

## KID SNACKS: REAL FOOD NOT JUNK FOOD

### DEMO LECTURE AT GROWING CONNECTIONS 2009

Jay and Lisa Imerman

#### **Beef Jerky**-Economical, Nutritious and Portable

Round steak and other cheaper cuts are good, needs to be tenderized (pounded out) and trim out all the fat or it will be too tough to eat.

Marinades (many good recipes on the internet) we use a simple one with Red wine, balsamic vinegar, olive oil, Worcestershire sauce, tamari sauce, salt, pepper, garlic powder, onion powder and a mix of herbs. You can use whatever you want to flavor it.

Slice in strips, marinate overnight. Place in dehydrator for about 24 hours on a low setting, around 105°

Package into containers and put in fridge or for longer storage it can be frozen.

This makes great high-protein snacks and although it does need to be kept refrigerated, it is portable and not too messy for kids to take in the car, etc.

#### **Crispy Nuts/Trail Mix** – Very portable, flexible and kids love it

The recipes for crispy nuts made with various types of nuts are in the book “Nourishing Traditions” by Sally Fallon pages 513-516

We make a variety of crispy nuts (almonds, walnuts, pecans) and keep them in the cupboard (after they are soaked and dehydrated). We like to take some of each type and mix them with dried organic fruit (dried MI tart cherries, dried raisins, banana chips, etc.) we sometimes add shredded coconut and a few dark chocolate chips. This is great to take in the car or keep in your bag and it is a good mix of protein and carbohydrates to really fill you up and keep you going. My kids love to mix their own (and our rule is you have to eat the nuts not just the sweet stuff). The nice thing about this is you can use whatever nuts you like and whatever fruits and mix-ins you like.

#### **Vegetables and Fruit**

I love to have a variety of cut up, washed vegetables handy for the kids to put in their lunch, take as snack to school or just for munching. We love carrots and get some delicious multi-colored ones from a local farmer in the summer, these make a great, colorful kids treat. Celery, kohlrabi, cucumbers, green beans (blanched), radishes, broccoli (lightly steamed or raw), tomatoes. I also sometimes serve these with hummus as a dip.

Fruits are always a hit, but we try to make sure the kids don't eat too much fruit all the time as it is high in sugar, although natural sugar. We also make our own applesauce. This is great for lunches and snacks when they don't want a piece of whole fruit.

**Applesauce**—We get a case of juicer apples from a local, organic orchard and simply quarter them (cut out any bad spots) and throw them in a pot with a whole cinnamon stick. Cook on medium heat until they are mushy, then run them through a food mill to remove peel and seeds. If you don't have a food mill then peel and core them before cooking and you can just mash them up once they are completely softened. A mix of apples gives you a lovely flavor. We never need to add sweetener as the mixed apples give a nice rounded flavor with just the right sweetness. If you use some red apples you get a nice rosy applesauce.

I like to cut up fruit chunks and let the kids thread them on a straw to make a skewer/fruit Kabob. It is fun for them to do themselves and makes the presentation fun for a lunch or snack.

Bananas are a nice portable snack too, although they can smooch easily in a backpack. I also like to freeze really ripe bananas to use in muffins, pancakes or smoothies. So we buy an extra bunch to keep in the freezer. You can also melt chocolate and add a bit of coconut oil to it (sweeten with honey if needed depending on what chocolate you use) and dip bananas or chunks of bananas into it and place on a cookie sheet in freezer till frozen (you can roll them in crushed nuts or coconut shreds before freezing too).

Fruit Smoothies are a healthy snack. You can add whatever you like to them to make them your own. We like to do Kefir or coconut milk and add a frozen banana and a mixture of frozen fruit. We sometimes add frozen strawberries or blueberries, mango or a tropical fruit mix (frozen organic fruit). We add a bit of maple syrup to sweeten and some ice to thicken it and whiz it in the blender. You can add other things to it too for added nutrition such as fermented yeast powder, greens (kale, chard, etc.), egg yolk. Sometimes we add cocoa powder and some peanut butter to make a smoothie still using the maple syrup and banana.

**Hummus**- this is good as a dip, spread on a sandwich or many other ways. I start with dried chickpeas (9 oz), soak them overnight, drain and put them in a pan with water to cover, bring to a boil, reduce heat and cook for about 1 ½ hours till tender, then cool. I don't bother to get rid of the skins, but if you want you can put them through a food mill or sieve and get the skins off. Put chickpeas, 1 large clove of garlic (crushed into a paste with a little salt), 3 Tablespoons tahini (sesame paste) into a food processor or blender and puree it a bit, add some salt to taste, then add the juice of 2 lemons and puree till smooth. Put the hummus into a bowl and stir in 3 tablespoons olive oil. If it is too thick or dry you can add some of the cooking liquid from the beans. Check for enough salt and you can serve it with a drizzle of olive oil if you want. I love hummus with roast chicken and vegetables!!

**Other easy snacks are:**

**Hard Boiled eggs**—I like to let the kids slice them with an egg slicer and sprinkle with salt and pepper

**Yogurt**-homemade or good quality purchased (plain) . Add fruit, nuts, maple syrup or honey to taste and even a little vanilla

**Pickles**-Lacto-fermented pickles and vegetables (sauerkraut, kim chi, pickled green beans, etc.) are very healthy. It is recommended that you eat a little with every meal to help aid digestion. We make many quarts of salt-brine dill pickles every year (Kosher style). My recipe is an old family recipe that my grandma taught to my dad, who in turn taught it to me, and I taught it to my husband and kids. This is a great activity for the kids to help with, they love to do it and they love to watch the pickles ferment and then eat them!! You can find some pictures and detailed recipe/instructions here <http://littlenosh.blogspot.com/2008/08/sanford-family-dill-pickles.html>

We frequently do the same recipe and sub green beans for the cucumbers. The garlic gets pickled too, and it is my son Ben's favorite.

**Sardines**- I used to eat sardines as a kid and not too long ago was reading about how nutritious they are. They are easy to take places (although messy to eat on the go) since they come in a can. I started buying some and found out two of my children love them. They will even take them to school and aren't at all concerned about the smell. I find some skinless/boneless in olive oil and also some lightly smoked sardines at Trader Joe's and they are reasonable prices. I also have found some in mustard at Whole Foods and these are my daughter's favorite. It is a great way to add more fish into your diet and since sardines are a small fish, they aren't listed as one of the species that are high in heavy metals and pollutants.

**Popcorn**- We use organic popcorn and a hot-air popper. Popcorn is not the healthiest snack, but is a good choice for a quick and fun treat once in a while. We pop it and put either melted butter or coconut ghee (coconut butter from Green Pastures) on it along with sea salt or a sea salt blend. It is very good and it makes an easy snack for school. We often pop our own popcorn and take it in bags to the movie theatre, they allow it and it gives us that movie theatre experience without the fake, unhealthy stuff in regular movie theatre popcorn. You can also pop it on the stove with coconut oil or bacon fat for a yummy treat!!

**Lunchmeats**-We get good-quality lunchmeats without any preservatives, nitrates, etc. from a smoke house in Detroit (Markowycz European Sausage). We also buy lunchmeats, bacon, hotdogs from many of our local farmer friends (Oliver Farm has great hot dogs). Always ask what is in them before buying and know your source. Some processors do add things like corn syrup, dry milk, MSG, etc to sausages and meats when they process them, so even if the meat started out from a great farmer, it may have additives from the processing, so always check!! We get things like all natural bologna, ham, bacon, hotdogs, smoked turkey, liverwurst, salami, sausage, etc. These make great portable snacks and meals. We frequently use these to pack lunches for trips or for school in our Laptop Lunch Boxes [www.laptoplunches.com](http://www.laptoplunches.com). I find packing a healthy lunch for kids is easy in these lunchboxes.

Many nights when the kids want a snack, and I don't want them to have anything "sweet", before bed, they will have some lunchmeat or liverwurst (which is a great way to get organ meats into your child).

**Cheese** also makes a good snack, preferably raw cheeses. I buy organic and raw when I can. Raw cheese is aged so many of them are a bit “ripe” for a kid’s palate, but if you slowly introduce the mild cheeses they do usually learn to like them. Even if it isn’t raw, I find cheese to be a great, healthy and easy snack for my daughter.

You can make neat skewers with chunks of lunchmeat, vegetables and cheese. It makes a nice change of pace in a lunch over a sandwich or just plain meat.

I also frequently make “lunchables” for the kids where I take some lunchmeat and cheese and cut them out into shapes with little mini cookie cutters and then serve them with a whole grain cracker or my homemade soaked wheat crackers or tortilla chips.

One of our favorite baked good which makes a nice breakfast or snack is a soaked muffin. I use the recipe out of “The Guide To Healthy Eating” by Dr. David Brownstein and Sheryl Shenefelt. The recipe is for Carrot Spice Muffins. I use wheat instead of spelt flour and kefir instead of yogurt. When I put the ingredients to soak overnight (see book for the recipe) I also shred the carrot and put it in the fridge and measure out the currants or raisins and the spice blend so that it is ready to go in the morning and it is fast to make that way. I pop them in the oven and then go back upstairs to help the kids get ready. When we come down they are ready to cool for a few minutes before the kids dive in. My kids LOVE these. I am sure you could vary the flavor/ingredients to make zucchini muffins, blueberry, etc.

I also like to make soaked pancakes or waffles for breakfast and snacks. These are nice because you prep them at night (doesn’t take long) and leave them in the blender overnight, in the morning you just add egg and some baking soda, baking powder and salt and whiz once more, then cook. I used oats and brown rice and did a dairy-free version and they were very good. I made a double batch and there were not any leftover, so next time I will do more so we have some leftover for snacks. You can freeze them too (I like to freeze them on a cookie sheet and then put in a baggie or container so that they aren’t all stuck together). This is the pancake recipe I use

<http://www.suegregg.com/recipes/breakfasts/blenderbatterwaffles/blenderbatterwafflesA.htm>

**Drinks** -- My kids usually drink water. They take water in their lunches and whenever we go somewhere we all fill a reusable water bottle with water for the journey. However, my daughter also drinks milk (fresh, unprocessed) to which we sometimes add a bit of organic vanilla syrup or chocolate syrup as a treat. My boys love Kombucha which is very good for you as it is a fermented drink with lots of probiotics (start slowly if new to Kombucha as it does have a cleansing effect and can cause intestinal distress if you have too much when you aren’t use to it). We also buy flavored mineral water which we love to drink. It is simply carbonated water with natural flavors and now sugar or sweetener of anykind. My son calls it “pop water”. I also make herbal tea blends and make ice tea lightly sweetened with raw honey for the kids. We try not to drink much juice but hope to get a juicer soon!!

