

Alternatives to sweets for birthday celebrations:

1. **Popcorn:** Almost everyone can eat plain popcorn and it is still a treat. **Popcorn cups:** Have your child help decorate plain 12-oz. paper cups with stickers, glitter glue or even his photo, and then fill with home-made popcorn. Alternatively, decorate small paper bags or purchase movie theater-style popcorn boxes or bags.
2. **Yogurt parfaits:** In clear plastic cups, alternate layers of your child's favorite yogurt and fresh fruit such as blueberries, strawberries or mangos. Top with a cupcake topper. (And don't forget spoons!).
3. **Mini muffins:** Carrot, blueberry and banana are all great choices. Use all or part whole-wheat flour or add ground flaxseeds for a nutritional boost.
4. **Banana bread:** Cut in slices like cake, sprinkle with powdered sugar and serve with fruit salad.
5. **Chocolate zucchini bread:** Don't try to hide the fact that there's zucchini in here! Instead, let your child (carefully!) help grate it, then bring in a whole zucchini for the class to see, touch and smell. I was naughty and added chocolate chips to this recipe; it's for a party, after all.
6. **Fresh fruit served in cupcake wrappers,** waffle cones or waffle bowls.
7. **Berries with fresh whipped cream:** Take individual clear plastic glasses and fill half way with any mixture of strawberries, blueberries and blackberries. Top with a dollop of freshly whipped cream.
8. **Fruit kabobs with vanilla yogurt dip:** Pick your child's favorite fruits—strawberries, blueberries, pineapple, kiwi, grapes, and melon, for example—and assemble colorful fruit kabobs. Serve with vanilla yogurt dipping sauce.
9. **Magic fruit wands:** Similar to fruit kabobs but made to look like a magic wand, with a whimsical star fruit at the top.
10. **Fruit roll-ups:** No corn syrup or artificial food coloring; just pure fruit, the way it should be.
11. **Cinnamon tortillas with fruit salsa:** Take wheat flour tortillas and brush with melted butter. Sprinkle the tortillas with cinnamon sugar; cut each tortilla into 8 wedges and bake on an ungreased cookie sheet at 350 degrees for 10 minutes or until crisp. For the fruit salsa, pick any combination of your kid's favorite fruits—apples, strawberries, kiwis, pineapple and blackberries all work well—dice and mix with a little sugar and lime juice. Serve salsa in mini plastic cups or bowls with the tortilla chips on the side on paper plates for dipping.
12. **Frozen yogurt tubes:** served with fresh fruit
13. **Yogurt parfait bar:** Serve vanilla or strawberry yogurt in cups. Set out toppings such as fresh berries, bananas, granola and shredded unsweetened coconut.
14. **Pretzel's** or Gold Fish or Cheez-Its, etc.
15. **Be careful of peanut allergies!**

Ideas for non-food celebrations

Not every party has to involve food!

1. Bring in his favorite game or book or a special art project to share with his class.
2. Put together a "goody bag" of non-edible treats such as glow sticks, balloons, stickers, tattoos, etc.
3. **Class Birthday Book I**
Instead of treats, the child brings a special book to add to the class library. The child or the teacher writes who gave the book and what birthday he or she is celebrating on the inside front cover. The child or teacher reads the book to the class (or a favorite part if it is a chapter book).
4. **Class Birthday Book II**
Each child in the class makes a page for the birthday child's Birthday Book. A page consists of a picture and a positive statement about the birthday child - something that is admired or appreciated. The birthday child makes the cover. The teacher makes a page too and all the pages are bound in a special book for the birthday child to take home.