



Healthy eating strategies for summer family fun

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During the summer months, families tend to be more on the go, whether it be day trips, vacations, picnics or family activities, and it can be tempting to gravitate toward the more fast-food or quick-fix options. Unfortunately, these types of foods tend to be lacking in nutrients and are laden with sugar, fat and sodium, which are detrimental to your health and that of your family.

I'm not saying to eliminate ice cream altogether—I have two young boys (6 and 2 years), and they would be devastated if I said no to their daily ice cream or S'mores at the cottage—but it is important to include the healthy food too.

It's easier to keep on top of healthy eating when you are in a school or work routine, but the planning doesn't have to stop just because it is summer. Planning is the key to healthy eating regardless of the time of year. Most of us know what we're doing the next day or week ahead, so plan for it as best you can.

Whether you're camping for a week or just out for the day, pack your cooler with lots of healthy food and snacks so you are never stuck without any healthy food options.

- Fresh and dried fruit can satisfy a sweet tooth without all the unnatural ingredients
- Raw veggies with a dip made with Greek yogurt or some hummus to add some protein.
- Whole grain crackers such as Mary's Organic or Blue Diamond Nut Thins and add some mini Babybel for a cheese fix
- Granola/energy bars are great as long as they are made with whole grains, nuts and dried fruit. Lara, Kind, Simply Protein and Made Good bars are some of my favourites. See my recipe below for my favourite home-made bars.
- Water is super important to keep you and your kids hydrated in the warmer months but I know it can be a struggle sometimes convincing them to drink it. Try adding a splash of juice to bottles of water and freezing them overnight or making fruity iced teas to give them a sweet taste.

Granola Bars

- 1 ¾ cups old fashioned rolled oats
- ¼ cup raw sunflower seeds, unsalted
- ½ cup raw pumpkin seeds
- ½ cup light spelt flour
- ½ tsp. baking powder
- ¼ tsp. sea salt
- ½ tsp. cinnamon
- ¼ tsp sea salt
- Dash of nutmeg
- ½ cup coconut oil
- ¼ cup sucanat or coconut sugar
- ¼ cup real maple syrup
- 1 large egg
- 1 tsp. pure vanilla extract
- ½ cup dried cranberries

Preheat oven to 350 F. Line an 8-inch square baking dish with parchment paper leaving enough over hang to use as handles when lifting granola bars out of dish. Spread the oats, seeds and nuts on a baking sheet and bake until they are lightly toasted. This should take about 10 minutes – stir every 2-3 minutes to avoid burning. Allow mixture to cool completely.

In a small mixing bowl, mix the flour, baking powder, sea salt, cinnamon & nutmeg. In a large bowl combine coconut oil, sugar, maple syrup, egg and vanilla. Stir in the flour mixture and then the oat mixture. Do not over mix. Lastly, add in dried cranberries. Bake for 30 minutes. Once cool, lift the bars out of pan using parchment paper edges. Place onto a cutting board and cut into desired size. I like using a pizza cutter wheel. Enjoy!

Melanie Grime is a nutritionist, wife and mom to two young boys. Becoming a mom took her interest in whole foods to new heights. She has the life experience to supplement her educational and career knowledge. She has always been passionate about food, and has experienced tremendous personal transformation using nutrition and lifestyle changes. Her continually evolving journey takes her to new places every day.

Her desire is to share her experience and knowledge to guide you to make the best choices for yourself, your children, and your family on the road to optimal health.

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