

# SCHOOL LUNCHES

## in America

In the early 1900s, parents and teachers began to notice the link between a child's level of nutrition and their academic performance. Through legislation and collaboration with food vendors, schools began to build lunch—and eventually breakfast—programs in an attempt to combat hunger and malnutrition. Let's take a look at nutrition standards in public schools and how they have changed from 1930 to today.

### 1930s

The Great Depression forced schools to take in surplus goods from American farmers, so as to save money. What schools could get from local farmers is what they served, whether it was balanced or not.



### 1940s

The National School Lunch Act is passed, expanding school lunch programs throughout the country and providing free lunches to underprivileged students.



### 1950s

Rich, protein-heavy dishes are common during this time when private companies begin contracting with school districts.



### 1960s

With the integration of black and white Americans in most schools, the student population increases and the cafeteria becomes more streamlined.



### 1970s

In a national response to concerns over growing childhood obesity, more fresh fish and vegetables were served.



### 1980s

This is the infamous decade of ketchup being deemed a vegetable. National nutritional guidelines are changed, allowing schools to use processed food.



### 1990s

Vending machines became popular in schools, and schools make deals with local fast food vendors. Students are also able to pick their own sides, drinks and desserts.



### 2000s

Mounting concerns over childhood nutrition and obesity lead schools to allow healthier options for kids, though fast food was still served.



The Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act is signed, and school lunch nutrition standards are reevaluated. Healthy eating gains cultural momentum, and students are encouraged more than ever to make better choices.

### 2010-Today

School lunch has now become a \$10 billion a year business.

