



Healthy Lunch Box Challenge

October 2012

The last month has been a busy period for the Little Cooks Club, leaving less time to think of ideas for the morning ritual, never mind healthy ones. I launched my book, the *Timeless Family Food Journal*, and it really came in handy for just this purpose.

Not only does it have these exact ideas for you in Chapter 4, but the whole book is designed to be interactive: there is a place for you to paste a photo of your child's first day of school, rate my recipes for future reference, and add your own ideas and notes. If your days are spent ferrying busy, active children around to wonderful summer sports, try our Easy Weeknight Dinners, cook a bit extra and pack that into the lunch box, too. (Freeze and pack a week later for the fussy eater.)

My journal also provides easy info on nutrition, tips for feeding the family, from baby food to sore tummies, cupboard 'must haves', camping checklists, and more. It is a great gift idea that we hope will stay in the family for generations, so direct dads to the website: www.tffj.co.za.

FROM THE *TIMELESS FAMILY FOOD JOURNAL*

Chapter 4, "Snacks and Lunch Box Ideas"

A lovely idea for a summer's evening or weekend snack; prepare before and keep some for the lunch box.

Healthy Crystal Spring Rolls

- ½ packet Vermicelli
- ½ cabbage, sliced
- 2 carrots, cut into thin strips
- 1 bunch spring onions
- 2 courgettes, cut into thin strips
- ½ packet baby spinach
- ½ bunch fresh coriander

Salt and pepper

15 sheets of rice paper (can be bought at any Chinese Shop)

Sweet chilli sauce

Soy sauce

- Prepare the vermicelli as per the manufacturer's instructions.
- Lightly saute' the vermicelli, cabbage, carrots, spring onions, courgettes, baby spinach and coriander in a knob of butter for 2 minutes.
- Add salt and pepper to taste.
- Place the rice paper into warm water for 10 seconds to soften.
- Lay the soft rice paper on a flat surface.
- Place a small amount of vermicelli on the rice paper and then some of the veggie mixture.
- Roll up into a spring roll.
- Place some sweet chilli sauce and soy sauce into small containers as a dipping sauce.
- Wrap the spring rolls in clingfilm before placing them in a lunch box.

Chapter 5, "Easy Weeknight Dinners"

After a busy day this is a quick dinner idea that can also distract weary young minds. They are also delicious cold for lunch, with or without sauce.

Carrot and Apple Meatballs in a Marinara Sauce

(Keep without the sauce for lunch boxes and provide as a dip for fun.)

1 onion, grated

2 cloves garlic, crushed

2 apples, grated

1 large carrot, grated

500g extra-lean minced beef

1 tsp dried oregano

1 tsp dried thyme (or fresh if you have)

1 tsp fresh or dried parsley

3 slices of bread soaked in a little milk

1 extra large egg

Salt and pepper

- Place all the ingredients in a large bowl and mix them together with your hands.
- Form the mixture into balls.
- Fry the meatballs in a little oil and pour over some Marinara sauce.

**Allow your kids to help you mix the meatballs – they love to get their hands dirty*

Marinara Sauce

1 tin tomato puree
1 tin chopped tomatoes
1 onion, sliced and sautéed
½ cup water
2 tsp sugar
1 tsp soy sauce
Salt and pepper
1 tsp dried marjoram
1 tsp thyme

- Simmer all the ingredients together on the stove in a small saucepan for 10 minutes.
- Serve with the meatballs and pasta or mashed potatoes.

Warm regards,
Christine Phillips

headoffice@littlecooksclub.co.za (for anything you want to share)