



ANN BLOOM
NUTRITION: IT'S ALL GOOD

Tasty tips for keeping kids well-fed at school, home

August is National Back to School Month, which seems appropriate since school children across the nation are heading back to in-person learning. That noise you heard was the collective sigh of relief from those children, their parents and teachers. It has been a long time in coming.

With back to school comes the question of what to do about breakfast, lunch and afterschool snacks for all those children. After approximately 17 months since some children have been in the classroom, it is hard to remember what a school breakfast, lunch or snack might look like. Many children participate in the federal Free and Reduced Meal Program which provides a free, or reduced cost lunch and breakfast to students in Oregon schools.

Mornings can be hectic and the last thing children and their parents need or want to think about is what to make for breakfast or lunch (if children pack a lunch to school). Everyone needs something easy, fast and yet nutritious.

Here are some ideas:

- A toasted, whole wheat English muffin with peanut butter or hummus (a spread made with garbanzo beans), plus a piece of fresh fruit (a banana or some grapes) or a glass of 100% fruit juice, is one idea. The English muffin can be substituted with a piece of whole wheat toast.

- Another quick breakfast is a bowl of cold cereal (100% whole grain is best), with fruit or juice. Low-fat or fat-free yogurt, coupled with a piece of fruit and toast is also quick and easy.

- A whole wheat bagel smeared with peanut butter or hummus, is portable and nutritious.

- Hard-boiled eggs, kept in a bowl in the refrigerator, are a handy breakfast item.

Breakfast should include a protein source and a source of complex carbohydrates. The complex carbohydrates (as opposed to the simple carbohydrates of a doughnut, or sugar-added cereal) take longer to break down in the body and provide a longer and steadier source of energy so a person does not get hungry so soon after eating. This helps to avoid that “crash” feeling at 10 a.m. and the need to eat long before the noon meal is available.

Just about anything can be turned into a breakfast including leftovers, such as soups, stews, even leftover pizza warmed in the microwave. A tortilla, either whole wheat or corn, can be spread with refried beans and cheese, topped with a little salsa and warmed in the microwave, and wrapped in aluminum foil it becomes a quick, portable breakfast. The point is something for breakfast is better than

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Seeking the top tuna sandwich

A selection of recipes from chefs

By **BETHANY JEAN CLEMENT**
The Seattle Times

SEATTLE — The tuna salad sandwich inspires such strong feelings that two fans recently filed a class-action lawsuit against Subway for how bad its version is, specifically alleging that said sandwich actually contains zero tuna. Some independent laboratory tests seem to show tuna is, in fact, present in Subway’s tuna salad sandwich. But other results have been inconclusive, perhaps due to the processing of the fish combined with the ensalading [technical term] of it diluting the tuna DNA. The fact that this is wending its way through our legal system feels like some end-times stuff.

We certainly all can agree a tuna salad sandwich starts with tuna. And while restaurants might dabble in fancier versions — at Seattle’s Old Salt, chef Liz Kenyon uses local albacore loins confited in olive oil from (the great) Villa Jerada — here we’re talking about canned tuna, in its familiar puck-shaped tin. Mayonnaise is — it must be — another nonnegotiable, with the abomination that is Miracle Whip beneath consideration. From this point, however, we descend quickly into a morass, made more morassy by the feelings deeply rooted in childhood sense-memory that many people bring to the matter.

Shall pickles or a cousin thereof be incorporated for complementary flavor and textural contrast? What about, contrariwise, sweet relish, because somehow a cloying element is desirable with fish? (Sorry, but see Miracle Whip above, and also: SHUDDER.) Then there’s the matter of onion: essential or really altogether overpowering? Maybe celery, just to do some extra chopping for some reason? Extra herb(s), just to complicate matters? On the sandwich as a whole, should lettuce and/or tomato be added as if tuna salad, correctly made, does not stand humbly yet magnificently on its own? What kind of bread, and to toast or not to toast (how is this even a question)?

But of course — of course — the way you like it is the only correct way, and also the reason the tuna salad sandwich



Steve Ringman/The Seattle Times-TNS

Chef Liz Kenyon from Manolin in Fremont prepares her version of their ultimate tuna salad sandwich, adding salt before stirring everything together on Wednesday, July 7, 2021.

made at home is the very best one. Have your sweet relish, you pervert! I make mine with olive-oil-packed tuna (extra richness, organic or Kewpie mayo (the latter even better because MSG), Dijon mustard (Amora is the world’s best), capers (Julia Child agrees!), grated Parmesan (for secret extra umami), a little salt, and a little pepper, with snipped-up chives a pleasing optional touch. Not-too-nice white bread like Franz buttermilk or nicer brioche both perform excellently (not toasted, need it be said). But — heretical though it may be — I like my tuna salad maybe very best on Saltines (assembled salty side facing down so it hits your tongue).

Following, please find The Very Best Way to Make a Tuna Salad Sandwich from five Seattle-area chefs. Turns out Kenyon likes her homemade stuff on crackers, too, and I might contemplate her idea of a squeeze of lemon. But, sweet pickles: agree to violently disagree. Holly Smith’s dash of hot sauce and Wayne Johnson’s celery salt are also under consideration. (Note that chef Johnson has here eschewed canned tuna — fair enough.)

Out of curiosity, I also asked everybody whether they call it a “tuna salad sandwich,” “tuna fish sandwich” or just “tuna sandwich,” and a half-dozen people can’t even agree on the name. (From my small sample

size, this does not appear to be a regional thing; I have yet to harass a linguist about it. I’m on Team Tuna Fish Sandwich.) One actual fact, if the National Fisheries Institute’s Tuna Council is to be believed: 52% of all canned tuna is used in sandwiches. That seems low, though, doesn’t it?

LIZ KENYON of Manolin, Rupee Bar and Old Salt

I love tuna salad. When we go down to Oregon to my in-laws, we stock up on their house-canned tuna they make. It is the best. If you can it yourself, there is something that makes it just [expletive] perfect — excuse my language, but I am passionate about this. The juices and fat from the fish confit in the jar with a pinch of salt ... nothing added but good, local fish and salt. Perfection.

At home, I mix the tuna with salt, mayo, extra sweet pickles (cucumber and, if they are in my fridge, pickled onions) and a squeeze of lemon. I like my tuna salad on nice sliced white bread — nothing fancy. But what really tickles me? Crackers! Anything from those tasty little rice crackers to Ritz crackers. Or lettuce cups or celery. Any type of small vessel.

Growing up my parents worked a lot ... Tuna salad was a staple. If there were leftovers, it was turned into tuna casse-

role. It’s one of those comfort foods for me. Quick and easy, an extra dose of mercury, and I am happy.

MELISSA MIRANDA of Musang

I love, love tuna sandwiches. My love for them definitely came later in life — growing up Filipina, I didn’t really get the opportunity to eat it until I was older. But I love that it’s something so quick, simple and healthy to make. Skipping the bread altogether and eating it with tomatoes, lettuce and cucumbers is also a delight!

**1 can tuna, packed in water
Kewpie mayo
Celery
Red onions
Capers
Dill/parsley
Salt and pepper**

Sometimes I like to add the Everything Bagel Seasoning from Trader Joe’s. I love it on brioche bread and also am down with Dave’s Killer Bread — any type.

HOLLY SMITH of Cafe Juanita

My mom’s tuna snack growing up was pretty great — she would open the can and then coat the top generously with Jane’s Crazy Mixed-Up Salt. Ate it straight from the tin. No idea if that seasoning mix still exists [Ed. note: It does!] or what exactly was in it [“Salt, Herbs and Spices, Dehydrated Onion, Dehydrated Garlic,” so who knows?], but it had crunch and flavor and was pretty delicious, as far as I recall.

Key is to get the best fish you can — find one you love — oil-packed for sure. I enjoy different jars/tins, ranging from wild yellowtail to Bonito del Norte (skipjack, albacore, belly, loin ...). If I have the really expensive stuff, then I simply flake onto a salad or veggies with great extra-virgin olive oil, smoked Maldon salt and maybe some olives.

Now for a sandwich, it’s Kewpie mayo, capers in large quantities, Dijon mustard, a bit of extra-virgin olive oil such as Laudemio, and sometimes celery. A dash or two of hot sauce, such as Tapatio, is always good. I tend to eat my tuna on salad greens more than not. I love it on a homemade or fabulous bakery-bought

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Must-have skills for cooking mussels

By **JAMES P. DeWAN**
The Daily Meal

Most people haven’t cooked many — if any — mussels in their lifetimes. Just the sight of that little cluster of blue-black shells is sometimes enough to send one scurrying back toward more familiar sea creatures like salmon and shrimp.

Today, though, we’ll embrace the unfamiliar and discuss what to do with mussels, starting when you first lay eyes upon them in the market.

How many mussels to buy per person

Buy enough mussels for the whole gang. Remember to take into account what we in the biz call “yield percentage,” which, with mussels, is roughly 25%. This means that a pound of mussels will yield about four ounces of meat, a typical serving for one person. So if mussels are your main course, purchase at least one pound per person. If they are an appetizer, a quarter- to a half-pound per person will be just fine.

How to store mussels

Once you get your mussels home, keep them in the fridge. Remove them from their netted bag and keep them in a bowl that’s loosely covered by a damp cloth or paper towel. They’ll keep like this for a couple of days.

How to tell if your mussels are fresh

Mussels need to be alive when you cook them because their meat begins to deteriorate very quickly. Thus, before cooking, you need to examine your mussels.

First, they should smell fresh, like the ocean. They should certainly not smell fishy. Also, mussels with cracked or broken shells should be tossed, as they’re probably dead.

Another telltale sign that your mussel has died is that its shell is open. Now, It’s fairly common for mussel shells to be open a little, like they were about to say something but then thought better of it. Here’s what you do: Take that mussel and tap it lightly on the counter. If the mussel’s still alive, it will close its shell. If it doesn’t close, toss it.

How to clean mussels

Before cooking, dump your mussels into a colander in the sink and run cold water over them. Today, most mussels are farm-raised, which means they’ll have less mud or seaweed than if they were plucked from their natural habitats. If there is any dirt or mud stuck to the shell, clean it off with a clean sponge or brush.

Next, you need to engage in the process called “debearding.” The beard or byssus (rhymes with “missus”) is the little stringy bundle emanating from the shell. It’s

made up of protein strands and is what the mussel uses to stay anchored and prevents it from being washed away with the tide. To remove the beard, grasp it with a clean, dry towel and yank it out.

How to cook mussels

You can use dry heat with mussels. Layer them in a dry cast-iron skillet and cook them on the stovetop. You can also balance them individually, if precipitously, on a grill rack over hot coals. You can also roast them in a shallow pan in a hot oven.

The most common way of preparing mussels is steaming. For this, you need a covered pot, a little bit of liquid and a little bit of time — usually five to 10 minutes.

One of the things that makes mussels such a treat is that they hold saltwater in their shells. When steamed, that saltwater turns into a kind of natural mussel broth and mixes with the cooking liquid, delicious and perfect for sopping up with fresh, crunchy bread. You can steam mussels with plain water but you’re going to get a more robust tasting final product if you use wine, beer, cider or stock.

Herbs and aromatic vegetables like shallots, garlic, leeks, celery and carrots are often simmered with the liquid for extra flavor. You can also add a little heat with crushed red pepper flakes or fresh chiles like jalapenos or serranos. After the mussels are cooked, the liquid can be enriched with cream or butter.



Kristen Mendiola for The Daily Meal

Mussels steamed in white wine.

Here’s what you do for a couple of pounds of mussels:

1. If you’re using aromatic vegetables, sweat them in a little butter or oil over medium heat in a large, covered pan.
2. When they’re limp and translucent, add a cup of liquid and any herbs or spices, increase the heat to very high, and bring it all to a boil.
3. Add the mussels all at once and cover the pan. When the liquid returns to the boil (another minute or so), reduce the heat to medium-low and let the mussels steam until they’re nearly all opened.
4. Discard any unopened shells. For family style, simply serve the mussels as-is from the pan or dump the entire contents

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