



## **Never Buy A Bag Again: How To Simply and Effectively Reuse Bags, Containers, Cans, and Paper Products Like a Pro.**

Today I wanted share how I save a bunch of money by reusing almost every single bag and container that comes into my household. First, before I begin to spill all my cool tips, I wanted to let you all know that buying Baggies is a big waste of money. Please, stop buying packaging products and start creatively reusing everything that lands in your home. So many reusable containers appear as byproducts of shopping (plastic bags, jars, cans, newspapers, and packaging paper) and most of us have plenty of water bottles, Pyrex, and other glass containers laying around in the pantry just waiting to be put to good use, so let's get to reusing this stuff together.

Ok, my first tip is to save every plastic shopping bag, produce bag or Ziploc that comes into your house. Plastic shopping bags are very thin and won't last long, but they are perfect for packaging up cleaned fruit, sandwiches, crunchy snacks and other foods that you need to toss into your kid's backpacks. I always place what I want to package in the bag, cut the extra plastic away from the top (if the bag is too big), and tie a simple knot. The kids can open the knot or just tear into the thin plastic. At least bag is getting a second life before hitting the trash.

When Ziplocs or normal heavy duty Baggies do land in my kitchen, I make sure to use them normally and ask the kids to bring them home. When I clean out their lunch boxes I simply wash the Baggies, turn inside out and dry on a bag dryer (which looks like a simple claw) or over a wine bottle or whatever bottle is hanging out on my counter.

My second tip is to reuse all brown paper bags as lunch wrap for sandwiches or wraps. I cut the handles off, open the bag flat, cut the brown paper to fit what I'm packing and wrap or roll to fit the treat. The paper, if you wrap and pack neatly, doesn't require any tape, but you can add a rubber band for extra hold. The kids can toss the paper and stash the rubber band back in their lunch box. I have also used newspaper and packaging paper to wrap food. Both are awesome for less messy sandwiches or wraps and are great for wrapping salami, cheese, and bread.

My third tip is to save all of your soup cans. You can package olives, fruit, crackers - anything really - in a clean soup can and simply throw a piece of plastic (reuse those bags) over the top (secured with a rubber band) and toss into the lunch box. You can also purchase a reusable lid designed just for securing reused soup cans. Look for it at Target, Bed, Bath, and Beyond, or simply Google around on-line.

My fourth tip is to invest in fabric lunch bags (you can buy or make) and simply wash them out after the kids get home from school. And, lastly, my fifth tip is to package food where you thought only fluids could go. Use your large mouthed BPA free Nalgene (or other brand) water bottles to package snacks. The bottles can hold trail mix, wet snacks, pickled vegetables, puddings, and other foods that would otherwise be crushed in a plastic bag.

Also, look around your garage and in your camp gear. Do you have any of those little stainless steel clampdown containers? If so, use them to pack your kids lunches. They are doing no one any good packed out in the garage - and kids, just like I do, love to eat out of and use camp gear at the dining table.

Have fun reusing all the interesting containers that cross your path. Just make sure they are all washed properly, safe, free of rigid edges, and easy to both use and clean.

PS – I have one last super cool tip... head out to target or Wal-Mart and buy a stack of bandanas. Yes. Bandanas. They cost less than a dollar each and make super cool reusable napkins and can be used to wrap up baked

goods. Get a stack and make sure to pack them in your kid's lunch boxes. Make it a routine to reuse everything and remind your kids to bring all packaging home – don't worry, they can do it!