
Ants on a Log (and 4 Variations)

Cooking | All Year | Ages 2-4

My two-year-old refuses vegetables unless they're disguised as a vehicle for peanut butter. Ants on a log? That'll work. It's the only way celery makes it past her lips, and honestly, I'm not above bribery when it involves actual produce.

The genius of ants on a log is that toddlers can help. They smear things. They sprinkle things. They eat half the ingredients before assembly. Everyone wins.

What You Need

- Celery stalks (washed, cut into 3-4 inch pieces)
 - Peanut butter (or sunflower seed butter for allergy-friendly)
 - Raisins (the classic ants)
 - Butter knife or spoon
 - Small bowls for toppings

How to Make the Classic Version

Wash and cut celery into manageable pieces. Let your kid spread peanut butter into the groove. It won't be neat. That's fine. Then they press raisins into the peanut butter — ants marching along their log.

Done. Snack achieved. Vegetable consumed.

Four Variations We Actually Eat

Cream Cheese + Blueberries: Swap peanut butter for cream cheese. Use fresh blueberries instead of raisins. This one's tangier, and the blueberries don't stick as well, but my daughter likes poking them in and calling them "bug eyes."

Sunbutter + Chocolate Chips: For classrooms or playdates where peanuts are banned, sunflower seed butter works. Mini chocolate chips make terrible ants but excellent bribes. We grab sunbutter at Trader Joe's on Roe.

Hummus + Cherry Tomatoes: Not sweet, but savory kids love this. Halve cherry tomatoes so they sit in the celery groove. My nephew eats three logs this way and ignores the dessert options.

Almond Butter + Dried Cranberries: Almond butter's thicker than peanut butter, which helps the cranberries stay put. This version feels slightly fancy, like something you'd serve at a Brookside playdate.

Tips from Our Kitchen

Cut celery short. Long pieces are awkward for small hands and end up snapped in half.

Put toppings in little bowls. Toddlers love choosing their own ants. Also prevents the entire raisin box from dumping onto the floor.

Let them eat it immediately. No plating, no photos. The reward for making it is eating it right there at the counter.

If your kid hates celery texture, try cucumber instead. It's milder and just as crunchy.

This works as breakfast, snack, or the dinner side when you're too tired to care. We've served ants on a log at 7 a.m. and called it balanced.

