

The RANCH REVIEW

August 2019 Volume 13, Issue 08

News for the Residents of Legends Ranch

Tips for Packing a Healthy School Lunch

by Stephany Pando, cooksmarts.com, edited for space

Packing lunches for your back-to-schoolers is no easy task. It takes time and planning. Plus, every parent knows that just because you pack it, doesn't guarantee your kids will actually eat it.

However, this doesn't mean you have to fill your kids' lunchboxes with pizza and cookies everyday. Below we offer 5 tips for how to pack a nutritious lunch that your kids will look forward to eating and you'll feel good about giving them.

Tip #1: Get Your Kids Involved

- Give your kids healthy food options from each food group and let them make the final decisions on what goes in their lunch.
- Take your child grocery shopping with you and let them have a say (to a certain extent) in what goes into the cart. This promotes feelings of responsibility and empowerment.
- Designate a part of your kitchen as the "lunch packing station" and spend some time there with your kids the night before to get lunch ready for the next day.

Tip #2: Turn Healthy Foods into Fun Foods

- Use cookie cutters to make shapes out of bread, deli meat, cheese, or a melon-baller for fruit.
- Use kid-friendly skewers to make colorful food kebabs.
- Create a theme for the day and have all of the foods in their lunch relate to the theme

Tip #3: Make Your Own Snacks – and limit processed ones

Kids rely on snacks to keep their energy up, but the type of snack is important to consider. Packaged snacks tend to lack important nutrients and can be high in sugar, sodium and saturated fats. Take control of what is in your kids' snacks by making them yourself!

Tip #4: Incorporate All Food Groups

A balanced diet includes all of the food groups. Luckily, there are so many different ways to enjoy each food group:

- Fruits: fresh, frozen, dried, canned, baked (think apple chips!) or pureed.
- Vegetables: fresh, frozen, or baked (think kale chips!)
- Lean protein: baked chicken, deli meats, hard boiled eggs, beans or nuts (be aware of nut allergy regulations at your child's school).
- Low-fat dairy: milk, cheese or yogurt
- Whole Grains: pita, sandwich bread, tortillas, wraps, and pastas

Tip#5: Encourage Hydration

It's recommended that school-aged kids drink between 6-8 cups of water a day (even more in hot weather or if their activity level is high).

- Let your child pick out their favorite water bottle and encourage them to drink the whole thing at least twice at school. They'll be more inclined to do it if they feel like they are completing a challenge!
- If the "flavor" of water is too boring for them, throw in a few pieces of frozen fruit to sweeten it up – and keep it cooler.

With these tips in mind, you and your child are ready to start out the school year on the right foot. Good luck – and happy packing!



RANCH REVIEW

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

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| Montgomery MUD #89 | 713-932-9011 |

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| Pct. 3 Constable Office | 281-364-4211 |
| S. Montgomery Co. Fire Dept. Non-Emergency..... | 281-363-3473 |
| Montgomery County EMS Non-Emergency | 936-441-6243 |
| Crime Stoppers..... | 713-222-TIPS |
| Poison Control..... | 800-222-1222 |
| Texas DPS | 713-681-1761 |

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| Electricity (TXU New Service) | 281-441-3928 |
| Electricity (Centerpoint)..... | 713-207-2222 |
| Gas (Centerpoint)..... | 713-659-2111 |
| Water/Municipal Oper. & Consulting | 281-367-5511 |
| Best Trash | 281-313-2378 |
| Street Light Outages | 713-207-2222 |
| Cable/Internet/Phone...COMCAST..... | 713-341-1000 |

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| Toll Road EZ Tag..... | 281-875-3279 |
| Voters Registration..... | 936-539-7843 |
| Vehicle Registration | 281-292-3325 |
| Drivers License Information | 936-442-2810 |
| Montgomery County Animal Control | 936-442-7738 |
| Montgomery Chamber | 281-367-5777 |

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| Conroe ISD | 936-709-7751 |
| Birnam Woods Elementary | 281-863-4200 |
| Cox Intermediate | 281-465-3200 |
| York Junior High | 832-592-8600 |
| Oak Ridge High | 832-592-5300 |

NEWSLETTER INFO

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Recognize a Great Neighbor:



Every day, we hear inspiring and touching stories about our Legends Ranch neighbors supporting and improving our community in a variety of ways. Whether it's collecting trash from around our lakes and common areas, taking care of a neighbor's pet, or creating meal trains and rallying around a neighbor in need, we are constantly reminded of the power of good neighbors.

To nominate a good neighbor for recognition, please share a short story with us about what this person has done to make our community a better place to call home. Please ensure you include their name, your name and contact details and the reason for recognition in the email contents.

Email your nomination to: ranchreviewnewsletter@gmail.com

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FLOODING: HOW TO PROTECT YOUR FAMILY & FINANCES

In many areas, flooding is the most common and costly natural disaster—and it can happen here. Just one inch of water in your home or office can cost thousands of dollars in cleanup and replacement costs, including drywall, baseboards, floor coverings and furniture. You may think you're covered, but many homeowners' insurance policies do not cover flooding.

Here are several reasons to talk to an insurance agent now about flood insurance.

- There is usually a 30-day waiting period before coverage begins.
- Coverage is relatively inexpensive.
- Renters can buy flood insurance for personal belongings or business inventory.
- Basement coverage includes cleanup expense and repair or replacement of items such as furnaces, water heaters, washers, dryers, air conditioners, freezers and pumps.
- You do not have to repay flood insurance benefits as you do with disaster-related assistance loans.
- You can receive payments for flood-related losses even if no disaster was declared.

Learn more about flood insurance at www.floodsmart.gov.

There are things you can do to prepare your home and family now for flash floods:

- Make a family emergency plan. Emergency preparedness is everyone's responsibility. Write down your plan. Decide ahead of time where you will go if you have to leave and where family members will meet up. Identify an out-of-town emergency contact.
- Get supplies for an emergency kit. Start with three days' water and three days' packaged and canned food. Add a battery-powered radio and extra batteries. Store in waterproof containers with wheels or that you can lift so you can take them with you. For details about preparing an emergency kit, visit www.ready.gov/america/beinformed/floods.html
- Stay informed about what could happen. During storm season, listen to local media for up-to-date reports on weather watches and warnings. Keep a battery-powered portable radio—with a NOAA weather band—handy in case the power goes out. Choose one.

Learn more about preparedness at www.ready.gov/america/beinformed/floods.html.



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RANCH REVIEW

REVENGE OF THE GIANT CARPENTER BEES!

This summer the carpenter bees returned with a vengeance in certain areas of our neighborhood, most notably to the Pool Pump House sending several of the new lifeguards running!

Though often confused with bumble bees, carpenter bees can be readily identified by their black (slick and shiny) abdomen. The thorax of the carpenter bee (directly behind the head) is usually covered with yellow, orange or white hairs.

As pollinators, carpenter bees are generalists in our gardens and landscapes. They may be found foraging on a number of different species of plants, flowers and vegetables. Like their close cousins, the bumble bees, carpenter bees are early morning foragers. They are excellent pollinators of eggplant, tomato and other vegetables and many types of flowers. Very powerful thoracic muscles allows them to become living, tuning forks when they land on flower blossoms and they can sonicate the dry pollen grains out of the flowers anthers. This type of pollen collection is known as “buzz pollination”. Carpenter bees are actually mass produced in the Philippines for farm-pollination services.

Did you know they are “robber” bees? On occasion carpenter bees can be quite ingenious in their foraging for nectar. Because of their large size, they are not capable of entering long, tubular flowers such as those produced by salvia and yellow bells... Instead, they become nectar robbers, using their mouthparts to cut a slit at the base of the corolla (all of the plant petals) and steal the nectar without having pollinated the flowers.

Unlike the bumble bee that typically builds colonies in the

ground, the carpenter bee is a solitary bee, preferring to live and rest alone in wood tunnels. Carpenter bees DO NOT CONSUME WOOD, but their tunneling can be destructive, especially if several generations have been tunneling in the same area. They prefer softwoods (cedar, pine, cypress, redwood); however they will also tunnel in hardwoods that have been softened by exposure or decay. Weathered woods are a common target of carpenter bees; thus, they are often found tunneling in fence posts, lawn furniture, decks, window shutters, roofs and eaves of buildings, and wood shingles/siding. To deter their behavior, keep exposed wood surfaces, including nail holes and saw cuts, coated with polyurethane or oil-based paint. Consider using non-wood building materials such as vinyl siding, to avoid possible damage. If tunnel entrances are found in buildings, seal them immediately with caulk.

Little Known Facts about Carpenter Bees:

1. Only the female carpenter bee stings (the male is incapable of stinging), but seldom does, unless provoked.
2. The males buzz and hover in an aggressive manner to scare you. They are the primary nest builders.
3. The adult bees hibernate in their nests during the winter. The older female and male bees that created the nest die during the summer after the larvae are laid.
4. Newly developed adult carpenter bees emerge in August and feed on nectar, returning to the tunnels to over-winter and start the cycle over again.



6 Ways to Save Money When Shopping on Amazon

These days, everyone's looking for bargains and ways to save while shopping online from the comfort of their own homes. With low prices, a wide selection and fast shipping for customers, Amazon has a lot to offer to save you both time and money. Below are six easy ways to save when shopping on Amazon:

1. Discounted offers: Customers receiving government assistance through EBT or Medicaid can enjoy the benefits of an Amazon Prime membership for a discounted monthly price of \$5.99, with the ability to cancel anytime. With Prime, members can enjoy fast, free shipping, exclusive savings, and easy access to entertainment with Prime Video, Prime Music, Prime Reading and more. Learn more and sign up for a free 30-day trial at <http://amazon.com/qualify>.

2. Stick to your budget. Making purchases with cash is a savvy way to stick to your budget, as it makes you more conscious of what you're spending. When you're shopping online, you can use Amazon Cash instead of your debit or credit card. It's a simpler way to shop and will help you manage your spending. You can visit more than 45,000 participating stores - including pharmacies like CVS and convenience stores like 7-Eleven - to add cash to your Amazon Balance. This method is quick, easy and Amazon doesn't charge any fees.

3. Take advantage of subscriptions. Families can maximize their savings by enrolling in convenient programs such as Subscribe & Save, which allow you to subscribe to a wide selection of items you

buy frequently (such as diapers, baby food and household products), and have them shipped to you for free on a regular basis. You'll not only save up to 15% on the purchases, but you'll also save the time and energy normally spent on trips to the store.

4. Scout out deals as they pop up. You can track the best deals on Amazon with Lightning Deals, which offer new deals daily to help you save money. It allows you to find the best prices on items you need, want and love. You can also sign up for "watch a deal" alerts so you'll never miss out on a discount!

5. Earn rewards by waiting. Not in a hurry to get your package? Here's a little-known Prime perk for those who don't need their order right away - selecting the "No-Rush" shipping option at checkout earns you rewards and discounts on future purchases. Rewards are automatically added to your Amazon balance, so you can start saving right away. Keep an eye out for this option next time!

6. Discover Bargain Finds. Check out Amazon's Bargain Finds for a wide selection of seasonally relevant products that are priced even lower - items can vary from clothing and jewelry to gifts and home decor.

Shopping online does not have to break the bank, and you don't have to spend all your time surfing and comparing prices. Thanks to Amazon, you can enjoy some of the best options available for shopping all in one place, and do it within your budget.

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Blackberry-Oat Crumble Bars Recipe

Ingredients

CRUST

- 6 cups regular rolled oats
- 2 1/4 cups packed light brown sugar
- 2 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 cups unsalted butter, melted, plus more for pan
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon baking soda

FILLING

- 9 cups fresh blackberries
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup fresh lemon juice (from 3 lemons)
- 1/4 cup cornstarch

How to Make It

Step 1 - Prepare the Crust: Preheat oven to 350°F. Stir together oats, brown sugar, flour, butter, salt, and baking soda. Remove 3 cups of the oat mixture, and set aside. Press remaining oat mixture in an even layer in an aluminum foil-lined and buttered 12- x 17-inch rimmed baking sheet. Bake in preheated oven until golden brown, about 20 minutes. Cool completely, about 30 minutes.

Step 2 - Prepare the Filling: Stir together blackberries, sugar, lemon juice, and cornstarch in a large saucepan. Cook over medium, stirring occasionally, until syrup thickens and is bubbly, about 8 minutes. Pour over prepared Crust, and crumble reserved 3 cups oat mixture evenly over Filling. Bake at 350°F until topping is golden brown, 30 to 35 minutes. Cool completely, about 2 hours. Cut into 24 pieces.



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