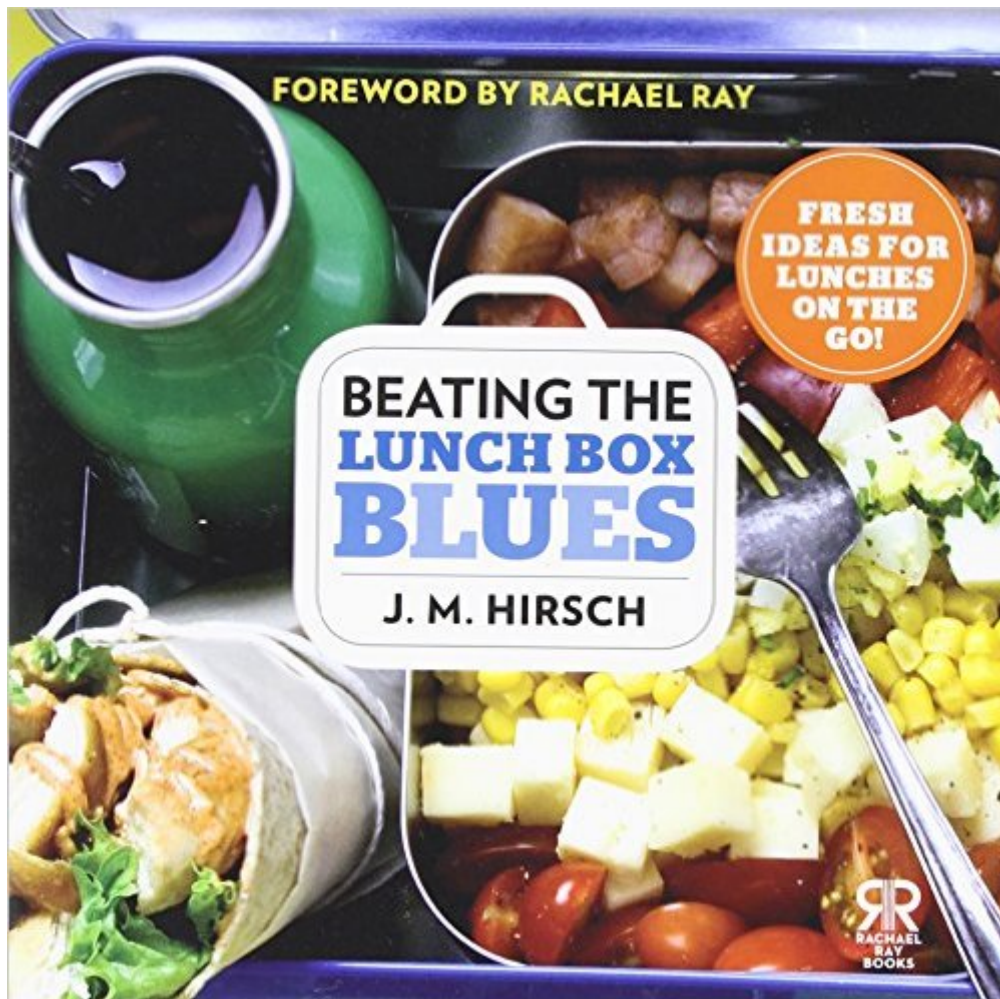


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# Beating The Lunch Box Blues: Fresh Ideas For Lunches On The Go! (Rachael Ray Books)



## Synopsis

Longing for more than yet another limp salad? Tired of tussling with the kids over junk food lunch kits? Sounds like you've got the lunch box blues. J. M. Hirsch has the fix. But it isn't a cookbook. Because when it comes to lunch, nobody has time to break out a recipe to bang out a brown bag special. Busy people need lunch ideas. Lots of them. And those ideas need to be healthy, fast, easy, affordable, and delicious. That's what *Beating the Lunch Box Blues* is: an idea book to inspire anyone daunted by the daily ordeal of packing lunch. Jammed with nearly 200 photos and more than 500 tips and meals, this book is designed to save families time, money, and their sanity. Whether you want to jazz up a grilled cheese, turn leftover steak into a DIY taco kit, or make pizza à la sushi, Hirsch has it covered. And because the best lunches often are built from the leftovers of great suppers, he has also included 30 fast and flavorful dinner recipes designed to make enough for tomorrow, too. Crazy good stuff like short ribs braised in a Rosemary-Port Sauce, Hoisin-Glazed Meatloaf, and kid-friendly classics such as Turkey Sloppy Joes and American Chop Suey. With ideas this easy and this delicious, there's no reason to let the lunch box blues get you down.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This is not a traditional cookbook. Though it does have some recipes in it, most of the book is made up of gorgeous photos and clever ideas. As Hirsch notes, most people don't want to cook elaborate

recipes in the mornings to take or send in a lunch box. Instead people assemble lunches. This book is packed with novel, clever, fun ideas that can be combined in endless combinations to make a delicious lunch. The book is divided into a dozen or so sections. There are the expected lists of packing tips, suggested lunch gear, and pantry staples along with ideas for basics like chicken, seafood, and beef. But there are also whole categories that are terrifically creative and fresh. Breakfast for lunch? He suggests 14 different ideas -- most of which I've never seen before. In a salad rut? There are a dozen ideas for turning your favorite deli sandwiches into a creative salad. He also includes 30 easy dinner recipes and accompanies each with two ideas for turning the leftovers into a new lunch the next day. Killing two birds with one stone is A-OK with me. If you're a parent looking to make the morning lunch packing routine go a little faster you should note that this is not a book filled entirely with "kid food". My boys are fairly adventurous eaters, but a lot of the recipes in this book would be a really tough sell with them. I would eat most of them happily. My kids? Not so much. Still, there are plenty of ideas for food that I think they would like, including: pizza sushi, peanut butter and pretzel sandwiches, and apples sauteed with brown sugar and butter and packed into a thermos to be eaten with freezer waffles. Yum!

I had to put the book down after one third of it because my brain was going a mile a minute with the insane amount of inspiration that was crammed on every page! This is everything I have been looking for to make non-fussy adult lunches. I already take my own lunches to work at least three days out of the week, and I'm super excited to apply all the fantastic ideas that I've gleaned from this book. I just can't put into words how gorgeous the photos are, how inventive the flavor combos are, or how absolutely SIMPLE it all is to put together! I just wish there were little notes on where to get all the little containers, like the ones used for salad dressings, but that is more of a personal fixation with cute vessels and not a real complaint :)

This is a fun book of ideas and a few recipes for getting out of the lunch box rut. With suggestions that adults and kids alike will enjoy, it is filled with beautiful color photographs which is always a plus for a book about food. What I like about this little book is the focus on fresh ingredients and the inspiration for creating unique lunches I might not have thought about beyond last night's leftovers or throwing together a sandwich. Those make fine lunches but sometimes those who pack one every day want something different. It isn't that we really need a book to get us to think of new ideas on our own, but the suggestions in this one can lead to even more as we work with what is in the fridge or pantry. The book includes suggestions for making things like yogurt and even oatmeal a

main meal with nutritious additions, ideas for sandwich wraps and salads, turning the convenience of already prepared food from the deli or a restaurant into balanced lunches, making kids' meals more appealing so they actually eat them, and suggestions for the types of portable containers that are best for keeping lunches fresh and mess-free. One section of the book has recipes for family dinners that can become the foundation for a packed lunch the next day with a few additions, as well as recipes that can be made ahead and frozen for quick lunches. I also liked the suggestion to consider having certain foods cold that we would normally have heated such as an English muffin pizza with a little sauce and slices of Canadian bacon and cheese. While most of the focus is on budget and convenience, a few of the recipes require more planning and might seem a little exotic for a packed lunch such as sushi or puffed pastry pinwheels, but most rely on readily available ingredients with easy preparation. I received a copy of this book for review from the publisher but the opinion of it is my own and was not solicited, nor was a positive review required.

This was not really what I was expecting - less of a cookbook and more of suggestions. While the photos are gorgeous, but I found the layout confusing and overwhelming at times (so much to see, not really sure where to look). I liked the idea of cooking dinner and using leftovers for lunch the next day - so practical and helpful. However, even after reading through the book several times, I am still not really clear what to make or where to start. Many of the suggestions made are for much older kids (perhaps even adults taking a lunch to work?). My kids are in elementary school and would definitely turn their noses up at "sourdough smeared with Brie and topped with a drippy hunk of honeycomb" or a "baguette + fresh goat cheese + prosciutto + a drizzle of honey." I also wonder about the packability about some of the suggestions - for example: waffle open-faced sandwich (which is a waffle with ricotta cheese topped with fresh fruit). I would imagine the waffle would be pretty soggy and I doubt the fruit would stay in place until lunch. A lot of the suggestions required multiple containers - like DIY nachos or crostini (toasted bread topped with cherry tomatoes) - and assembling at lunch. I know my kids have a fairly short lunch period, and not sure assembly is really feasible.

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