

Celebrate Spring with an Outdoor Picnic



Spring temperatures have arrived, the sun is shining and the flowers are blooming. That means there's no better place to be than outdoors relaxing and of course, eating. It's time to get that basket out of the closet, pack some food and roll out the blanket for picnic season. Outdoor meals require little planning and can be as simple or as elegant as you'd like. Here are a few picnic tips and healthy recipes:

Do: Pack Wisely

Have plenty of water, trash bags, and a blanket to sit on. Bring items to wash hands; soap, paper towels or wet wipes.

Don't: Leave Food Out For Too Long

While you can leave non-perishable foods like chips, cookies, or bread to munch on throughout the day, perishable items should generally not sit out for more than two hours.

Do: Keep Hot Foods Hot and Cold Foods Cold

A good rule of thumb is to remember cold foods should be kept below 40°F and hot foods should be kept above 140°F. A cooler with plenty of ice will help keep the foods cold enough, while hot foods can be stored in a vacuum-insulated thermal container, like those from Thermos.

Don't: Open the Basket or Cooler Too Much

Opening the cooler lid frequently will raise the temperature of the cooler more quickly than if the lid remains mostly closed.

Do: Keep Your Cooler in the Shade

Placing your cooler under a shady tree or beach umbrella will keep it cooler longer.

Chicken Avocado Roll-Ups

INGREDIENTS

2 avocados, cubed
Juice of 1 lime
2 c. Shredded chicken
1 bell peppers, seeds and cores removed, chopped
1/2 small red onion, chopped
1/2 c. Shredded Monterey Jack
1/2 c. shredded Cheddar
2 tbsp. sour cream
2 tbsp. finely chopped chives
4 large flour tortillas

DIRECTIONS

1. In a medium bowl, combine avocado and lime juice and mash until only small chunks of avocado remain. Add chicken, bell pepper, red onion, Monterey Jack, cheddar, sour cream and chives and stir until evenly combined.
2. Spread a thin layer of the chicken avocado mixture onto a large tortilla, leaving a small border around the edges. Roll the tortilla up tightly, then cut off the edges and slice into 1" rolls. Repeat with remaining ingredients. Serve cold or at room temperature.

Loaded Cauliflower Salad

INGREDIENTS

1 large head cauliflower, cut into florets
6 slices bacon
1/2 c. sour cream
1/4 c. mayonnaise
1 tbsp. lemon juice
1/2 tsp. garlic powder
Kosher salt
Freshly ground black pepper
1 1/2 c. shredded cheddar
1/4 c. finely chopped chives

DIRECTIONS

1. In a large skillet, bring about 1/4" water to boil. Add cauliflower, cover pan, and steam until tender, about 4 minutes. Drain and let cool while you prep other ingredients.
2. In a large skillet over medium heat, cook bacon until crispy, about 3 minutes per side. Transfer to a paper towel-lined plate to drain, then chop.
3. In a large bowl, whisk together sour cream, mayonnaise, lemon juice, and garlic powder. Add cauliflower and toss gently. Season with salt and pepper, then fold in bacon, cheddar, and chives. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Chocolate-dipped Cuties

INGREDIENTS

1/4 c. melted semisweet chocolate chips
1 tsp. coconut oil
5 mandarin oranges, peeled and divided into segments
Flaky sea salt, for garnish

DIRECTIONS

Stir together melted chocolate and coconut oil. Dip each clementine segment into melted chocolate and transfer to a parchment-lined baking sheet. Garnish with flaky sea salt. Refrigerate until firm, 20 minutes. Serve.