

## 318 - 10 Foods I'm Stocking This Summer

Hi there! You're listening to The Lazy Genius Podcast! I'm Kendra Adachi, and I'm here to help you be a genius about the things that matter and lazy about the things that don't. Today is episode 318 - 10 foods I'm stocking this summer.

Summer is here, and summer food is a bit different than food in other seasons. Some differences might be that the schedules are often different, so when you shop and cook changes. Summer produce from your personal garden or the farmers market is bountiful and impacts your menus. Maybe if you have kids, everyone is around more and eating more which changes things compared to when they're in school. Or maybe you have your college kids home for the summer and you forgot how much they ate. Or you think they're going to eat with you but they make plans for dinner without telling you. There are a lot of things that can impact the way we eat in the summer.

First, there are a handful of resources you can look at today aside from this episode. If you google the phrase "lazy genius summer food," you will get several great blog posts and podcast episodes to check out. I am particularly fond of a very old episode, Episode 164: The Summer Meal Formula. It's actually a pretty brilliant way to think about summer food, and I'm going to re-listen to that episode myself in the next week or so to put together my summer meal formula for this year.

You can also get my book, *The Lazy Genius Kitchen*, which offers a five step-process to Lazy Geniusing anything but specifically six very relevant areas of life in the kitchen. The chapters on Planning and Prepping are particularly helpful right now. And even the chapter on the table since the way we gather in the summer is different than other seasons. Dinner doesn't have to be the most important meal of the day from a gathering standpoint.

So anyway, there are resources on my website, particularly that summer meal formula episode, and the book, *The Lazy Genius Kitchen*, so you'll have your handbook on how to approach food in any season.

Today, I want to get specific about the 10 foods I'm stocking this summer. These are foods that will be a huge part of making summer cooking and eating easier. Your list is probably quite different, but I'm sharing mine because you might not have even thought to have a list at all! It's like the episodes about What's Saving My Life. The practice of naming what's saving your life is helpful, so when I share my list, it's less about my list and more about what my list does to inspire yours. Same today. This is my list of 10 foods I'm stocking this summer, but ultimately I hope it helps you see that having a list of your own would be good and what could be on it.

Let's jump in.

Number one , hot dogs and hot dog buns. Of course. This is a summer staple. But if it's going to be a staple, it should be around. Now, in general, I don't love hot dogs. They're fine. But a hot

dog on the grill? Holy moly, that is a different story. I will gladly invite grilled hot dogs into my life this summer.

Now, there are several reasons why this is a summer staple food we'll order again and again: all the kids like hot dogs, they are ready in a blink, and when we are coming home from the pool or camp or something where everybody is hungry and we need something fast, we have something fast. They're really the perfect summer food. We can do all kinds of sides - corn on the cob, tater tots or frozen fries, chips or crackers or whatever crunchy things come in a bag. Hot dogs are an essential summer food for us, so clearly they are at the top of the list.

And remember the point of this list: sure, it gives you ideas, but there might be another food that hits all these points for you that aren't hot dogs. Quesadillas come to mind. Only one of my kids likes them on a regular basis, so quesadillas are not a slamdunk summer food for us. But they might be for you, and they're just as quick. Stock tortillas and cheese, and you're good to go. They can be served solo, with stuff, made fancy with other fillings, but ultimately you can even make one in the microwave and it's not terrible. In fact, I often microwave quesadillas first to give the cheese an extra melting boost. Then I throw them in a hot skillet with a little oil and fry them up quickly since I don't have to wait for cheese to melt.

So whatever your hot dog food is - actual hot dogs, quesadillas, cereal, whatever - stock it for the summer!

Number two: smoothie bags. And maybe smoothie booster cubes, but I'll get to that. Smoothies are a lot more of a staple in our house during the summer than in other seasons. My kids, as picky as they are, are also very closely connected to the weather. If it's hot outside, they want something cold. If it's cold outside, they want something hot. They're almost embarrassed for me if I offer them a smoothie in the winter. "Mom, it's so cold outside why would we want a smoothie." Such a vibe. But in the summer, smoothies are pretty common.

Now, is it hard to get out the two bags of fruit and peel the bananas or whatever to make a smoothie? No. But if we're about to head out to the pool or I'm working and a kid wants to make a smoothie solo without messing up the ratios to the point of not drinking the thing, a smoothie bag is a great option.

This is basically applying the Lazy Genius principle Batch It to smoothies. Get some quart freezer bags, and portion out some smoothies. I put in the the fruit only, not the yogurt or juice or whatever liquid you use. But I'll put in the banana, strawberry, mango, maybe a few avocado cubes for creaminess, some spinach if the kids aren't weird about it... whatever. Then I just have to add that bag to the blender along with some yogurt and liquid. I actually have an entire episode about smoothies. Like for real. It's very early - episode 31 - but it's actually pretty solid, and it has some recipe ideas for you, too.

Also on the blog, there is a post about smoothie booster cubes. We'll put links to all of these in the show notes by the way. A smoothie booster cube is all of the seeds and greens and such

blended together and then frozen in ice cube trays. Then you can put that vitamin boost into a smoothie via a cube or two. You can check those out and see if you're into the idea. But the point here is that we have smoothies a lot more often in the summer, and I want to not only stock the ingredients but stock them in a way that makes the smoothie making that much easier.

### **We'll be right back...**

Number three: individual frozen desserts instead of just gallons of ice cream. When a kid asks for a bowl of ice cream, it's not just getting a bowl of ice cream. There are chocolate chips and sprinkles and maybe whipped cream and the management of whether we're going to go full-out sundae instead of just ice cream. And even still, with ice cream, a kid always needs help scooping or to find the scoop at all, even though it's always in the same place. Then they forget to put the container back in the freezer which leads to melted ice cream. It's just a whole thing. I don't know why my family cannot just eat a bowl of ice cream like a person, but it's way more complicated than it should be. Which is why in the summer when we eat a lot more ice cream than normal (which is still a lot frankly), having fudge pops and those Costco chocolate dipped ice cream bars and fruity popsicles and ice cream sandwiches and stuff that's just grab-and-go is the way to do it.

Number four: taco meat. This is not a homerun meal like hot dogs generally are, but some kind of taco-nacho-burrito-rice bowl situation usually gets us to at least second base in the game of dinner baseball. It's super doable and works great. But if we don't have some kind of meat, Sam won't get protein because he doesn't eat cheese. You heard me correctly. Again, such a situation feeding multiple children. I also don't love cheese as the main thing (I shared that on Instagram a couple of weeks ago, and some of you are still learning to trust me again). Because of all of that, we need meat close at hand. Ground beef that's seasoned with spices like chili powder, cumin, garlic powder, and cayenne and then frozen? A dream. You don't even have to thaw it before putting it in whatever you're making. Just nuke it in the microwave for a minute or let it warm up in the skillet with the quesadilla or watch it come to life in the oven on top of nachos. It's just so easy to have that particular meat around for another version of quick dinners when I don't want to cook or have much time to. Plus it's such an easy thing to make a huge batch of. We will for sure stock cooked taco meat.

Number five: Just Bare chicken breast chunks. I get these at Costco, but I'm sure there are other places to get them. They are the best grown-up chicken nuggets. They're bigger than popcorn chicken but have the same irregularity as popcorn chicken compared to very uniform nuggets. I love them so much. The boys like them pretty well, too, but I eat them more than anybody else. I'll throw a handful in the air fryer and then toss them with some kind of sauce, like Korean barbecue or American barbecue, or I'll just leave them plain. I eat them on top of rice, in salads, in a wrap, on their own. I usually have them for lunch at least twice a week in recent months. They're just so good. And because the kids also like them, they're a great quick snack, lunch, or dinner component. But they taste real. You don't feel like you're eating kids chicken nuggets that aren't really chicken. They're super tasty, and I love them. And since I can

cook them in just a few minutes in the air fryer, it's a great way to not have to turn on the oven in the summer.

Number six: speaking of barbecue sauce, I'm going to stock good barbecue sauce. Bri McKoy and I are on a short break from this, but we used to do these Instagram live shows called Bri and Kendra Eat Stuff. We would take one type of food and taste test a lot of them to find the best one, and we've actually done one on barbecue sauce. Now here's what stinks: I just went looking for that episode of BAKES. Some are on my feed, some are on Bri's, but daggumit if I cannot find the one on barbecue sauce. I found the one on pickles, on chips and salsa, on cheddar cheese, my favorite which was the one where we were in person at Bri's house trying various fast food sauces. But I cannot find the barbecue sauce one. Maybe Leah will create a miracle and find it after the fact and put the link in the show notes, but I scoured both my feed and Bri's to no avail. No matter. The point is that we discovered that Stubbs barbecue sauce is a delight. Now, it is a bit more tangy and a thinner texture than most barbecue sauces you come across, but I like it especially for pork. So good with pulled pork. But I also love Sweet Baby Rays. I can't remember if that was another winner from our tasting, but it is such a solid choice when it comes to barbecue sauce. And because we're going to have those chicken nuggets and because we'll do barbecue chicken and barbecue pork too, I want to have sauces at the ready so I can actually make those meals when the time comes.

Another barbecue sauce I want to stock is Korean barbecue sauce. Now here's the problem. I get a Korean glaze from a local fried chicken place called Scratch which we love, and I always make that Korean glaze last for a couple of weeks after. I'll toss those Just Bare chicken bites in that sauce and serve it with rice and spinach, and it is so delicious. But I've never made or bought Korean barbecue sauce outside of the leftovers when we order fried chicken. So I need to remedy this. Part of me is a little meh about it because I don't want to waste money on something that's not as good. But I'm telling you now that I'm going to work on recreating that sauce, and if I do, I'll share the recipe. But the main point here is knowing ingredients that offer you a really quick win for summer meals. We generally want and even need our food a little faster because we're more relaxed everywhere else. We're playing outside or at the pool or going to a museum or park or just staying inside in the AC watching a movie and no one wants to move. A great barbecue sauce is going to be hugely helpful during those times.

Number seven: yakisoba. Yakisoba is a noodle dish that we eat constantly, and we'll eat it even more during the summer because everyone is home at lunch and Sam cooks it himself. Praise. It's basically a chow mein that comes in a ramen type package. Just a block of noodles and a packet of seasoning. But this isn't soupy. You cook the noodles in water, but all of the water gets absorbed. Then you add the seasoning. I have a loose recipe of how we make yakisoba with ground pork and vegetables on Instagram; I'm pretty sure it was a live where I cooked it in real time. But we eat it always, and it is the saddest thing when we're out.

Which is why I'm going to stock it. I recently discovered that Amazon sells our favorite brand, a brand that's hard to come by in my local Asian market, so now we just order a huge box. I'll put

a link in the show notes so you check it out. It's even on subscribe and save which is kind of magical.

### **We'll be right back...**

Number eight: grocery store donuts. We get donuts from our favorite local donutery, Donut World, about once a month. Annie, who always wakes up first, will come into my bed and before even saying good morning will say "Can we get donuts?" About one Saturday a month, I'll say yes. But there is something nice about having a sweet snack I didn't have to go out and get or make to go with the eggs and bacon and such, and in the summer when they're home always and out of the school rhythm, we really like having a bag of powdered donuts or donut holes or something around. They're a special, fun breakfast without me having to leave the house to get it.

Number nine: stuff for s'mores. We have a Solo stove that we love, and on summer nights where it's not quite as hot, we'll make s'mores. Often the kids will surprise me by asking if we can make them, and it's the worst when I have to say no because we don't have the ingredients. That's why they're stocked. And they're shelf-stable, so they survive the whole summer.

If you want some ideas of ways to change up your s'mores, here are a couple. Use Reese's cups instead of Hershey's chocolate. A delight. Instead of the graham crackers and chocolate, just use those Keebler fudge stripe cookies. That and a marshmallow. I'm not saying it's the tastiest, but it sure is easy. Use cinnamon graham crackers for a more Mexican chocolate s'more flavor. Spread nutella or cookie butter on the graham crackers. Use any kind of candy bar instead of chocolate. I have seen someone put bacon in a s'more for a salty sweet situation. I've never tried it myself, but go to town. Bacon is on top of donuts now. It can't be terrible. But s'mores supplies are essential for the summer.

And finally, number ten. This is more of an event than a stocking, but it's still food. So my kids are meh about cereal. They all eat it but in fits and starts. It's not a staple. But for some reason, at the start of the summer, they get so excited about cereal. So one of the things we do that first week of summer is go to the store and get summer snack supplies, one of them being cereal. Everybody gets to pick two boxes: one favorite and one new one to try. If they don't like the new one, no shame. You don't know until you get it.

The reason this choice is important is because when a kid asks for a new thing in the store, I get it with the expectation they will eat it. But they don't always. Sometimes the marketing is better than the product, right? I remember being a kid and asking my mom if I could get Sunny D because the commercials were so cool. We did not have a lot of money growing up, so for her to say yes to this request was a huge deal. And I didn't like it. So I didn't drink it. I tried to pretend it wasn't there. I remember thinking it was weird that she wanted me to drink it so it wouldn't be a waste, but now as a mom who buys groceries, I understand that. It's a lot to get something new for a kid especially, not knowing if it'll get eaten. It feels wasteful.

And that's why this choice is important. If a kid doesn't like what they chose, no worries. Now they know. The expectation of finishing the cereal is removed from the beginning. It's a fun thing to explore, and sometimes we find different things when we explore. That's good! So I like this choice of getting cereal to try without the pressure of having to like it. So number ten is our beginning of summer cereal trip.

And those are the 10 foods I'm stocking this summer: hot dogs, smoothie bags, individual frozen desserts, taco meat, Just Bare chicken bites, barbecue sauce, yakisoba, grocery store donuts, s'mores supplies, and our start of the summer cereal trip. I hope this list inspires you to not only make your own but then stock those things to make summer food that much easier.

Before we go, let's celebrate The Lazy Genius of the Week! This week it's Emily Heller who sent me this fantastically simple idea just a few weeks ago. Emily writes, "I love supporting kids' lemonade stands in the summer and try to stop every time I see one. But I don't always carry cash. Now, I just stock the center console of the van with ones so I can be prepared all summer. Boom! Go entrepreneurs!" Emily! This is magical. What a beautiful, thoughtful thing. While supporting lemonade stands doesn't matter to everyone, you named what matters to you: supporting kids willing to make a stand and sell that lemonade, and you used two Lazy Genius principles to support that. First, you Decided Once that when you saw one and could stop, you'd stop. Done. No going back and forth. Unless you're in some high speed car chase, you're stopping at the stand. Decision made. And the second principle you used was Put Everything in Its Place. You need cash for lemonade stands, so put some in the place where you'd also be when you see a stand: the van. So fantastic. I love this idea and application of Lazy Genius principles so much, so thank you so much for sharing, and congratulations on being the Lazy Genius of the Week!

Don't forget to sign up for the Latest Lazy Listens, our biweekly podcast digest that gives you a robust summary of the last two weeks' worth of episodes with everything written out. So this whole list of ten things plus links to them if you need them will all be in that email that goes out every other Friday. The link is in the show notes, or you can go to [thelazygeniuscollective.com/listens](https://thelazygeniuscollective.com/listens).

Alright, thanks so much for listening, and until next time, be a genius about the things that matter and lazy about the things that don't. I'm Kendra, and I'll see you next week!