

# Lunch Break

Take a vacation from grilled cheese. Famous chefs show you how to make the midday meals of kids in other countries.

BY CHERYL LOCK



There's no shame in putting your kids' lunch on autopilot. If they'll eat a healthy sandwich you can throw together in three minutes, fabulous. But on summer weekends when you have a little more time to spare, why not take a break from the usual? We asked celebrity chefs with close ties to a foreign country what kids abroad are chowing down for lunch. It's adventurous stuff—olives, shrimp, and spinach—but don't let that dissuade you from trying the recipes the chefs passed along. They're all parents, and they've adapted the dishes to their kids' tastes. Besides, children tend to be more receptive to trying new foods at lunch (when they're usually less tired and cranky) than they are at dinner. Send us a postcard and tell us how it's going!

Make Ming Tsai's Chicken Chow Mein (page 46).



## AUSTRIA



### Garden Vegetable Soup

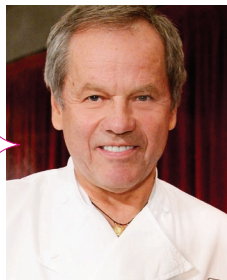
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|---------------------------|---|
| 1 leek, white parts only  | 1½ Tbs. water                           |
| ½ large potato, peeled    | 4 cups no-salt-added chicken stock      |
| 1 small onion             | 3 ripe tomatoes, peeled and seeded      |
| 1 stalk celery            | 15 fresh basil leaves, washed and dried |
| ½ medium zucchini         | 2 medium garlic cloves                  |
| 6 green beans             |   |
| 1 medium carrot, peeled   |   |
| 3 Tbs. olive oil, divided |   |

1 Cut all the veggies into ¼" pieces. In a large pot, mix half the olive oil with the water. Add veggies; sauté on medium-low until the water evaporates. Don't let the veggies brown.  
2 Add stock; bring to a boil. Cook, uncovered, at a gentle boil for 30 minutes. Meanwhile, puree tomatoes, basil, garlic, and remaining oil. Stir puree into soup. Don't let it return to a boil. Season with salt and pepper. Makes 6 cups.

**Nutrition per cup** 121 calories; 4g protein; 7g fat (1g sat. fat); 11g carbs; 2g fiber; 34mg calcium; 1mg iron; 315mg sodium.

#### WOLFGANG PUCK

Owner of Spago in Beverly Hills  
**KIDS** Cameron, 19, Byron, 14, Oliver, 4, and Alexander, 2  
**ON AUSTRIAN FOOD** "Many families rely on vegetable gardens for their produce. I ate this soup growing up—and often make it for my boys."



## GREECE



### Hummus Sammy

- |                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| 3 Tbs. low-fat mayonnaise       | 6 cucumber slices                                    |
| 2 tsp. chopped kalamata olives  | 2 tomato slices                                      |
| 2 tsp. finely chopped scallions | 2 Tbs. shredded carrots                              |
| 5 Tbs. hummus                   | 2 pieces romaine lettuce                             |
| 4 slices pita bread             | Pitted olives, cherry tomatoes, cucumber for garnish |

1 Mix together the mayonnaise, olives, scallions, and a pinch of black pepper in a small bowl and set aside.  
2 Spread the hummus on two slices of pita bread and the mayonnaise mixture on the other two. Layer the cucumber, tomatoes, carrots, and lettuce on top of the hummus. Top each hummus slice with a mayonnaise one. Cut in half. Skewer together the olives, tomatoes, and cucumber and serve on the side. Makes 2 sandwiches.

**Nutrition per sandwich** 143 calories; 5g protein; 6g fat (1g sat. fat); 19g carbs; 3g fiber; 51mg calcium; 1mg iron; 258mg sodium.

#### CAT CORA

The only female Iron Chef  
**KIDS** Zoran, 5 (shown), Cage, 2, and Thatcher, 3 months  
**ON GREEK FOOD** "Hummus and olive mayo sandwiches are the Greek equivalent of PB & J. My boys love them—and I love that they're eating veggies."



## FRANCE



### Ham & Cheese Crepes

- |                      |                             |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 3 eggs               | ½ cup low-fat diced ham     |
| Pinch of salt        | ½ cup diced tomatoes        |
| 1 cup low-fat milk   | 1 cup grated Gruyère cheese |
| ¾ cup flour          | Steamed baby carrots        |
| ¼ cup melted butter  | Mustard for dipping         |
| Canola oil as needed |                             |

1 Whisk eggs, salt, milk, and flour. Stir in butter; let batter rest 10 minutes. Spread ¼ cup batter into a heated, oiled nonstick skillet. Cook for 2 minutes, until golden brown. Flip; cook other side. Repeat with rest of batter, stacking the crepes in between pieces of wax or parchment paper.

2 Preheat oven to 350°F. Fill crepes with ham, tomatoes, and cheese and roll up. Bake on lightly oiled pan for about 5 minutes, until the cheese melts. Serve with the carrots and mustard dip. Makes 8 crepes.

**Nutrition per crepe** 213 calories; 11g protein; 14g fat (7g sat. fat); 11g carbs; 0 fiber; 195mg calcium; 1mg iron; 240mg sodium.

#### ERIC RIPERT

A guest judge on *Top Chef*

**KID** Adrien, 5

**ON FRENCH FOOD** "There's no kiddie food in France; children just eat smaller portions of what their parents have. At lunchtime, it's common to serve a savory food like crepes with a veggie."



## MEXICO



### Shrimp Ceviche

- |   |                                 |
|---|---------------------------------|
| 12 oz. shrimp in shell (16)                 | 2 Tbs. cilantro, finely chopped |
| ¾ cup lemon juice                           | Salt and pepper, to taste       |
| ½ cup olive oil                             | ¼ cup chopped avocado           |
| 1 habanero chile, finely chopped (optional) | Baked corn tortilla chips       |
| 1 tsp. honey                                | Salsa                           |
| ¼ cup red onion, finely sliced              |                                 |

1 In a pot, boil the shrimp until pink. Remove from heat, strain, and cool down by running cold water on them.

2 In a large bowl, mix lemon juice, olive oil, chile, honey, onion, cilantro, salt, and pepper until honey dissolves.

3 Add the shrimp to the marinade and let the flavors blend together in the fridge for about half an hour. Distribute shrimp among four serving bowls. Top with avocado. Serve with tortilla chips and salsa on the side.

**Nutrition per bowl** 244 calories; 18g protein; 17g fat (2g sat. fat); 5g carbs; 1g fiber; 50mg calcium; 2mg iron; 201mg sodium.

#### RICHARD SANDOVAL

Owner of 11 Mexican restaurants

**KIDS** Giancarlo, 13, and Isabella, 9

**ON MEXICAN FOOD** "I was born in Mexico, and I have taken my kids there. Ceviche—seafood marinated in citrus juice—is popular among Mexican kids. My son loves it with shrimp."



## CHINA

### Chicken Chow Mein (shown on page 40)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1 Tbs. cornstarch  | 1 Tbs. finely chopped fresh ginger                                    |
| 2 Tbs. reduced-sodium soy sauce                                | 1 bunch scallions, white and green parts separated, sliced 1/8" thick |
| 1 lb. boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cut into 1/2" pieces | 4 garlic cloves, thinly sliced  |
| 1 lb. fresh or dry lo mein noodles                             | 3 cups packed spinach   |
| 1/4 cup canola oil, divided                                    | Salt and pepper, to taste   |

**1** Mix cornstarch and soy sauce in a bowl. Add chicken; marinate for 5 minutes.  
**2** Boil the noodles in a large pot of salted water until al dente, about 5 minutes for fresh, 10 to 15 minutes for dried. Drain and transfer to a bowl filled with ice water. (It helps prevent the noodles from getting soft and sticky.) When they're cold, drain and toss them with 1 Tbs. canola oil.

**3** Meanwhile, heat 2 1/2 Tbs. oil on high in a large pan. Stir-fry chicken until almost cooked through, about 6 minutes; remove. Add 1/2 Tbs. more oil to pan; stir-fry ginger, scallion whites, and garlic until oil is fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add the noodles, chicken, and spinach and stir-fry 1 to 2 minutes, until the chicken is cooked through. Season with salt and pepper. Garnish with scallion greens if your child likes them. Makes about 8 cups.

**Nutrition per cup** 291 calories; 20g protein; 8g fat (1g sat. fat); 34g carbs; 2g fiber; 46mg calcium; 3mg iron; 543mg sodium.

#### MING TSAI

Star of Public Television's cooking show *Simply Ming*  
**KIDS** David, 9, and Henry, 7 (shown)

**ON CHINESE FOOD** "My parents were born in China, and I spent a lot of my childhood summers in Taiwan. Most kids eat noodle dishes for lunch. My boys enjoy this chow mein—even the veggies. I guess it appeals to their sweet tooth; vegetables stir-fried in onions and garlic taste sweeter than steamed or raw ones."



## Raise a Worldly Eater

You can get your child to try the most exotic ethnic dish if you approach it right, says Susan B. Roberts, Ph.D., author of *Feeding Your Child for Lifelong Health*. Her three best pointers:

**\* Don't oversell it.**

"Just offer your child the food without saying anything about it," says Dr. Roberts. If she asks "What's this?" tell her, but leave out the endorsement. For example, say "It's a taco with cheese and veggies" rather than "Aren't the red tortillas so cute?"

**\* Stay calm.**

If your child says he doesn't want to try the meal, sweetly tell him that he doesn't have to eat it, but don't offer to make him anything else "If he asks, offer him a non-cooked alternative, like cheese and crackers," suggests Dr. Roberts.

**\* Skip the praise.**

Don't applaud whenever your child tries new food. "I know a kid who avoided carrots for months after she was admired for eating them," Dr. Roberts says. "It's called 'the discounting principle.' Kids think 'How great is this food if Mom is happy when I eat it?'"