

How to feed two kids for under \$50

Now the kids are back at school many parents are battling to deliver a healthy, budget-friendly daily lunchbox.

Reporter **Sarah Harris** took on celebrity chef Michael van de Elzen at Countdown to see if they could fill lunch the boxes of two children, for five days, for under \$50. Feel Fresh Nutrition owner Abbie O'Rourke judged the results.

Michael's lunch plan

I was planning to make wraps for three days, pumpkin soup one day and vegetable rolls the last day. All the veges can be sliced and wrapped in lettuce to make vegetable rolls. I would make a dip out of beetroot and black beans to go through the wraps. A boiled egg, chicken rice rolls, chopped watermelon and kiwifruit would be there for snacks.

I would spend the leftover money on nuts and celery for snacks and salami for the wraps.

My daughter Hazel, 6, and Ivy, 4, get lunch boxes. And they always have a separate "brain food" box of snackable healthy, clean foods like nuts, tomatoes, celery and

carrots. We're shifting from sandwiches towards wraps and sushi to broaden their food experiences.

We don't let the kids influence us too much – but we watch what comes back. They clearly don't like something they always leave.

My top tips would be to buy seasonal, on special, write a list and avoid packaged food. Cook extra dinner to add to lunchboxes. Prepare food the night before. Study upon study says if you give your kids good food they're going to concentrate.

Abbie says

This deserves a standing ovation! Michael has created lunchbox meals predominantly vege-based, which is undoubtedly nutrient dense

and gives kids with plenty of fibre. I would swap the Homebrand wraps for homemade egg wraps. Due to our kiddies being more interested in playing than spending time eating, it's important to increase satiation by including protein, so they feel full even if they do not finish their meals. Michael has included incredibly nutrient dense protein: black beans, chicken, eggs and nuts. From an ethical standpoint I'd dedicate \$2-4 extra for free range eggs.

Children have short attention spans so I liked the idea of lots of little things to nibble on. The sandwich should fill an empty tummy and I chose grainy bread as it's low GI. The boiled egg and cheese sticks are a protein, vitamin and mineral hit, and quick to prepare, too. The nectarine and yoghurt are sweet treats to look forward to.

Abbie says:

Fantastic intentions, this lunchbox would be the envy of many with the CalciYum yoghurt. Nutritionally speaking, lettuce, nectarine and carrot are representing the entire fruit and vege food group. This could be increased by including cherry tomatoes, strawberries,



Sarah's lunch plan:

My lunch basket would have a ham, mayonnaise and lettuce sandwich, a boiled egg, carrot and cheese sticks, a nectarine and a CalciYum yoghurt for each lunch.

I don't have children so I haven't thought what to make for a kid's lunch. At school, I tried to eat as many soft white buns with pink icing as possible. Fortunately, I have matured and am an avid lunch maker for myself – it's healthy and saves you pennies.

roasted kumara or potato.

Each pottle of yoghurt contains nearly 2.5tsp of sugar. For an additional \$1.79, you could replace the yoghurt with 180 degrees oat crackers. These have a comparatively stronger nutritional profile, and less than ½ tsp of sugar per 5 crackers.

Bread, shaved ham, yoghurt and mayo are all processed foods, so best keep them to a minimum to avoid any additives that can interfere with little tumms.

Hummus is a great alternative to mayo, and bread should be more of an occasional rather than "every day" lunch – egg wraps or lettuce leaves are a fantastic alternative to wrapping up sandwich ingredients.



Michael van de Elzen

Watermelon 1.065g	3.18
Green kiwifruit	3.01
Homebrand wrap	2.90
Brown rice 500g	1.45
Sweetcorn 2	2.78
Popcorn 500g	3.00
Tinned black beans	1.80
Tinned beetroot	2.19
Pumpkin	3.00
Avocado	1.50
Shredded chicken	2.84
Cucumber	2.49
Carrot 0.827kg	3.30
Iceberg lettuce	1.99
Farmer Brown 10 eggs	4.99

TOTAL: \$38.63



Michael Van de Elzen with Sarah Harris in Countdown.

Doug Sherring



Reporter Sarah Harris

Free-range eggs 12	7.00
Soy/linseed bread 2	7.00
Mayonnaise	5.00
Colby cheese 250g	5.00
Shaved ham 200g 2	5.00
Iceberg lettuce	1.99
Nectarine 1.169kg:	7.00
Carrot 532g	2.12
CalciYum chocolate yoghurt	6.00

TOTAL: \$46.11