

Human Vitality

Foster Human Rights

- Ethically Traded
- Peacemaking & Equality
- Volunteerism

Preserve Culture & Diversity

Protect Health & Wellbeing

Teach Your Kids

Step into Spring



[Shop all step into spring](#)



Prepare Healthy, Package-Free Snacks & Drinks

Share: [Pinterest](#) [Like 0](#) [Tweet](#) [Email](#)

Convenience is key for busy parents especially, when it comes to preparing school lunches, and so we often rely on foods and drinks that are pre-packaged. Unfortunately, this type of ease comes with an environmental price evident by the amount of waste we ship into our landfills. Food packaging waste is a big issue but there are many small things that consumers can do to adopt a waste-free lunch routine. Healthy families and eco parenting ideas are very important to our Hearts team. Our guide to choosing fresh and unpackaged foods should point you in the right direction of both convenient and healthy options.



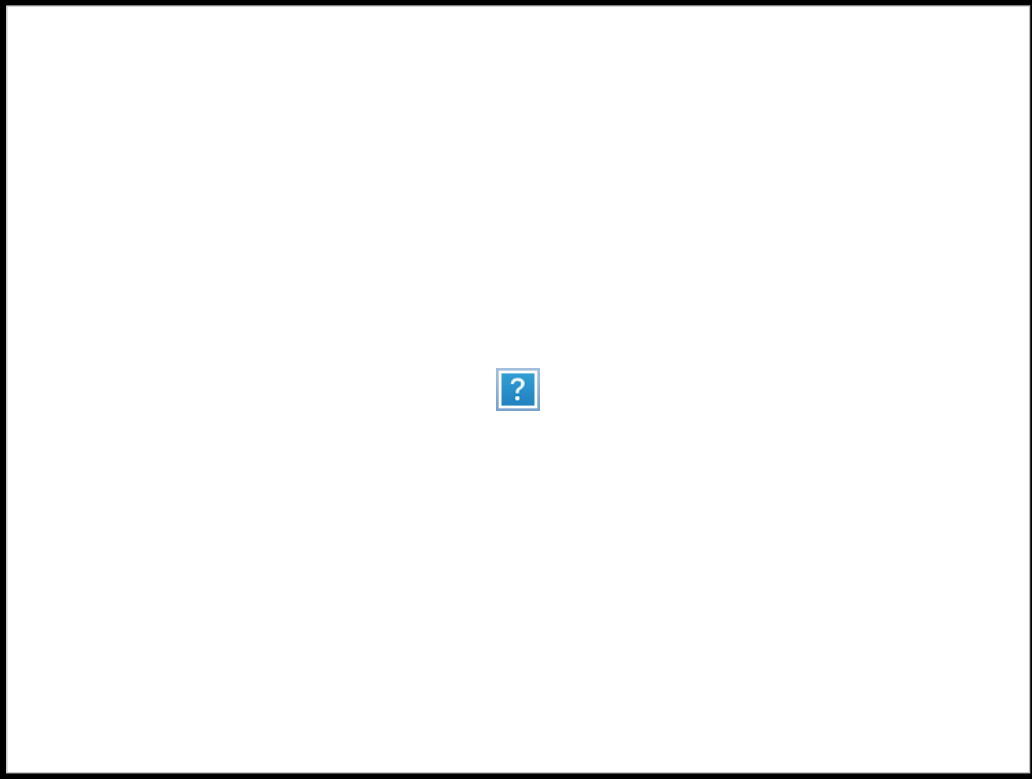
Quick Facts: Lunches and Food Packaging Waste

- **164 tons of juice boxes and 1,300 tons of milk cartons consumed daily:** These are generally unrecyclable and non-compostable because of the aluminum foil and polyethylene in them. Drink boxes are about 70% paper but the long paper fibers are wasted because of the residual liquid they contain.^[i]
- **20 million plastic food baggies tossed daily:** Three out of 50 Americans toss a plastic food baggie every day, adding up to 20 million pieces^[ii] of petroleum-based waste nationwide.^[iii] Annually, 12 million barrels of oil are used for the production of plastics,^[iv] much of which litters our land and collects in plastic ocean islands, creating wildlife hazards and pollution.^[v]
- **500 million disposable straws trashed daily:** A total of 500 million disposable straws are used in juice boxes and fast food outlets daily.^[vi] These plastic straws are one of the most common kinds of debris found in our marine ecosystems.^[vii]
- **14 million trees for paper lunch bags:** Americans consume millions of paper bags as lunch containers every day equivalent to 14 million trees cut down each year.^[viii] Only 21% of these paper bags are recycled and the rest are left to degrade in landfills.^[ix]
- **2.8 billion square inches of snack packages thrown daily:** These are used on snacks and single-portion food once and then thrown into landfills.^[x]



Take Action! Avoiding Pre-Packaged Foods

1. **Invest in reusable drink containers, straws, sandwich bags, and utensils:** Save a lot of money and do the environment plenty of good by investing in food packaging containers that you can easily reuse. Replace BPA-laced water bottles with stainless steel bottles like [Klean Kanteen](#) and [One Green Bottle](#). Refuse to use plastic straws and instead opt for glass straws like ones from [Glass Dharma](#) or bamboo straws such as [Bambooya](#). Say goodbye to the disposable sandwich bag by choosing reusable containers like [Black + Blum](#) or cute cotton sandwich bags from [Graze Organic](#). Reusable and portable utensils that kids will love are also available from brands like [Light My Fire](#) and [Fred and Friends](#).
2. **Buy a good quality lunch bag:** Stay free from the dangerous chemicals that come with PVC lunch bags. Instead go for PVC-free reusable lunch bags made from recycled content. [Ecobags](#) has plenty of options that you can check out including totes from [Pretty Planet](#) and [recycled cotton canvass bags](#).
3. **Choose fresh over packaged:** Go for fruits that use no food packaging bags at all such as bananas, pineapples, and jackfruit. For produce like grapes or apples, portion out servings in recycled cloth bags or reusable containers.
4. **Avoid buying single portion snacks and drinks:** There are some ridiculously over-packaged snacks available in the market today wrapped in plastic then cardboard. Instead of buying raisins in plastic wrappers inside tiny boxes or pickle chips in plastic cups, buy them in bigger portions and just store them in smaller, reusable containers at home. It is also cheaper to buy in bulk. Just be sure you're not opting for a large crate of individually-packaged foods (which will save you no packaging at all).
5. **Push for waste-free school lunches:** Advocate for a waste-free lunch policy in your kids' schools. You can do this little by little by starting with one trashless day every week at first. Before this day, give out resources to students and teachers on how to pack a waste-free lunch. There are plenty of materials available online such as a [complete guide to advocating for waste reduction in schools](#), [posters](#), and this [useful worksheet](#) that can help kids track which lunchbox items were reusable, recyclable, compostable, and pure waste. Don't forget to share the results of your waste-free lunch day with friends from other schools and posting pictures on social networking sites to spread the word.



Dig Deeper: Reducing Food Packaging Waste

- [Earth 911](#) has a list of some of the most absurdly over-packaged foods around.

- [Waste Free Lunches](#) is a great resource for success stories on waste-free lunch efforts.

Images By: [Jamiesrabbits](#) and [aMichiganMom](#).

+ References

+ References

Share: [Pinit](#) [Like 0](#) [✉](#)

Related Articles



Foolproof Home Recycling

Comments

0 Comments

Sort by **Oldest** ▾



Add a comment...

[f](#) Facebook Comments Plugin

