

Packing the Perfect Garden Picnic

Summer is the perfect time for picnics and barbecues. Pack healthy choices, practice good food safety and enjoy some fun in the sun!



Keep it Safe:

The risk of foodborne illness (food poisoning), can increase when we take food out of the kitchen and onto the picnic blanket. Be prepared to keep hands and utensils clean and food at the right temperature.

- Pack soap so everyone can wash hands if there is running water and pack hand sanitizer as a back up
- Use lots of ice or frozen gel packs to keep your cold food cold. Use a thermometer (found in kitchen section of Wal-Mart) to make sure the temperature is $<40^{\circ}$ F
- Keep your food in the cooler - not spread out over the table - for as long as possible and keep your cooler in the shade
- Pack drinks in a separate cooler from prepared foods so the cooler of food can stay closed as much as possible
- Pack clean platters for serving food as it comes off the grill. Never put cooked food on a plate that raw food has been on
- Wash your fruits and vegetables before you leave home, even the ones with skins or peels



- Marinate meat in the fridge or the cooler; throw away the marinade the raw food was in
- Food should not sit out for more than 2 hours or 1 hour if the outdoor temperature is $>90^{\circ}$ F - toss anything that is out for too long
- Be sure to unpack your cooler and get cold foods back in the fridge as soon as you are home - toss anything that got warm

Make it Sizzle:

Make sure you cook your food thoroughly, especially if you are cooking on site.

- You can't tell if meat is cooked from the outside. Pack a thermometer and check the temperature of your food before you take it off the grill.
- Hot food should be kept at temperatures >140° F; use insulated containers to keep food safe
- Food should not sit out from more than 2 hours or 1 hour if the outdoor temperature is >90° F - toss anything that is out for too long

Use your meat thermometer and check the thickest part to be sure you get to these minimum internal temps:

Steaks = 145 ° F
 Roasts = 145 ° F
 Fish = 145 ° F
 Pork = 145 ° F
 Ground beef = 160 ° F
 Chicken = 165 ° F

Pack it Healthy:

Traditional picnic foods can be super high in fat, sodium and calories. One piece of fried chicken, for example, can have >500 calories and $\frac{1}{2}$ the daily allowance for sodium. Salads made with regular mayo like potato salad, macaroni salad and coleslaw can provide a day's worth of fat. Lighten up your picnic basket with these tips:

- Choose lean meats to grill like ground turkey breast or veggie burgers instead of beef and be sure to remove chicken skin
 - Try grilling veggies like summer squash, zucchini, peppers, onions and eggplant - even corn on the cob
 - Serve whole wheat pita triangles or crunchy veggies like carrots, celery and broccoli instead of chips
 - Salsa, hummus, black bean dip and low fat ranch are healthier dipping choices
 - Make salads with low fat mayo, plain yogurt or mustard instead of regular mayo or sour cream and cut the amount in the recipe by half
 - Build a healthy sandwich by using whole grain bread, lean meat, low fat cheese and lots of veggie toppings like lettuce, tomatoes, sprouts, bell peppers, cucumber slices and pickles
 - Serve fresh fruit like watermelon, cantaloupe, honeydew melon and pineapple as a sweet ending to your meal
 - If you offer sweets, keep the portions small and only break them out at the end of the meal
 - Make sure you have lots of calorie free drinks on hand like water, water flavored with lemon or cucumber slices and unsweetened ice tea - bon appetite!

