

# LET'S CELEBRATE LUNCH

## Children's book looks at lunch around the world

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Breakfast has been called the most important meal of the day. Dinner, well, we all know what's special about that.

But what about lunch? Hardly anybody talks about the importance of midday refueling. Who gets hitched or celebrates an anniversary over lunch? Who studies, analyzes or critiques our lunch habits, with the exception of publicly funded school programs?

Today, that all changes. Today, we reflect on a new, adorable children's cookbook called, "Everybody Eats Lunch," by Cricket Azima (Glitterati Inc.; \$16). True, it's aimed at the under-11 crowd, what with its colorful graphics and pocket recipes hidden under cardboard cutaways.

"Lunch is more of a kid's meal," said Azima, whose favorite lunch is either Asian noodle soup with coconut milk or a chopped salad with bacon and tuna.

Many cultures have a whole different approach to lunch than we do here in the United States. "In many countries, school ends at 2, children head home and eat a big meal with their families. Then they have a light dinner later," she said.

"I thought it would be fun to look at what children eat in other countries."

"Everybody Eats Lunch" is shaped like a lunchbox. Inside, board pages look at what people around the world typically eat for lunch.

In Japan, for example, children like to eat onigiri rice balls, the recipe for which



Cricket Azima

is included in the book. Here are a few of the recipes.

### TORTA, MEXICO

- 1 lb. shredded cooked chicken\*
- 1 15-ounce can refried pinto beans
- 1 cup iceberg or romaine lettuce, shredded
- ½ cup thinly sliced radishes
- ¼ white onion, thinly sliced
- ½ cup salsa
- ¾ cup shredded Monterey Jack cheese
- 4 bread rolls, halved

Divide and stack chicken, beans, lettuce, radishes, onion, salsa and cheese evenly among rolls and serve.

\*Place chicken in pot of water or chicken stock and bring to boil over high heat. Reduce heat to medium and simmer, until chicken is cooked thoroughly, about 30 minutes. Drain, cool and shred chicken.

Serves 4

### ONIGIRI RICE BALLS, JAPAN

- 2 cups cooked rice
- 2 teaspoons rice vinegar
- 2 ounces cooked salmon or canned tuna, cut into small pieces
- 2 dried seaweed sheets (nori), halved

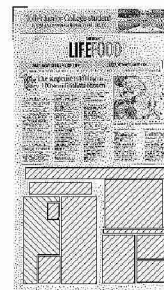
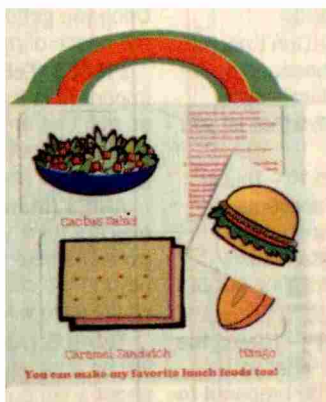
Mix rice with vinegar.

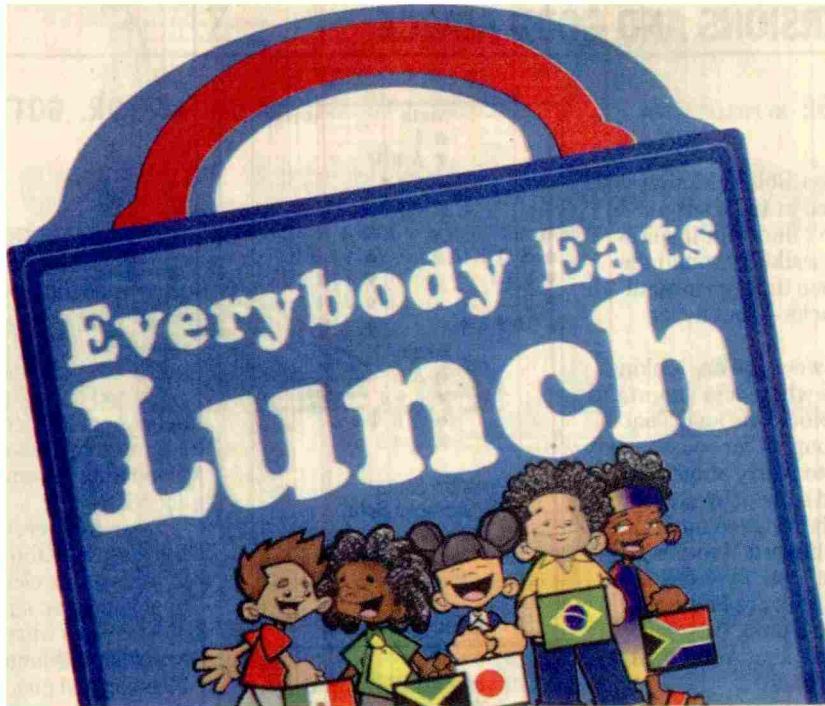
Wet hands and shape ½ cup rice into a loose ball. Press ½ ounce fish into center of rice ball. Pass back and forth between hands to form triangular mound with fish in center.

Wrap each mound in a dry seaweed strip and serve.

Makes 4 rice balls.

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## Let's look at lunch around the Southland

Now that we know what people around the world eat for lunch, we wondered what people across the Southland like to eat for their midday meal.

Here is a very unofficial, highly unscientific survey.

■ **Jacqueline Gilhooly**, 18, lifeguard and swim instructor with Alsip Park District:  
A turkey Subway sandwich, with water.

■ **Adam Woodworth**, executive director of the Oak Lawn Children's Museum:

Barbecue. Any kind. But I can't have it all the time. It depends on what I have to do that afternoon. Not everybody appreciates you smelling like barbecue in a meeting.

■ **Kenneth Smith**, varsity coach of the Homewood-Flossmoor High School football team:

I love any kind of sandwich, although I do prefer peanut butter and jelly or turkey and ham, with cheese. I also like to eat a bowl of fruit with any type of flavored beverage.

■ **John Schroll**, director of Food and Nutrition Services at Little Company of Mary Hospital in Evergreen Park:



SOUTHTOWNSTAR FILE PHOTO

**A turkey sandwich is a favorite for midday.**

A Primo's soft-serve half-vanilla, half-chocolate ice cream cone, dipped in chocolate syrup. Of course, I can't have it all the time, but I think about it quite often. Otherwise, I'll eat a light sandwich and some fresh fruit.

■ **Nikki Van Kalker**, Van Kalker Farms and Greenhouses, Chicago Heights:

Turkey on wheat bread with fresh tomatoes and lettuce and a little mayo. Some potato chips and grapes would complete the meal.