

Healthy Snacks for Your Summer Road Trip

24 AUGUST / 2018



Summer is here and it's time to hit the road. What's a road trip without good snacks? You may think that healthy snacks sound boring but here are some tasty ideas that will keep everyone munching happily on the road.

I have fond memories of traveling by car in Northern Mexico with mom and dad and the sibs. We would stop at roadside stands all the way through the state of Sonora until we got to Guaymas, our beach destination in the Sea of Cortez.

Healthy snacks were easy to come by on the road in Northern Mexico. Aguas frescas and corn on the cob were everywhere. Then, the lady in the red stand in Magdalena made some killer homemade corn tortillas!

There's a small town by the name of Imuris just south of Nogales where we would always stop. Little boys carrying blue enamel pots sold soft homemade cooked cheese - queso cocido - out

of these little pots. You could roll one up and eat it just like that, or add a tortilla and make a quesadilla! They sold it in small personal serving sizes in sheets of wax paper, and it was fresh and delicious.

The very first food item I think of for a nice little road trip picnic is fresh cheese! Mozzarella cheese sticks are very similar to the queso cocido of my youth, and you can find them in almost all grocery stores now. Taking a handful of these handy snacks is a good way to get some protein. Pack some whole wheat tortillas, or even a moderate amount of tortilla chips and you've got a healthy snack.

My favorite chips are blue corn! Whole grain and good looking! There are some great blue corn chips available at your local super market!

¡Esquite! (Now there's a good Nahuatl word for you!) Make some homemade popcorn and sprinkle it with red chile powder or Tajín! Try it with grated parmesan cheese for extra flavor. Popcorn is a whole grain, just like blue corn. (Just remember to go easy on the salt.)

After we stopped in Imuris for queso cocido, we stopped a few miles down the road at the naranja stand. These were delicious, ugly little oranges that tasted like heaven on a hot summer day. Yes, we let the juice run down our arms, but now you have handi-wipes, so don't fret about the kids getting sticky. It's summer! Chill out.

You can make your own version of roadside naranjas by cutting up some oranges into quarters and taking some Tajín with you on your road trip. (Full disclosure: They are not our sponsors but everything tastes good with Tajín!)

After the queso and the naranjas, off we went down the road until we hit Santa Ana, Sonora. There we stopped for figs! Fresh from the tree and so much fun to pick your own! Finding fruit stands along the way is a fun way to break up a trip and get those little ones to stretch their legs. But if you don't have roadside stands, pack some dried fruit like figs, apricots and almonds and put them in a ziplock bag to share, or split them up into small bags to distribute to hungry kids and grown-ups alike.

No road trip is complete without peanut butter sandwiches. This is America after all! Use whole grain bread to make a more substantial sandwich. Hearty breads made of whole grains are much better for us and they don't get as soggy as quickly as white bread.

Pack some ready-to-eat baby carrots, celery sticks and cut-up cucumber spears, and pass the Tajín!

Add some whole wheat or rice crackers for extra crunch.

Keeping yourself and your kids well nourished on your road trip is easier than you think.

Avoid sugary drinks and greasy junk food and make it healthy and fun!

Stick to fruits, veggies and nuts. Sunflower seeds are fun to eat, messy and delicious. So what if the car looks like a bird lives in it-it's summer! Chill out.

Drink plenty of fluids. Water is best! But for a special treat, invest in one those vintage water cooler jugs and make some homemade “aguas”, such as Jamaica (aka hibiscus), melon water, or watered down lemonade. If you water it way down, it isn’t so loaded with sugar, and the kids will still love it, especially when they’re thirsty.

If you really want to avoid the sugar, just fill it up with cool water and lemon. I promise it will taste good when it’s hot outside and it comes out of a pretty jug. And remember one rule of summer, everyone loves the refreshing taste of lemon on a hot summer day.

Keep it healthy, Comadres and keep it real. Even a little sugar in your lemonade won’t hurt anyone, because remember - it’s summer!

And we believe in the ¡Poquito porque es bendito! philosophy.

And to close this off, how about some plant-based protein for your journey?

Here’s a simple recipe for crunchy garbanzos. My favorites are sprinkled with chipotle powder, but you can get creative.

1. One can of garbanzo beans...chick peas.
2. One teaspoon oil
3. One teaspoon salt.
4. One teaspoon powdered chipotle chile, red chile, or curry powder.
5. Drain the liquid out of the can. Dry the garbanzos on paper towels until they are pretty dry. Remove some of the skins if you can. Less skin = more crispy.
6. Add 1 teaspoon oil and one teaspoon salt. Toss. Don’t season them with anything else until they are out of the oven.
7. Bake in a preheated oven at 350 degrees until crispy or about 45 minutes. (Shake them around a little at the half way point and put them back in.)
8. Season them after you bake them. Don’t cover them in an air tight container until they dry completely.
9. Get creative. Powdered chile is always good but you can use other flavors such as, garlic powder, paprika, pepper, a touch of cumin, and, you guessed it, Tajín.

¡Happy Verano! ¡Y Buen Provecho!