



No-Garbage Lunch

Avoid Disposables

The average kid goes to school 180 days every year. If you're bringing your lunch to school in a paper or plastic bag, that's 180 pieces of trash! Instead of piling up the waste, use a lunch box or fabric bag. There are many canvas or nylons bags you can buy. The ideal choice is a canvas bag made from organic cotton. The cotton is grown from seed without pesticides and the fabric is processed without toxic dyes, bleaches, and unnecessary chemicals.

Avoid Prepackaged Single Serving Containers

Parents often buy single serving juice, chips, yogurt, or desserts for a "treat." But since each "treat" is packaged individually, it is also a single serving of waste. Instead, you can buy larger amounts of the things you like, and then pack it in smaller reusable containers.

Use Reusables

Get your parents to pack sandwiches and snacks in Tupperware, Rubbermaid, or empty yogurt or other food containers. Use them over and over again. Check the bottom for the plastic recycling code to be sure you can recycle them when they eventually crack. Also, use reuseable water bottles for beverages.

Use Recyclables

Remember, materials like aluminum cans, glass bottles, and some plastics are recyclable. If your school doesn't have recycling bins, then be sure to take them home for re-use or recycling. Otherwise they end up as waste.

Avoid Styrofoam

Styrofoam is mostly a one-time-use item. It is difficult to recycle and it harms the ozone layer when it is manufactured.

Avoid New Plastic Food Bags

If you keep and reuse the plastic produce bags, you may not have to buy new plastic bags at all. Some kids carry their lunch to school in the same bread bag for several months! Just wipe them clean with a dishcloth, rinse and leave out to dry. If you have to use new food wrapping, buy unbleached wax paper or cellulose bags. Cellulose is made from wood pulp and is easier to recycle.

Take Leftovers Home

Even leftovers don't have to go in the trash. Take them home to your family pet or throw them on a compost heap.

Bring Containers Home

You can be responsible for the "full cycle" of your "zero-waste" lunch. By taking containers home to wash and reuse, you'll begin to realize how each of us is responsible for reducing waste. You'll also see how materials aren't "finished" just because we're through using them for the moment.

How To Pack A No Garbage Lunch

Recycle

Reduce

Reuse

Return

1. Use cloth, backpack, a bandana (bring the ends of the cloth or bandana together around the lunch and tie them) or a re-usable lunch box to wrap and carry lunch.
2. Use reusable containers to store your fresh items (sandwich, vegetables, fruit, etc.).
3. If using a bandana as a lunch box, untie the ends of the bandana; the bandana then becomes your table cloth. When finished with lunch, your bandana becomes your napkin – then wrap up leftovers and carry out.
4. All the food items leftover from lunch can go into a compost pile.
5. Sort out items from lunch that can be taken to a recycling center (aluminum cans, glass bottles).

Reusable container items

Cottage cheese containers

Sour cream containers

Cool whip containers

Large yogurt containers

Tupperware

Lunch pails and bags

Things to avoid

Sandwich baggies

Juice boxes

Single-serve products

Lunchables

Small bags of chips

