

LETS GO GLUTEN FREE

THE FAMILY EDITION · 2026

The Gluten-Free *School Lunch* Guide

20 packable lunches kids actually eat — plus a one-page classroom safety summary you can print, sign, and hand straight to your child's teacher.

20

KID-TESTED LUNCHES

5

THEMED CATEGORIES

1

PRINT & SHARE
SAFETY SHEET

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LetsGoGlutenFree.com

Lunch shouldn't be the hardest part of your day.

If you've ever stared into the pantry at 7:43 a.m., trying to invent a gluten-free lunch your kid will actually eat — without the wheat-laced granola bar, without the crackers their friend brought, without the cafeteria pizza that started this whole thing — this guide is for you.

We built it the way our family builds every weekday morning: fast, real, and rooted in what works. Each lunch below has been packed in our own kitchen and sent to school in a real lunchbox. The classroom safety page in the back is the one we wish we'd had on day one.

"Gluten-free school lunches don't need to be elaborate. They need to be safe, satisfying, and walk out the door at 7:55."

A quick word on safety: every recipe here is built around naturally gluten-free whole foods or clearly labeled certified gluten-free products. Always read every label, every time — manufacturers change formulations without warning. And for kids with celiac disease or a confirmed wheat allergy, the safety summary at the back of this guide is the most important page.

With you in the lunch trenches,

— THE LGGF FAMILY

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Real lunches, packed in real kitchens.

Every lunch below is built around **certified gluten-free** ingredients or naturally GF whole foods. Always check labels for "certified gluten-free" or "gluten-free" claims, and watch for cross-contact warnings. Each idea includes a **Pack-It list** and a **Pro Tip** from our kitchen.



Sandwich-Style Classics

LUNCHES 1–4

01 The Honest Turkey & Cheddar

Pack it: Certified GF bread, sliced turkey (label-checked), sharp cheddar, butter or mayo, apple slices, pretzel sticks (GF).

PRO TIP

Toast the bread lightly before assembling — GF bread holds up better in the lunchbox when it's been warmed first.

02 Sunbutter & Banana Stack

Pack it: GF bread, sunflower seed butter, banana coins, honey drizzle, baby carrots, GF chocolate chips on the side.

PRO TIP

Sunbutter is the safest "PB&J" for nut-free schools. Most classrooms ban tree nuts and peanuts entirely.

03 Ham & Swiss Roll-Up Bites

Pack it: GF deli ham slices, Swiss cheese strips, dill pickle spear inside, GF crackers, grapes, cucumber rounds.

PRO TIP

Skip the bread entirely. Roll the cheese inside the ham and secure with a toothpick — fewer carbs, no soggy sandwich.

04 Egg Salad on Rice Cakes

Pack it: Hard-boiled egg salad (mayo, mustard, salt), brown rice cakes packed separately, cherry tomatoes, GF crackers, orange wedges.

PRO TIP

Pack the egg salad and rice cakes in *separate* containers. They go from "lunch" to "soggy mess" in about 90 minutes.



05 Buttery Garlic Rice Pasta

Pack it: GF rotini or penne tossed in butter, garlic powder, parmesan; steamed broccoli, applesauce pouch, GF cookie.

PRO TIP

Pre-warm the thermos with boiling water for 5 minutes before filling. Pasta stays hot for 4+ hours.

06 Chicken & Rice Soup

Pack it: Homemade or GF-labeled chicken & rice soup, GF crackers, string cheese, sliced strawberries, dark chocolate square.

PRO TIP

Most canned chicken soups contain wheat. Look for "Pacific Foods" or "Amy's Organic" — both have certified GF lines.

07 Mini Meatballs & Marinara

Pack it: GF meatballs (Aidells or homemade) in marinara, GF garlic toast wrapped in foil, parmesan packet, banana, fruit snacks.

PRO TIP

Most pre-made meatballs use breadcrumbs as a binder. Make a double batch on Sunday with GF panko and freeze in portions.

08 Cheesy Quinoa Bowl

Pack it: Cooked quinoa, shredded cheddar, diced rotisserie chicken, frozen peas (thawed), salt & butter, blueberries on the side.

PRO TIP

Quinoa is naturally gluten-free but check the package — many brands process it on shared lines. Look for "certified GF."



09 DIY Lunchable Stack

Pack it: GF crackers, ham & turkey rounds, cheese cubes, halved grapes, mini GF pretzels, single-serve hummus cup.

PRO TIP

This is the lunch your child will trade for. Use a divided bento box and let them assemble at the lunch table — it doubles as entertainment.

10 Hummus & Veggie Plate

Pack it: Hummus, baby carrots, cucumber spears, bell pepper strips, GF pita chips or rice crackers, hard-boiled egg, clementine.

PRO TIP

Most hummus is naturally GF, but flavored varieties sometimes contain wheat-based thickeners. Stick to plain or roasted red pepper.

11 Fruit, Cheese & Protein Board

Pack it: Cheese cubes, GF salami slices, apple wedges, grapes, GF crackers, dried cranberries, dark chocolate chips.

PRO TIP

Applegate Naturals salami is certified GF and a kid favorite. Avoid pre-sliced deli salami unless it specifies "no fillers."

12 Rainbow Sushi-Style Bento

Pack it: Sticky rice molded into balls, nori sheets (cut), avocado slices, cucumber sticks, GF tamari packet, edamame, mandarin orange.

PRO TIP

Regular soy sauce contains wheat. Always pack *tamari* or San-J's certified GF soy sauce — never assume.



13 Turkey Avocado Wrap

Pack it: GF tortilla (Mission or Siete), turkey, mashed avocado, spinach, cheese, sweet potato chips, GF granola bar.

PRO TIP

Siete almond-flour tortillas hold up beautifully and don't crumble. Wrap in parchment, then foil, for a clean lunch.

14 Cream Cheese & Cucumber Pinwheels

Pack it: GF tortilla spread with cream cheese, cucumber ribbons, deli turkey, dill — sliced into 6 pinwheels. Add olives, baby carrots, applesauce.

PRO TIP

Pinwheels travel beautifully and look like real food, not "weird gluten-free food." A small win for picky kids.

15 Lettuce-Wrap Tacos

Pack it: Seasoned ground beef in a small thermos, butter lettuce cups, shredded cheese, salsa, tortilla chips, mango chunks.

PRO TIP

Most taco seasoning packets contain wheat. Make your own with chili powder, cumin, garlic, paprika, salt — store in a jar.

16 Chicken Caesar Wrap

Pack it: GF tortilla, chopped grilled chicken, romaine, GF Caesar dressing (Primal Kitchen), parmesan, GF croutons, apple, oat-free granola bar.

PRO TIP

Most Caesar dressings contain anchovies (fine) *and* wheat-based thickeners or Worcestershire (not fine). Check the label twice.



17 Cheese Quesadilla & Fruit

Pack it: GF tortilla quesadilla (cooked, cooled, sliced), salsa cup, sour cream cup, strawberries, blueberries, GF tortilla chips.

PRO TIP

Quesadillas keep well at room temp for 3-4 hours. No thermos, no fuss, no complaints.

18 Mini Pancake Sandwiches

Pack it: Two GF pancakes (Birch Benders or homemade) with sunbutter inside, sausage links, blueberries, yogurt cup.

PRO TIP

"Breakfast for lunch" works on the worst mornings. Make pancakes Sunday, freeze, and grab two on the way out the door.

19 Hot Dog & Sides

Pack it: All-beef hot dog (Applegate, GF) in a thermos with hot water to keep warm, GF bun separately, ketchup, baby carrots, apple, fruit pouch.

PRO TIP

Most hot dogs contain wheat-based fillers. Stick to Applegate or Hebrew National "all-beef." Always check buns separately.

20 "Backup" Snack Box

Pack it: String cheese, GF pretzels, beef stick (Chomps), grapes, cucumber slices, GF granola bar, fruit snacks, chocolate chips.

PRO TIP

Every parent needs the "I forgot to pack lunch" emergency box. Keep all these shelf-stable in a bin — assemble in 90 seconds.

Classroom Safety Summary

FOR TEACHERS, AIDES
& CAFETERIA STAFF

⚠️ **PRINT THIS PAGE · HAND TO YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER ON DAY ONE**

My child must avoid **all gluten** — including wheat, barley, rye, and cross-contact with shared surfaces, hands, and food. Even a crumb can trigger a reaction.

1 Foods to Avoid

- ✗ Wheat, barley, rye, malt, brewer's yeast, triticale
- ✗ Most breads, crackers, cookies, cakes, donuts, pretzels
- ✗ Regular pasta, pizza, breaded chicken nuggets
- ✗ Most soy sauce, gravy, soup mixes, taco seasoning
- ✗ Play-Doh, traditional papier-mâché, some craft glues

2 Generally Safe

- ✓ Whole fruits, vegetables, plain meats, plain dairy
- ✓ Items in sealed packaging marked "**gluten-free**"
- ✓ Rice, corn, quinoa, potatoes (plain, no seasoning)
- ✓ Eggs, beans, plain nuts & seeds (where allowed)
- ✓ Anything packed by parent in their lunchbox

3 Cross-Contact Matters

- ✓ **Wash hands** with soap & water before food handling — sanitizer doesn't remove gluten
- ✓ Wipe shared surfaces — desks, tables, art areas
- ✓ Keep my child's food in their own labeled container
- ✓ No food sharing or trading at the lunch table

4 Class Parties & Treats

- ✓ Please give us **48 hours notice** of any food event
- ✓ We will gladly send a safe, equivalent treat
- ✓ "Birthday cupcakes" without warning = my child sits out
- ✓ Non-food rewards (stickers, pencils) always appreciated

⚠️ IF ACCIDENTAL EXPOSURE OCCURS

Watch for:

Stomach pain, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, headache, fatigue, brain fog, mood change, or skin rash. Symptoms may appear within minutes or hours.

Action:

Contact parent immediately. Document what was eaten and when. Allow access to bathroom and water. *Not an allergic emergency unless breathing/swelling occurs — then call 911.*

CHILD'S NAME

PARENT / GUARDIAN PHONE

DATE

YOU'VE GOT THIS.

Real food, real lunches, and a kid who eats *safely.*

This guide is the lunchbox version of what we believe at LetsGoGlutenFree.com: gluten-free living shouldn't feel like a punishment, a science experiment, or an apology. It should feel like dinner. And lunch. And tomorrow.

Restaurant Finder

136+ verified gluten-free restaurants across the U.S., curated by real families.

Is It Gluten-Free?

The fastest searchable answer to "wait, can I eat this?" — for 400+ products and ingredients.

The Weekly Email

One short note, one tested recipe, zero fluff. Sent Sunday afternoons.

LetsGoGlutenFree.com

Real life. Real food. No gluten. No drama.

The information in this guide is provided for educational purposes only and does not constitute medical advice. Always consult your child's physician, registered dietitian, or allergist for personalized guidance — especially for children with celiac disease, wheat allergy, or non-celiac gluten sensitivity. Product recommendations reflect ingredients available at time of publication; manufacturers can change formulations at any time, so always read every label, every time. © 2026 LetsGoGlutenFree.com — feel free to share this guide unaltered with friends, families, and schools.