

# Hogtown HomeGrown

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## What's in your lunchbox today?

Once they started kindergarten, our children made their own lunches. For our oldest, this meant whole wheat bread with swiss cheese and mustard (eaten as if it were a food group), carrots, fruit and a drink. Our middle son liked bagels, salad and leftovers (sandwiches were too soggy). Our youngest has a microwave available, so individual burritos are his favorite, but hummus wraps with feta are great too!

Why did they have to make their own lunch? No, I'm not mean or lazy—face it, sometimes it would have been easier to just fix the lunches myself. We had them make their own because they could, because they would eat what they made and because independence is more important than a perfect lunch. The oldest helped the youngest during the latter's first few months of kindergarten and now we have three sons who can plan, shop and cook their own meals.

Stock your kitchen with healthy choices in order to make lunch in a snap, avoid cafeteria calories, and save lots of money. Think about how much money you can save if you pack a lunch at the same time! Make a batch of hummus or tofu salad that everyone can use as dips or sandwich filling for all week. Take a little time to bag up some veggies and fruit so they are easy to grab. Provide bread, protein, fruit and veggie choices, along with 100% fruit juices or water to go! Leftovers can be safely transported in a cooled or heated thermos and if they have access to a microwave, anything goes!

### Lunchbox Pantry

Protein Ideas

Nuts, nut butters, hummus, boiled eggs, cheese, cooked beans, tofu, tempeh

Breads of All Kinds

Whole wheat pita, bread, tortilla-type wraps, crackers, breadsticks, bagels

Traveling Veggies

Carrots, celery, sugar snap peas, grape tomatoes, broccoli florets, sweet peppers (try low-fat dressing or yogurt as a dip)

Fruit to Go

Oranges, tangerines, apples, pears, bananas, grapes, raisins, dried fruit, fruit-juice sweetened jams

### Lunchbox Combos

*As you and your children put lunch together, remember there are no rules—pack what you like! Yes, children will sometimes get in a rut—eating the same lunch everyday—just make sure it's made from healthy choices!*

- Hummus, pita, feta cheese, leftover salad
- Wrap, peanut butter, banana, honey
- Hummus, veggies, breadsticks
- Apple slices, nuts/nut butter, dried fruit
- Bread, cheddar cheese, jam/marmalade
- Wrap, cooked beans, cheese, salad, salsa
- Bagel, peanut butter or hummus
- Veggies with dip, boiled egg, crackers
- Bread, cheese, sliced apple or pear
- Pita or wrap, tofu salad
- Celery, peanut butter, raisins

# It's Local, It's Fresh, It's Florida Pears

## Tricks and Tips

Florida Pears are good raw and these combinations make a quick lunch or snack.

Slice pears about 1/8" thick—peeling is optional. Sandwich pear slices with one of the following items:

- Sliced Havarti
- Almond Butter
- Sliced Almonds

In the first issue of Hogtown HomeGrown (last November), this spot featured Florida Pears, so I feel like we have come full circle. I was first introduced to Florida Pears by a kindly neighbor, Mrs. Hazen, whose yard behind our house had a huge pear tree with limbs dragging the ground, filled with heavy fruit. Back then, I tried baking them (see the November 2006 issue for that recipe), eating them raw and even made a pint or two of Pear Butter (I won a 4th Place ribbon at the fair in the early '80s) But, alas, the season's too short....

This year, our son came home with 25 pears, with promises of as many more as I wanted. It was time to try my hand at Pear Butter again. Recipes vary, but I like mine to be reminiscent of apple butter. For the first time ever, I attempted jelly—it was so easy, that I highly recommend it. My next batch of pear butter had orange juice instead of lemon and nutmeg instead of cinnamon—another yummy treat to enjoy sometime next year when we pop open a jar! There are still more pears on the counter—where is that recipe for pear chutney?

## What's Fresh Right Now?

## Pear Jelly and Butter

### Chestnuts

It's chestnut season.

Sweet and nutty, these low-fat tasty morsels are not just for roasting over an open fire—they can be roasted or boiled and used in stir-fries or desserts!

### Roasted Chestnuts

To roast, cut an "X" into the outer skin, bake on a cookie sheet for 20-30 minutes in a 350 degree oven. The skins will curl and the meat will be golden. Peel while warm and enjoy as is or use in recipes.

Chestnuts

Cucumbers—hydroponic

Eggplant—Italian

Greens—mustard, spinach

Honey—Gallberry, Orange Blossom, Tupelo, Wildflower

Lettuce—green leaf

Okra

Peppers—jalapeno, banana, green and red sweet Bell

Persimmons—Fuyu (non-astringent)

Potatoes—sweet potatoes

Squash—yellow summer, zucchini, calabasa

Tomatoes—beefsteak, grape, roma

Sunflowers

Plants—bedding flowers, native trees, bushes and flowering plants, caladium, marigolds, Asiatic lilies, begonias, herbs, snapdragons

### INGREDIENTS

25 small pears, cored and chopped

4 cups sugar (divided)

1/2 cup lemon juice (divided)

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1 package no sugar pectin

### DIRECTIONS

Place pears in large saucepan, almost cover with water, cook until pears are tender. To make the jelly, pour off and strain 4 cups of juice. In another saucepan, mix pear juice with 1/2 cup lemon juice, whisk in pectin, bring to boil. Stirring constantly, add 3 cups sugar, bring to rolling boil for one minute. Fill, seal and process jars for 10 minutes.

To make the butter, puree pear pulp in food processor, return to pan, add lemon juice, cinnamon, 1 cup sugar. Allow to cook over low heat for 8-10 hours— you can put it in a slow cooker overnight. Fill, seal and process jars for 10 minutes.

## Sweet and Savory Simmered Tofu

### INGREDIENTS

1 Tablespoon olive oil	1/8 teaspoon cayenne (or more)
1 large sweet onion, diced	1/3 cup raisins
2 large cloves garlic, smashed and chopped	1/2 cup red wine
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon	1 can (28 oz.) diced tomatoes (fire-roasted)
1/4 teaspoon ground cloves	2 tubs (14 oz. each) extra firm tofu, cubed
1/2 teaspoon ground cumin	2 Tablespoons red wine vinegar
	1 teaspoon raw sugar

### DIRECTIONS

Sauté onion in olive oil until translucent. Add garlic and spices. Stir over medium heat until everything is fragrant and just starting to stick to the pan—about 3-5 minutes. Mix in raisins, add red wine and let it sizzle for a couple of minutes, then stir in tomatoes and tofu. Stir carefully so the tofu does not break up. Partially cover, turn heat to low and let simmer at least 30 minutes, but no longer than 60 minutes (it will dry out after that), stirring occasionally. About 10 minutes before serving, add vinegar and sugar, stir well and continue to simmer until ready to serve.

### **Tricks and Tips**

Serve this over yellow rice—the colors and flavors really complement each other. I find the time-saving commercial yellow rice mixes too salty, but if you add a teaspoon of sugar to the cooking water, the salty taste is reduced (but not the sodium content.)

## Salad Your Kids Will Eat

### INGREDIENTS

5 ounces mixed salad greens  
2 carrots, shredded  
2 small apples, shredded  
1 orange, juiced and zested  
2 ribs celery, chopped  
1/2 cup walnuts  
1/2 cup raisins (try mixed jumbo raisins)  
1/2 cup dried cranberries  
1/4-1/2 cup Newman's Light Raspberry Walnut Vinaigrette (or another sweet dressing)

### DIRECTIONS

Place greens in a large serving bowl. Mix shredded carrots and apples with orange juice and zest. Toss mixture with salad greens. Add celery, walnuts, raisins and cranberries—mix well. Serve dressing on the side, to taste. Leftovers can be refrigerated without dressing for one day, so save some for the next day's lunch.

### **Tricks and Tips**

I grew up eating salad as the first course, but my husband likes his salad last, so just recently I tried eating my salad after my entrée. Not only do I fill up on veggies instead of seconds, a sweet salad like this one will quell my desire for dessert.

# Hogtown HomeGrown

Local and Seasonal Recipes, Menus and More

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## Tricks and Tips

This is the way we like hummus—yes, we use 5 cloves of garlic and occasionally I'll add a few drops of Tabasco. I have also added a can of artichoke hearts—it made the hummus lighter with a wonderful artichoke flavor

## Lemon Garlic Hummus

### INGREDIENTS

3 cans (15 oz.) garbanzo beans, drained (I prefer Hanover—better taste, less salt)  
2-5 cloves of garlic  
1/2 cup tahini  
1/2 cup fresh lemon juice  
1 Tablespoon fresh lemon zest  
1/2 cup cold water  
1/8 teaspoon ground black pepper OR cayenne pepper (optional)

### DIRECTIONS

In a food processor, grind beans and garlic until chopped well. Add tahini, lemon juice and zest (and optional pepper) and process until smooth, adding water as needed to make a smooth puree. Scrape into serving or storage container. Can be refrigerated up to one week.