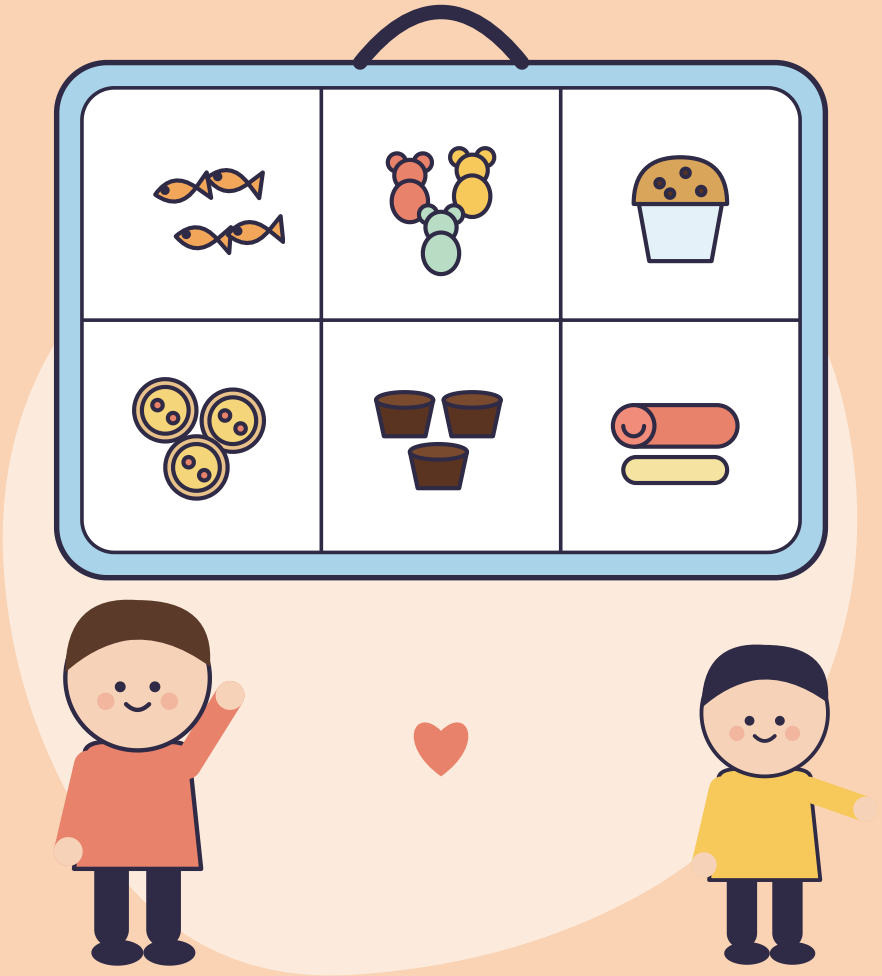


Make the snacks they already ask for

Better Than the Box

21 familiar kid snacks made at home, with simple ingredients, freezer notes, and shortcuts that make them doable.

For family snack time

Includes snack box combos and printable planners

A note before you begin

Welcome to the snack drawer makeover.

Kids love the snacks that come in crinkly bags and colorful boxes: the little fish crackers, the fruit snacks, the chewy granola bars. And honestly, so do we.

This book isn't about banning packaged snacks or making everything from scratch. It's about adding a few homemade favorites that feel just as fun, and are practical enough to make again.

You'll find 21 homemade versions of familiar favorites, from cheesy crackers to gummies to peanut butter cups. Each recipe shows the time, storage, approximate nutrition, and added sugar per serving, so choosing a first recipe is easy.

Start with one recipe, not all 21. If your family likes it, make a double batch and let it earn a regular place in your snack drawer or freezer.

Familiar favorites. Made your way.



Why homemade can help

Not because packaged snacks are forbidden, but because one homemade favorite gives you another useful option.

What the research says

67%

of calories eaten by US children and teens came from ultra-processed foods in 2018, up from 61% in 1999.

Wang and colleagues, JAMA, 2021

What the research says

12.9%

of children's calories came from packaged sweet snacks and treats alone, such as cakes and ice cream.

Wang and colleagues, JAMA, 2021

What the research says

Under 25 grams

of added sugar a day is the American Heart Association's recommendation for children aged 2 to 18. That's about 6 teaspoons. Children under 2 should have none.

Vos and colleagues, Circulation, 2016

What the research says

Start with one

Choose one recipe your child already recognizes. A repeatable win is more useful than a perfect snack drawer.

What this means for your week

Keep the packaged snacks. Add one homemade batch. If it disappears happily, make it again; if not, try another.

What's inside

1 **Smarter snacking** 7
Good snacks, sugar math, labels, and safety.

2 **Prep and storage** 15
Tools, batch baking, and storage.

3 **The recipes** 19
21 familiar homemade favorites.

4 **Snack plans** 41
Snack boxes, rotations, and parties.

\+ **Printables** 47
Snack menu and weekly planner.

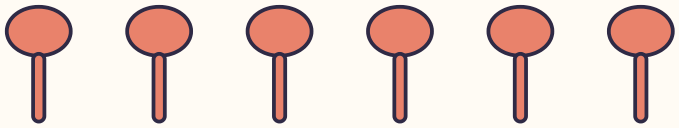
The recipes

20 Golden Cheddar Fish Crackers
21 Cheesy Square Crackers
22 Pizza Bagel Bites
23 Soft Pretzel Bites
24 Crispy Pita Chips
25 Crunchy Roasted Chickpeas
26 Fruit Snack Gummies
27 Fruit Roll-Ups
28 Chewy Chocolate Chip Granola Bars
29 Berry Toaster Pastries
30 Honey Bear Grahams
31 Animal Crackers
32 Peanut Butter Cups
33 Chocolate Hazelnut Spread
34 Oatmeal Cream Sandwiches
35 Yogurt Melts
36 Frozen Yogurt Bark
37 Smoothie Pops
38 Sealed PB&J Rounds
39 Banana Oat Mini Muffins
40 Baked Apple Chips

Part 1 5-min read

The sugar math

The American Heart Association recommends no more than 25 grams of added sugar a day for children ages 2 to 18, about 6 teaspoons. Children under 2 should avoid added sugar.



6 teaspoons, about 25 grams: a general daily reference for ages 2 to 18

Homemade snack	Added sugar per serving	Share of daily limit
Soft Pretzel Bites	1.5 g	6%
Fruit Snack Gummies	0 to 0.6 g	0 to 2%
Chewy Chocolate Chip Granola Bars	10.1 g	40%
Berry Toaster Pastries	3.0 g	12%
Honey Bear Grahams	8.7 g	35%
Animal Crackers	6.2 g	25%
Peanut Butter Cups	7.8 g	31%
Chocolate Hazelnut Spread	3.0 g	12%

What counts as added sugar

Honey, maple syrup, table sugar, and sweetened chocolate count. Sugars naturally present in whole fruit, plain milk, and 100% fruit juice are not listed as added sugar on U.S. labels.

Fruity and chewy

15 min + 1 hr set

Inspired by packaged fruit snacks

Fruit Snack Gummies

Bright, chewy gummies made with fruit juice and real fruit.



Makes	Calories	Protein	Fiber	Keeps
6	45	3.2 g	0.5 g	Fridge, 1 week

0 to 0.6 g added sugar — approximate per serving; brands and portions vary

Ingredients

1 cup (240 ml)
100% fruit juice

1/2 cup (120 g)
pureed strawberries or mango

3 tbsp (21 g)
unflavored gelatin

1 tbsp (21 g)
honey, optional

Method

1. Whisk the gelatin into the cold juice and let it bloom 5 minutes.
2. Warm gently, stirring until dissolved. Don't boil. Stir in the fruit and honey.
3. Pour into silicone molds and chill until set, about 1 hour.

Tip: Silicone bear molds make them look just like the store-bought kind.

Safety: Chewy gummies can be a choking hazard for young children. Cut into small pieces for little ones.

Honey note: Never give honey to babies under 12 months.