



Kid-Friendly Snacks, Dips and Spreads

By Heather McDougall

Below are some of my children's favorite snack foods. They are growing boys and eat often, so I always have at least a couple of these dip and spread recipes ready-to-go in the fridge. All of these can be served with carrots, sugar snap peas, red bell pepper, steamed broccoli, boiled and chilled red potatoes, crackers, or whole wheat bread or bagels, which I also always have on hand. All of these recipes pack well for school lunches or for any outdoor adventure. I find that if I am prepared there is less chance for requests of not-so-healthy foods when we are out. Next month, I will feature kid-friendly lunchbox recipes.

Favorite Pre-packaged Snacks for Kids

Pretzels
 Corn Thins
 Baked Tortilla Chips
 Popcorn with Bragg's and Nutritional Yeast
 Dried Fruit without Sulfur
 Fruit Leather sweetened with fruit juice

Some of our favorite crackers:

Mary's Gone Crackers
 Whole Foods 365 Baked Woven Wheats
 Edward & Sons Baked Brown Rice Snaps – Tamari Seaweed, Tamari Sesame, Black Sesame
 Real Foods Corn Thins

Eggless Egg Salad

Preparation Time: 10 minutes
 Chilling Time: 2 hours
 Servings: Makes 1 ¾ cups

12.3 ounce package extra firm silken tofu
 ¼ cup tofu mayonnaise (see below)
 ¼ cup minced celery
 ¼ cup finely diced white onion
 2 teaspoons apple cider vinegar
 ½ teaspoon turmeric
 ¼ teaspoon onion powder
 ¼ teaspoon garlic powder
 ¼ teaspoon dill weed
 ¼ teaspoon salt

Place the tofu in a bowl and mash with a fork or bean masher until crumbled, but not smooth. Add remaining ingredients and mix well. Cover and chill at least 2 hours before serving.

Tofu Mayonnaise

12.3 ounce package firm silken tofu
 1 ½ tablespoons lemon juice

1 teaspoon sugar
½ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon dry mustard
1/8 teaspoon white pepper

Combine all ingredients in a food processor and process until smooth. Cover and refrigerate. This will keep in the refrigerator for at least 1 week.

Red Pepper Aioli

Use this as a dip for raw veggies, or as a spread for crackers or bread.

Preparation Time: 10 minutes
Chilling Time: 1 hour or longer
Servings: makes 2 cups

12.3-ounce package soft silken tofu
2 tablespoons lemon juice
1 tablespoon cider vinegar
dash salt
½ cup roasted red peppers

Place the tofu in a food processor and process until fairly smooth. Add remaining ingredients and process until very smooth (this may take several minutes). Refrigerate at least 1 hour for flavors to blend. Note, you may either buy the red peppers already roasted in a jar (just be sure they are not packed in oil) or you can make your own.

Hummus

There are many variations of Hummus in most supermarkets and natural food stores. Many of them have added olive oil and most have tahini. Some people are convinced that Hummus without tahini is just not Hummus. However, I have been making no tahini Hummus for years and it is delicious, plus it is healthier for your body. If you can't stand the thought of Hummus without tahini, then add 1 tablespoon of it to this recipe, realizing that you are also adding some fat to the recipe.

Preparation Time: 5 minutes
Servings: makes 1 1/2 cups

1 15 ounce can garbanzo beans, drained and rinsed
3 tablespoons lemon juice
2 cloves garlic, crushed
1-2 tablespoons water
dash sea salt

Place all ingredients in a food processor and process until very smooth. Add additional water to change the consistency of the hummus, if desired.

Hints: Add other ingredients to this basic Hummus, for flavor and variety.

1/2 cup roasted red peppers plus 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
1/2 cup chopped parsley or cilantro
1-2 teaspoons chopped jalapeno pepper

Mock Tuna Spread

Servings: makes 2 cups
Preparation Time: 15 minutes
Chilling Time: 1 hour

1 15-ounce can garbanzo beans, drained and rinsed
1 stalk celery, finely chopped
1/4 cup finely chopped onion
1/4 cup finely chopped green onions
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1/4 cup Tofu Mayonnaise
salt to taste

Place the beans in a food processor and process until coarsely chopped, or mash with a bean masher. Don't let them get to a smooth consistency.

Place in a bowl and add remaining ingredients. Mix well. Add a bit more Tofu Mayo if you want a creamier spread. Add salt to taste. Chill to blend flavors.

RECIPE HINT:

Two tablespoons of pickle relish may be added to this spread to jazz it up.

Creamy Dill Tofu Dip

I always have a batch of this in the refrigerator. My boys love it with steamed broccoli.

1 package Creamy Dill Dip by Simply Organics
3 cups Tofu Sour Cream

Tofu Sour Cream

2 12.3 ounce packages silken tofu
4 tablespoons lemon juice
3 teaspoons sugar
1 teaspoon salt

Combine all ingredients in a food processor and process until very smooth and creamy. Refrigerate at least 2 hours to allow flavors to meld, one day is even better.

Spinach Dip

My mom and I have been making this dip for many years. We like it on crackers or as a dip for fresh vegetables -- artichokes are my boys' favorite. This can also be served in a bread bowl.

Preparation Time: 5 minutes

Chilling Time: 1-2 hours

Servings: makes about 2 cups

12.3-ounce box silken tofu
1 package (1.1 ounce) Fantastic Foods Vegetable Soup & Dip mix
½ package (10 ounce) frozen chopped spinach, thawed & squeezed dry
¾ cup tofu sour cream (recipe above)

Place the tofu in a food processor and process until very smooth. Scrape into a medium sized bowl. Add the soup mix and stir well. Add the spinach and stir again until well mixed. Stir the tofu sour cream into this mixture, cover and refrigerate for at least one hour to allow flavors to blend.

Simple Bean Dip

This is such a simple dip that you won't believe it can taste so good. Make it a day ahead of when you plan to use it so the flavors can blend. Serve with baked tortilla chips, baked pita chips or on bruschetta or crackers. We also like it with cold, boiled potatoes as a snack.

Preparation Time: 5 minutes

Servings: variable

2 - 15 ounce cans black or pinto beans, drained and rinsed
1 cup fresh mild salsa
salt to taste

Place the beans and salsa in a food processor and process until smooth. Refrigerate overnight for best flavor.

Hints: Vary this dip by using different salsas or beans. To make bruschetta, slice bread quite thin, rub with a cut clove of garlic, if desired, and toast in the oven or on a grill until crisp.

Pumpkin Muffins

I bake these in silicone muffin cups, medium size. I let the muffins cool for about 10 minutes, then just pop them out of the muffin cups. No sticking ever!

Preparation Time: 20 minutes

Baking Time: 30 minutes

Servings: 12 muffins

Dry Ingredients:

1 cup whole wheat pastry flour
3/4 cup unbleached white flour
1/2 cup brown sugar
1/8 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
1 1/2 teaspoons cinnamon
1 teaspoon nutmeg
1/2 cup chopped walnuts
1/4 cup raisins

Wet Ingredients:

1 cup canned pumpkin puree
1/2 cup Lighter Bake fat replacer
1/4 cup molasses
1/4 cup non-dairy milk
2 teaspoons Ener-G egg replacer mixed in
4 tablespoons warm water

Preheat oven to 375 degrees.

Combine all dry ingredients in a large bowl and set aside. Combine all wet ingredients in a medium bowl and mix well until smooth. Pour wet ingredients over dry ingredients and mix well (do not over-mix). Spoon batter into muffin cups. It will fill 12 medium muffin cups. Bake for 30 minutes.

Hints: Use a whisk when mixing the egg replacer with the water and beat until frothy. Then add to the other wet ingredients. Ener-G egg replacer is a flour product, available in many natural food stores. It is used for leavening and binding. Test for doneness by inserting a toothpick into the center. If it comes out clean, it is done. If you don't have silicone baking pans, these may be made in any non-stick muffin tins or baking pans. Allow to cool before removing from pans. Lighter Bake is a fat replacer made by SunSweet. It can be found in many supermarkets or online at www.sunsweet.com.