

# Healthy Food Guide For School Activities and Other Special Occasions Empty Calorie Foods

The food items listed below are high in fat and sugar with few nutrients. They are considered empty calorie foods or foods of minimal nutritional value, and should only be eaten in small amounts.

Provide a variety of foods for school parties or events, and offer no more than one of these items.

- Desserts
- Cookies
- Ice cream
- Pretzels
- Croissants
- Punch
- Pastries
- Cream-based soups
- Supersized muffins, cookies or supersized anything!
- Anything fried
- Sausage, hot dogs, high-fat lunch meats
- Pizza with high-fat meats, extra cheese or thick crusts. (Healthier option is thin crust with vegetables or fruit. Pineapple is a hit with kids.)

## Helping Kids Eat Healthy

Promoting healthy behaviors among students is an important role of every school administrator, teacher and parent.

By promoting healthy behaviors, you can help:

- Increase students' ability to learn
- Reduce absences
- Improve behavior
- Teach children lifelong healthy eating habits

Behaviors are often established in childhood. As a role model, you can provide your students or child with the proper guidance and education to lead them to positive choices which can help them improve their chances for a healthy life.

## Classroom Parties and Snacks

Classroom parties can include foods that are delicious, nutritious and special. Parents and older children can help make them. Healthy classroom party snacks are a great idea for many reasons.

Children learn and behave better when properly fed and they get a chance to try new foods they may not have at home.

If parents are bringing food to your classroom, ask them to bring healthy snacks or give them these guidelines to use. Some teachers make healthy foods a standard. We're not suggesting that school food offerings be nutritionally perfect. When food is served for a group event, you can serve a healthy foundation with a maximum of one item from the "empty calorie" list. For example, if cake is served at a party, also serve some foods to balance the menu, like some fruits, veggies and water. If you decide to serve ice cream to your students, you may select some of the healthier beverage and snack options listed in this booklet.

### Guidelines for school snacks:

When buying packaged foods for school snacks, **check the label**. Pick products that have:

- 6 grams or less of fat per serving
- 7 grams or less of sugar
- under 300 mg of sodium

Many products on the market now meet these guidelines.

## Recipes for Healthy School Snacks

Included in this booklet are ideas, recipes and tips that you will find useful in helping our students make and hopefully develop lifelong healthy eating choices.

## Paradise Pop

2 parts 100% juice to 1 part sparkling water-  
You may add crushed ice if desired.

## Orange Slurpie

(Orange juice right out of the orange)  
Roll a juicy orange on the counter to get the juice flowing. Rinse the whole orange under cool water and pat dry. Cut a hole about the size of a quarter in the top of the orange. Drink the juice right out of the orange by squeezing and slurping the juice out of the hole.

## Orange Smoothie

1 cup orange juice  
1 banana  
2 ice cubes or  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup crushed ice  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup vanilla yogurt  
Blend on high until smooth and creamy. Adjust flavors thickness if needed.

Makes 2 servings

Note: There are hundreds of variations on

the theme. Just think about what flavors

compliment each other and what ingredients

will give it the thickness you like.

## Apple Strawberry Delight

2 cups apple juice  
1 cup frozen strawberries  
Blend on high until smooth and creamy. Adjust flavors or thickness if needed.

Makes 2 servings

A smoothie is a healthy milkshake.

## Halloween Treat

1 loaf of wheat bread  
Cat and ghost cookie cutters  
8 ounces peanut butter  
2 cups crushed granola  
1 (12-ounce) package raisins  
Confectioners' sugar  
Cut cat and ghost shapes from bread with cookie cutters.  
Spread bread shapes with peanut butter. Sprinkle granola on cat shapes; arrange raisins for eyes, nose and mouth.

Yields 48 servings

## Ants on a Log

1 celery stick  
1 tablespoon peanut butter  
1 tablespoon crisp rice cereal or raisins  
Spread peanut butter on celery stick. Press cereal and/or raisins into peanut butter.

The kids will love making and eating the "good" ants!

## 3-Minute Fruit Salad

1 can mandarin oranges, drained  
1 banana sliced  
1 red apple chopped  
Sprinkle raisins or blueberries on top  
Mix and eat.

## Fruit Pizza

English muffins (whole-wheat, if possible), sliced in half  
Low-fat cream cheese  
Sliced fruit, fresh or canned

Slice English muffins in half. Spread a thin layer of cream cheese and top with favorite fruits. No cooking required!

## Trail Mix

Add 3 or more of the following items:  
Chex cereal, Cheerios, pretzels, popcorn, raisins, nuts, cranraisins, honey-nut oat cereal, dried fruit, Teddy grahams, and peanuts.

## Snack Tree

Styrofoam cone  
Decorative paper  
Bite-sized cauliflower, green pepper, cherry tomatoes, grapes, apples, cheese, etc.  
Toothpicks  
Low-fat dip  
Cover styrofoam cone with decorative paper to match the theme of the occasion. Place bite-size vegetables, fruits and cheese on toothpicks. Push toothpicks into Styrofoam cone.  
Serve with low-fat dip.

## Cranberry Punch

1 quart (32-ounce) cranberry juice  
1 ½ cups (12-ounce) pineapple juice  
2 cups diet ginger ale  
Ice cubes  
**Refrigerate all ingredients. Combine ingredients and serve immediately. Makes 15 ½ cup servings**

## Pizza on English Muffins

2 English muffins (whole-wheat, if possible)

2 tablespoons canned tomato paste, no salt added  
2 tablespoons water  
1/2 teaspoon dried oregano  
Black pepper (optional)  
4 thin slices part-skim mozzarella cheese  
Slice or separate the muffins into halves and place them in a toaster or toaster oven. Toast until the muffins are golden brown. While the muffins are toasting, mix tomato paste, water and oregano in a small bowl. Top each muffin half with 1 T. of sauce mixture. Place cheese on top. Broil until cheese melts  
- 4 or 5 minutes.

## Super Veggie Wrap

1 cucumber, peeled and thinly sliced  
2 small zucchinis, thinly sliced  
2 carrots, peeled and thinly sliced  
4 large white mushrooms, chopped  
4 green onions, chopped  
1 clove garlic, chopped (optional)  
4 (10-inch) fat free flour tortillas  
1/2 cup fat-free cream cheese  
In a small bowl, combine all vegetables. Thinly spread 1 tablespoon cream cheese on each tortilla. Place some of the chopped vegetable mixture evenly across center of tortilla. Roll up tortilla, trapping ingredients

tightly inside to form a tight tube. When finished rolling, slice each tube into 1-inch wide sections to serve.

**Variation:** Add 1 tablespoon of salsa to each wrap.

Yields: 32 slices.

## Sorbet

To make your own delicious sorbet, freeze 4 cups of berries or melon chunks, combine with 1/2 cup orange juice, and blend them in the blender until smooth

## Pumpkin Muffins

Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

**Sift together:**

1 $\frac{3}{4}$  cups whole wheat pastry flour (or half whole wheat and half all purpose flour)

$\frac{3}{4}$  teaspoon salt

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup sugar

2 teaspoons baking powder

1 teaspoon cinnamon

$\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon nutmeg

**Beat in a separate bowl:**

2 eggs

**Add to the eggs:**

2 tablespoons vegetable oil

$\frac{3}{4}$  cup low-fat milk

1 cup canned pumpkin

Combine the wet and dry ingredients with a few swift

strokes (don't over mix). Fill greased muffin cups two

thirds of the way full and bake for 20 to 25 minutes.

**Makes a dozen muffins**

# Classroom Parties and Snacks Ideas

## Grains

- Low-fat baked tortilla chips
- Pretzels
- Air-popped popcorn
- Animal crackers
- Graham crackers
- Popcorn mix (popcorn, raisins, and peanuts)
- Granola
- Chex mix
- Oatmeal-raisin cookies
- Bagels
- Raisin bread
- Muffins

## Fresh Vegetables

- Baby carrots
- Green or red pepper strips
- Pea pods
- Ants on log
- Broccoli
- Celery with low-fat cream cheese

## Dairy Products

- Cheese kabobs (cheese cubes threaded on thin pretzel stick)
- Yogurt
- Low-fat string cheese
- Yogurt parfaits

## Beverages

- Bottled water
- Pitchers of water - May be cheaper and easier
- Smoothies (Healthy "milkshakes" made from fruit)
- 100% fruit juices
- Paradise pop
- Punch made with mostly 100% fruit juice
- Single serve, low-fat milk (regular or flavored)

## Fruits

- Fresh Fruits
- Apple or orange wedges
- Pineapple (canned or fresh)
- Fruit salad
- Blueberries
- Kiwi
- Dried apricots
- Plums
- Grapes
- Fruit skewers
- Watermelon fruit basket (hollow out watermelon and fill with chopped fruit)

# Fun Alternatives to Food Rewards

Food rewards can be an easy way to bring about an immediate behavior change in students.

So

why change a reward system that seems to work? Rewarding children with food can contribute

to health problems such as obesity, diabetes, and hypertension. It also interferes with teaching

children to eat in response to hunger and fullness cues. Giving donuts and soft drinks to students may seem like a harmless treat for a job well done. But rewarding children with unhealthy food can develop habits that stay with children throughout their school careers...and their lives.

**Listed below are some fun alternatives to using food as a reward.**

## **Elementary School Students**

Trips to a treasure box filled with nonfood items such as stickers, play tattoos, bubbles, jump ropes, puzzles, key chains, yo-yo's, spider rings, charms, trading cards, pencil toppers, coupons for extra credit, etc

- Bank system (earn play money to be used for privileges)
- Play favorite game
- Extra recess
- Make deliveries to office
- Sit by friends
- Help teach class

- Eat lunch with teacher
- School supplies
- Show-and-tell
- Paperback book

## **Middle School Students**

- Sit by friends
- Listen to music while working at desk
- Reduced homework or give a homework pass
- Eat lunch outside or have class outside
- Computer time
- Hat break (permission to wear a hat in class)
- Field trips
- Assemblies
- Extra reading time
- Free time at end of class

# **FOOD-FREE HOLIDAY CELEBRATION IDEAS**

## **General activities to recognize children**

- The key is to recognize their efforts.
- Celebrate with physical activity - allow them an extra recess or gym class.
- Have the children design, build, and run an obstacle course.
- Celebrate with art and music - have an art party. Divide the classroom into 4 stations and at each station have a craft activity. Play music in the background.
- Have a staged sleep-over - children bring in sleeping bags/pillows and lie on the floor telling ghost stories.

## **Birthday Parties**

- There are many ways of making the birthday child feel special:
- Single them out with a "V.I.P." button/badge or crown
- Have the birthday child be the first to do each classroom activity and/or be the line leader for the day.
- Book Donation - A great way to build up the classroom library and recognize the child. Have the child's family donate a book and inside label it "This book was donated to Mrs. Smith's classroom in honor of John Jones'

8th

birthday"

- Sing the birthday song!

## Christmas, Hanukah, Kwanzaa

These holidays provides the opportunity to focus on community outreach. Instead of throwing a party, have each class pool its efforts in honor of a worthy cause. Examples include:

- decorating pillowcases to give to a homeless shelter,
- making holiday cards for a nursing home,

## Easter

Decorate plastic or rubber eggs with paints, stickers and glitter. The Easter Bunny can hide small toys or coins inside plastic eggs for hunting. Easter baskets can be filled with books, legos, art supplies or washable stuffed animals, or other smaller trinkets available on line.

## Halloween

- There's more to Halloween than just candy. Focus the students on wearing their costumes. Make Halloween into a drama day where kids get to make their own costumes or masks and write and act out their own plays.
- Explore the history and legends behind Halloween.

## St. Patrick's

Teach an Irish step dance.

## Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving is about giving thanks for what we have and for the people we have in our lives. Have students share what they are thankful for by writing a poem, drawing a picture, or telling a story.

## Valentine's Day

- Have students write down one positive comment about each classmate, e.g., "you're a good friend, you have a nice smile, or you're smart" and pass them out for valentines.
- Have them write poems and read them aloud to the class. Vote on the best one and have a Valentine's Day assembly showcasing each classroom winner.

# Theme Party Snack Ideas

\*Recipe provided

## Halloween

- Roasted Pumpkin Seeds
- Pumpkin Bread Muffins
- Halloween Brew\*
- Abracadabra Wands\*

## Harvest or Thanksgiving

- Nut & Dried Fruit Trail Mix
- Lemon-Chili Veggies\*
- Corn Bead

## Winter Holidays

- Popcorn mixed with Red and Green Candies & Peanuts
- Apple Wedges Dipped in Caramel
- Cereal Holiday Trees\*

## Valentine's Day

- Angel Food Cake with Fresh Strawberries Topped with Whipped Topping
- Fresh Fudgy Fruit
- Cherry tomato Fillers\*

## Spring

- Sparkling Grapes\*
- Fruit Salad with Yogurt dip

## End of the Year or summer

- Bananas Splits\*
- Fresh Fruit Kabobs
- Veggie Sticks with Lowfat or Nonfat dip
- Hooray for the Red, White, and Blue!\*

## More ideas

- 3-minute fruit salad
- Fruit pizza
- Veggie pizza
- Mini pizzas on English muffins
- Mini sandwiches
- Rolled sandwiches cut into small circles
- Orange slurpies
- Fruit and veggie trays
- Crackers & Peanut Butter
- Baked Chips & Salsa
- Fresh Fruit (topped with yogurt dip or peanut butter)
- Veggie Sticks (dunked in lowfat dip)

# Theme Party Recipes

(All recipes serve 32 students)

## Abracadabra Wands (serving size: 2 sticks)

### Ingredients:

10 red apples, cut into 64 chunks  
5 cups red grapes  
8 oz. nonfat or lowfat cheddar cheese, cut 64 chunks  
2 avocados, cut into 64 chunks  
64 long, thin pretzel (or wooden) sticks (about 3 inches long)

### Preparation (20 minutes):

1. Use a wooden skewer to poke holes in center of each piece of food.
2. Thread pieces onto pretzel stick.
3. Serve leftover pieces of fruit.

## Halloween Brew

### Ingredients:

1 gallon cranberry juice  
1 gallon apple cider  
12 oz. frozen orange juice, unprepared

### Preparation (5 minutes):

1. Mix all ingredients together in large pitcher

## Lemon-Chili Veggies

1. Chop any favorite veggies (try cucumber and jicama) into chunks.
2. Squeeze fresh lemon juice onto each piece.
3. And lightly sprinkle with chili powder and salt.

## Cereal Holiday Trees

### Ingredients:

16 cups Oat "O" type cereal (e.g. Cheerios)  
12 cups mini marshmallows  
8 tablespoons butter

2 teaspoons green food coloring  
2 teaspoons vanilla

### Preparation (10 minutes):

1. Prior to class, melt butter and marshmallows in saucepan, & add food coloring. Add cereal.
2. Have students mold the mixture into a triangle tree shape.

## Cherry Tomato Fillers (serving size: 2 tomatoes)

### Ingredients:

64 (large) cherry tomatoes,  
1 1/2 cups low-fat cottage cheese  
1 cup sunflower seeds

### Preparation (15 minutes):

1. Cut tops and scoop seeds and the pulp out of each tomato.
2. Fill with 1 teaspoons of cottage cheese.
3. Sprinkle with sunflower seeds.

## Fresh Fudgy Fruit (serving size: 1/2 banana & 1 strawberry)

### Ingredients:

16 bananas, peeled, cut in half  
5 cups lowfat granola  
32 strawberries, tops removed,  
64 wooden craft sticks  
3 cups light hot fudge at room temp.

### Preparation (15 minutes):

1. Insert wooden stick into the cut end of each fruit.
2. Place granola into plastic bag and use a spoon to crush the granola, and place in shallow bowl.
3. Pour fudge into shallow bowl.
4. Place fruit in fudge and spread the sauce around.
5. Place fruit on top of the granola. Turn to coat lightly.

## Sparkling Grapes (serving size: 2 glittery grape clusters)

### Ingredients:

- 3-3 oz. packages of gelatin
- 1 1/2 cups boiling water
- 64 small clusters grapes
- 1 1/2 cups ice cubes

### Preparation (15 minutes):

1. Pour gelatin powder into measuring cup. Pour half of the powder into a bowl and place the other half on the side.  
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2. Add boiling water to the bowl of gelatin. Stir until powder is dissolved. Add ice cubes and stir until ice melts.
3. Dip grape clusters in liquid gelatin mixture & shake off excess.
4. Sprinkle extra powder over grapes and serve.

## Mini Banana Splits

### Ingredients:

- 16 small bananas, peeled
- 16 cups lowfat vanilla yogurt
- 8 cups fresh berries
- 2 cups lowfat granola

### Preparation:

1. Cut banana in half, share between 2 students.
2. Scoop a  $\frac{1}{2}$  of cup of yogurt onto banana.
3. Top with berries and granola.

## Hooray for the Red, White, and Blue!

### Ingredients:

- 5 baskets of strawberries (about 64 strawberries)
- 4 containers of blueberries
- 1-12 oz. container of lowfat whipped topping

### Preparation (10 minutes):

1. Wash fruit. Remove tops from the strawberries.
2. In small cup, place 2 strawberries, a dollop of whipped topping and sprinkle with about 5 blueberries

## Some Important Tips for Parents and Teachers

Classroom parties can be fun and healthy. Here are some tips to help plan a healthy and safe party.

### Safety Tips:

- Remember to follow these 4 steps for serving safe food:
- Clean (wash hands and food-contact surfaces).
- Chill (refrigerate promptly).
- Cook (cook foods to proper temperatures).
- Separate (be aware of and avoid potentials for cross-contamination).
- Be familiar with the most common food allergens:
- Eight foods account for 90% of food-allergic reactions: milk, egg, peanut, tree nuts (walnuts, cashews, etc.), fish, shellfish, soy, and wheat.
- The most common food allergens for children are eggs, milk, and peanuts.
- If you are planning a party for young children, be aware of foods that are potential choking hazards for that age group. Things such as whole grapes, sliced hot dogs, hard candies, or other items that are small enough to lodge in a child's throat.