd's support that he and the rest of his fellow musicians can continue to do what they love.

"It has become my drug of choice," Wuestewald said. "It's a really amazing feeling to get onstage play for people. It's the best feeling in the world."

Wuestewald wants the public to be aware of how far the bands are traveling to perform, some from as far away as the UK and Hawaii.

"They're doing it by the grace of just knowing that we're musical friends," he said. "All we ask is for people to give us a chance to play our music for them."

MUSICAL LINEUP

- 11:30 a.m.-noon — Kings of Oblivion;
- 12:15-12:45 p.m. — The Ragabonds;
- 1-1:30 p.m. — Saint Cecilia's Jubilee;
- 1:45-2:15 p.m. — Antique Lantern;
- 2:30-3 p.m. — Guardian Of The Underdog;
- 3:15-3:45 p.m. — Third Seven;
- 4:4-4:30 p.m. — Sweetcorn & Peanut;
- 4:45-5:15 p.m. — The Ghost Pines;
- 5:30-6 p.m. — The Wilderness;
- 6:15-6:45 p.m. — Duane Mark;
- 7-7:45 p.m. — The Lugnuts;
- 8-8:45 p.m. — Reverend Red;
- 9-9:45 p.m. — Champagne Charlie;
- 10-10:45 p.m. — Kids & Chemicals;
- 11 p.m.-End — Onward, Etc.;
- After Fest Party At Rounding Third/12:15 Till The Party Ends — The Apes

- For more information, visit www.facebook.com/oldroadsmusicfest.

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Velma Weverstad
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