

### ***Thinking outside the bag: New spin on brown-bagging it***

Bringing your lunch to work gives you full ownership over what goes into your meal and into your body. This is especially important if you have allergies, or conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, high cholesterol, or high blood pressure where mindful food choices are particularly important. It can also save you money, even if you are packing your lunch a couple days a week.

Brown-bagging it doesn't have to be boring or take a lot of time. Check out the ideas and tips below to make your brown bag lunch something you will really look forward to at lunch time!

- **Think ahead:** Preparing your lunches the night before can save you from that morning rush! Consider *planning* for leftovers so you have extra for lunches. Soups, stews, and grilling extra meats for sandwiches, wraps, or salads are a great way to cook once and use in multiple ways. Getting into a habit of thinking ahead about lunches will not only make the process quicker and easier, but will allow you to think more creatively about packing some healthy and delicious lunches for the work week!  
<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/08/28/dining/bring-your-lunch-to-work.html? r=0>
- **Take it outside:** Taking your lunch outside on a nice day allows for a break from pinging email notices and ringing phones, and gives you the opportunity to practice mindfulness techniques and recharge for the second half of your day.  
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/in-practice/201302/6-mindfulness-exercises-each-take-less-1-minute>
- **Show me the money!** Bagged lunches can be more cost effective compared to store bought and café lunches. Purchasing all the fixings for your salad may cost you a bit more initially, but results in extra ingredients for more than one salad (providing for multiple days/lunches), snacks, or dinner. This avoids both wasted money and food!

Some cool ideas to keep your lunch fun and interesting. Here are a few brown bag lunch ideas to get you started:

<http://www.familycircle.com/recipes/healthy-eating/lunch/healthy-brown-bag-lunches-under-500-calories/>

<http://www.bhg.com/recipes/lunch/healthy-lunch-ideas-brown-bag-recipes/>

**Enjoy!**