

Let's Do LUNCH!

Pack It & Snack It

Choosing back-to-school lunch gear is never easy – it has to be kid-pleasing, but not budget-busting, and functional as well. Snack foods have to please all, too, with kid-approved flavor but healthy nutrition moms and dads require.

Atlanta Parent magazine's staff, contributors and Parent Advisory Board (PAB) members were up to the challenge. On a recent evening in the Whole Foods Market Buckhead's café, we tasted and tested good-for-you snacks and new lunch gear that should win over the pickiest of kids and delight their grown-ups.

Read about our five picks for healthier snacks and the gear that rose above the rest.



Visit atlantaparent.com/deals for AP reader discounts on our back-to-school gear picks!

Gear Up



Packit Freezable Lunch Bag, \$19.99, packit.com and Bed, Bath & Beyond

A cool idea: a soft-sided freezable lunch bag that keeps foods cold for about 10 hours. It folds flat when not in use so it takes up very little freezer space.

Rebecca Lettier, AP Contributor: "I love that it keeps things cold for several hours and folds flat for backpack stashing and home storage."



Mamoo Kids Rover red toddler backpack, \$29, mamookids.com

While not specifically a lunch bag, it's roomy inside space, easy magnetic clasp and adorable design make this a standout option for brown (or red!) bagging. Plus, it's machine washable.

Ayanna Hawkins, PAB: "I love the design and magnetic clasps."



Milkdot Stoh Lunch Tote Striped Collection, \$27, milkdot.com

A lightweight, handsy handled lunch tote with organization pockets inside and out has a water repellent exterior and wipes clean inside.

Meredith Snellings, PAB: "Nice handle! The shape and size make it easy to pull out of a backpack and carry."



Eco Vessel Smashbox Collapsible Lunch Box, Single Compartment \$16.95, Double Compartment \$19.95, ecovessel.com

Any foods can go inside the collapsible container that's dishwasher, freezer and microwave safe. A multi-use spoon fits into the lid, and it folds down to a compact size.

Melissa Williams, PAB: "Love that you can collapse it for storage or messy snacks. It's like a two-in-one!"



Beatrix NY Cozy Can, \$22.50, beatrixny.com

They look like sodas, but these stainless steel insulated cans hold water or whatever healthy drink you pour, plus the lid holds a ball in straw.

Melissa Williams, PAB: "My kids would love to drink out of this."



Ecolunchbox Blue Water Splashbox with Cotton Carrying Bag, Splash Box \$22.50, Bag \$16, ecolunchboxes.com

An embossed (for good grip) silicon leak-free lid covers a stainless steel lunch compartment. The 100 percent cotton carry bags have sturdy cord handles and are machine washable. Designers' intent: no plastic to protect our oceans.

Alicia Garcia, PAB: "I'll take it now! It's easy to open and clean, leak proof, cute, and I love the carrying bag."

I See Me Personalized Tin Lunchbox, \$29.95, isecme.com

Tin (no lead) lunchboxes with your kid's name displayed on multiple sides makes bringing lunch a lot more special. A chalkboard lining the lid is the perfect spot for notes from home.

Rebecca Lettier, AP Contributor:

"These remind me of lunchboxes when I was a kid – really cool! I love that it can be personalized and the chalkboard on the inside!"



Eco Lunch Gear Sandwich Wrap and Bag, Wrap \$10.50, Snack Bag \$10.50, ecolunchgear.com

Lined to keep food fresh, these 100 percent cotton reusable food huggers are machine washable and a good looking green alternative to plastic baggies.

Alicia Garcia, PAB: "Adorable and functional!"

Booginhead Pack'Em's, \$9.99, booginhead.com, Walmart and other retailers

Reusable food bags with Velcro Press-Lok closure keep everything clean on the go, and the stand-up, expanding bottoms make it easy to stuff in snacks and sandwiches.

Dalia Faupel, AP Associate Editor: "I love how they stand up for easy filling and they stayed closed, even in a misty bag."



Contigo Autospout Striker Kids Water Bottle, \$10.99, gocontigo.com, Target and other retailers

A really-for-everything water bottle has a protective spout cover to keep it clean, plus a one-touch lid pops up for one-handed straw drinking. It's even spill proof with the spout open.

Meredith Snellings, PAB: "My son would go bananas for this one, plus it has a great spout to keep germs out."



Nalgene On the Fly Kids Water Bottle, \$10, Target and REI

A durable, easy-to-clean water bottle for little hands has a smooth-opening drinking spout, locking, leak-proof cap and designs with kid appeal.

Kim Currutt, PAB: "This would really get my son excited in drinking more water."



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