

Stasher Founder Kat Nouri Wants to Help You Make Lunch Waste-Free

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Get her tips on ways to make lunch more

By Bridget Shirvell

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Erin Scott

There's a time and a place for granola bars, but it isn't at lunch. Yes, we know how convenient it is to quickly munch one in between folding laundry, setting up the next Zoom kindergarten session, and finishing up that sales report. The midday meal was often overlooked before the coronavirus pandemic turned our world upside down, and now it can be even more of a struggle than ever before. Kat Nouri, Stasher® Bag founder and mom, has already revolutionized the way we store food and now she's coming for lunch.

Her new cookbook, *Let's Fix Lunch!: Enjoy Delicious, Planet-Friendly Meals at Work, School, or On the Go* (\$19.95, [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)) is full of recipes and tips to help make lunch more sustainable and enjoyable.

"This book has been on my wish list for what feels like my whole life," says Nouri. "I wanted to create something that represented my heritage, the way I grew up and the lessons I learned from my mom that I'm passing on to my kids. But it's also a collective effort from my Stasher squad. You really see that in the recipes."

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Let's Fix Lunch! features more than 30 recipes inspired by Nouri's favorite childhood dishes and ones from the Stasher staff. The result is at times a mismatch of influences, but the common theme of comforting, nutritious meals designed to help us find nourishment with ingredients already on hand is what ties the book together. The recipes are meant to spark creativity in the kitchen and help reduce household food waste, which ReFED estimates to be as much as 76 billion pounds of food per year.

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"Food waste is top of mind for me, there's so much of it," says Nouri. "At the very least, I try to make sure that I use what's in my own fridge and teach my kids that it's not OK to purchase something and not use it." Her go-to for cooking down her fridge is soup, and there are several soup recipes in the book. Nouri's also a big fan of meal planning and says that since the pandemic, she's focused even more on outlining out her family's meals; in addition to reducing food waste, it helps her avoid going to the store frequently. "Buying in bulk, food prep, and storage is huge for us," Nouri says



If there is a silver lining to current times, Nouri sees it in how the pandemic has forced many of us to be more mindful of what we buy and cook. "A lot of these practices we've developed, whether it's cooking more, buying food in bulk, or not purchasing packaged foods, are really positive things we can take into our future," she says. Not surprisingly, storage remains a massive part of how Nouri reduces waste in her own home. Through meal planning, she's able to identify dishes that store well. "My favorite is kuku sabzi," says Nouri. "It's something my mom has been making forever, and it's a very universal dish, almost like a frittata, or a kish. It's a quick thing to make, easy to take on the go, holds in the fridge for a while and comes with a ton of nutrients."

While Nouri remains focused on reducing food waste and plastic usage in her personal and work lives, she says one of her biggest sustainability lessons is not being too tough on yourself. "You're not perfect. No one is, but you can have a big impact and create positive change," she says. As we're home more and grabbing fewer things on the go, Nouri is hopeful this time will give us all the perspective to start changing some of our habits in order to create lasting ways to champion the environment. Well, that and eating something besides a granola bar for lunch again.

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