



It's Not a Sandwich without the BREAD

Don't Leave Home Without It!

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Did you know Americans eat more than a billion sandwiches every year? Yes, it's true. Americans love sandwiches -- they are not only convenient and taste great but they're also healthy! It's National Sandwich Month and a perfect time to celebrate the sandwich and all its wonderful attributes. From classics like PB&J and BLTs to the trendy grilled Panini's -- the sandwich has become a fixture on menus and in kitchens across America.

Invented by the fourth Earl of Sandwich, John Montagu, in 1762, the sandwich was born when the earl was too busy gambling to stop for a meal. According to legend, he asked for roast beef between two slices of bread so he could hold the snack in one hand and continue playing cards with the other. Soon after, the sandwich became a popular culinary trend in England and was widely considered to be restaurant fare.

While the sandwich quickly gained popularity in England, that wasn't the case in America. During the time, colonial cooks were hesitant to imitate British cuisine. In fact, it wasn't until the late nineteenth century the sandwich was widely adopted in the US. The sandwich became a popular way to repurpose supper leftovers. In 1930, sliced bread was introduced and the sandwich came into its own.

To this day, Americans still love their sandwiches! According to a survey commissioned by the Grain Foods Foundation and conducted by Harris Interactive®, nearly three-quarters (72%) of U.S. adults indicated they eat sandwiches at least once a week due to their convenience (82%) and taste (53%). In fact, one-third (33%) of Americans do not leave home without a sandwich -- they even take sandwiches along with them when they travel. In October 2006, the NPD Group reported the most popular dinner entrée at home is sandwiches.

Sandwiches are great because they can be made into many combinations, shapes and sizes and are perfect for on-the-go activities. They can be carried to work or school in a lunch box or just a brown paper bag. They can be eaten as breakfast, a midday meal, taken on picnics, hiking trips and other social outings -- and can be served as entrées at restaurants or eaten at home as a quick meal or as part of a larger meal.

However, you can't have a sandwich without the bread! All types of bread are essential to making great tasting sandwiches. Bread and grains have been around for ages -- in fact, they've formed the basis of the human diet for more than 10,000 years; not just because they taste great, but because they provide many of the essential nutrients that help the human body stay healthy and fight disease. For example, whole grains contain many nutrients and fiber that can help lower blood cholesterol and assist in weight management. Enriched grains contain folic acid which may help lower the risk of heart disease, birth defects and some cancers.

While dieting and eating trends come and go, sandwiches are here to stay. And don't forget, what would a sandwich be without the bread?

SANDWICH RECIPES

by Dave Lieberman

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Balsamic-Marinated Grilled Summer Vegetables with Ricotta and Arugula on White Bread

2 yellow squash, sliced lengthwise
2 zucchini, sliced lengthwise
2 large red onions, sliced crosswise into 1/4-inch slices
1/4 cup balsamic vinegar
1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil
1 cup whole milk ricotta
1 large bunch arugula
Salt
Freshly ground pepper
8 slices of white bread

Toss sliced yellow squash, zucchini and red onions with balsamic, olive oil, salt and pepper. Grill veggies in batches until nicely colored and softened. Smear bread evenly with ricotta seasoned with salt and pepper, top with grilled veggies and arugula and sandwich between the two slices of bread.

Makes 4 sandwiches.

For the kids ...

Peanut Butter, Raisin and Honey on Whole Wheat

2 slices soft, whole wheat bread
2 big spoons of peanut butter
1 good handful raisins
Honey

Spread the peanut butter onto one slice of bread. Press in the raisins. Drizzle the other slice of bread with honey and close together with the raisin/peanut butter side.