



**WASTE-FREE LUNCHES ENCOURAGED TO  
CELEBRATE USE LESS STUFF WEEK  
(Earth Day Week of April 22) &  
AMERICA RECYCLES DAY (Nov. 15)**

It has been estimated that on average a single school-age child generates 67 pounds of lunchtime waste per school year, or 18,760 pounds of lunch waste for one average-size elementary school. Every single piece of packaging or excess food that we eliminate from the waste stream makes a difference. Let's do our part!

In an effort to reduce waste (and save parents money) at our April event, we would like to encourage students to bring a waste-free lunch. Here are a few suggestions for making it work, not just for this event but anytime:

- ?? Pack lunches the night before and store them in the refrigerator overnight.
- ?? Maximize leftovers. Prepare extra servings at dinnertime for the next day's lunches. Pack the leftovers in lunchboxes in the evening when you're doing your regular dinner clean up.
- ?? Keep fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and other nutritious foods on hand.
- ?? Keep nuts and dried fruit on hand for emergencies.
- ?? Buy from bulk bins to reduce your costs.
- ?? Consider purchasing a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) share, joining the Oklahoma Food Cooperative or shop at the local farmers' market.
- ?? Write your name on all your containers before you leave the house.

TIPS ON WHAT TO PACK IN A WASTE-FREE LUNCH	
YES - COMPOSTABLE	YES - RECYCLABLE
paper napkins	EMPTY plastic #1 & #2 drink bottle
cereal boxes	EMPTY glass drink bottles
corncobs	EMPTY aluminum or "tin" cans
fruit & veggies (stems, cores, skin)	brown paper sacks & corrugated cardboard
coffee & tea grounds/bags	
bread/grain scraps	<b>NO!! NOT RECYCLABLE</b>
containers/utensils made of corn	juice boxes or pouches
<b>NO!! NOT COMPOSTABLE</b>	plastic sandwich wrap or bags
dairy products	plastic trays
meat, fish or bones	plastic eating utensils
grease, oil or fats	disposables
Styrofoam or corrugated cardboard	individual serving packages
<b>YES!! PACKAGING IDEAS</b>	ziploc bags
reusable lunch boxes or bags	lunchables (eek!)
reusable plastic containers	
refillable drink bottles	

A waste-free lunch means that you have no packaging to throw away when you're done -- nothing other than apple cores, banana and orange peels, peach or cherry pits to toss in the compost and aluminum or plastic cans or bottles to recycle. The best way to reduce garbage is to stop making it. Every item in the lunch should

<b>ALUMINUM AND TIN CANS</b>	In the time it takes you to read this sentence, more than 50,000 12-oz. aluminum cans were made
	Most inorganic trash retains its weight, volume, and form for at least four decades

be eaten, reused, recycled or composted . . . there should be **ZERO WASTE** when finished.

Set a good example by packing a waste-free lunch every day. It's easy once you make it part of your daily routine.

**Save money with waste-free lunches.**

Packing a waste-free lunch not only reduces landfill waste, but it costs less too. A prepackaged lunch costs about \$4.02 a day or \$723.60 per school year compared to \$2.65 a day (\$477.00 per school year) for a waste-free lunch-a difference of \$246.60 per person per year. And adults can save even more. In fact, an adult can save an estimated \$100,000 over a 30-year career by packing lunch from home. (This assumes a cost of \$3.50 for a home-packed lunch compared to \$6 for a takeout meal.)

**Help your school save money.**

Finally, waste-free lunch programs help schools reduce waste hauling fees by reducing the amount of trash they send to the landfill. If every American child attending a public elementary school packed a waste-free lunch, 1.2 billion pounds of lunch waste would be diverted from landfills each year. The money saved could be spent on educational programs instead. Landfills would last longer, and children would learn the importance of protecting the planet. So, if you're doing lunch this school year, make sure it's waste-free!

