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Deborah Rhoades, MA, RD, FAND
Extension Educator, Family & Consumer Sciences

TIME FOR A PICNIC

Memorial Day Weekend traditionally marks the beginning of the entire summer recreational season. After over a year of social isolation people are more than excited about getting together with family and friends. Picnics are an inexpensive option and you can skip the cleaning tasks required for in-home parties.

Frederick County offers a vast menu (pun intended) of choices where hip meets historic every day! Where in Maryland can you find so much adventure in one location? National parks, historical battlefields, Cunningham Falls, the C & O Canal, the Appalachian Trail, Catocin Zoo, Frederick Keys baseball, art festivals, concerts at Baker Park, etc.

Frederick County Parks and Recreation offers an interactive map of 23 trails in the county and 36 picnic shelters at <https://maps.frederickcountymd.gov/parksandrecreation/> On-line reservations can be made on the site to reserve a spot. There is even a YouTube video explaining “How to Make Facility Reservations On-line.” Be aware facilities cannot be reserved more than 365 days in advance and MUST be made three days in advance.

Here are some tips to keep food safe for your picnic. Regardless of your choice of foods, remember “Food Safety”:

PACKING POINTERS

- Start with cold food – pack right from the refrigerator or freezer.
- Pack all food in clean plastic wrap or sandwich bags.
- Use an insulated cooler if you have one.
- Include a cold source in the cooler or picnic basket, such as:
 - Commercial ice packs or make your own: place ice cubes in a plastic bag, then wrap the bag in foil.
 - Make sandwiches ahead and freeze them – place frozen sandwiches in the cooler or bag, sandwiches will thaw by lunchtime. Simple sandwiches freeze best. Try sliced meat or poultry, cheese, or peanut butter.
 - Place lettuce, tomato, pickles and mayonnaise in separate containers; add them to sandwiches just before eating.
 - Freeze small cans or boxes of juice, yogurt, or applesauce – they will thaw by lunchtime.
 - Cold fruit
- Pack cold infant formula in an insulated cooler with a source to keep it cold.
- Keep hot foods hot with a thermos or insulated dish.

AT THE PICNIC

- If running water is not available, bring soap, paper towels, hand sanitizer or moist towelettes. This will help keep your hands clean throughout the day especially after handling any raw meat or poultry.
- Keep the cooler in the shade – don't leave it in direct sunlight or in the trunk of the car.
- Keep the lid on the cooler – avoid frequent openings.
- Add more ice if it begins to melt.
- In **hot** weather, food should not sit out for more than an hour. USDA 2-Hour Food Safety Rule states that perishable food should not be kept at *room temperature* longer than 2 hours.
- Serve food quickly from the cooler.
- Serve small portions so the food doesn't stay out of the cooler too long.

IF YOU PLAN TO PREPARE FOOD AT THE SITE:

- Keep food cold until you're ready to grill it. Bring a couple of portable coolers – one for perishable foods and one for beverages– filled with ice. Perishable items like raw chicken, burgers or appetizers like fresh salsa, guacamole or bean salads should be kept at 40 degrees F or below.
- Cook food completely at the picnic site – no partial cooking ahead.
- Cook food thoroughly – pack your meat thermometer. Checking the temperature is the only way to know if your food is safe to consume. Safe minimum internal temperatures are:
 - Beef, pork, lamb and veal (steaks, roasts and chops): 145 degrees F with a three-minute rest time.
 - Fish: 145 degrees F.
 - Ground meats (beef, veal, lamb, and pork): 160 degrees F.
 - Whole poultry, poultry breasts and ground poultry: 165 degrees F
- Use a clean plate to serve cooked food.
- Be careful that raw meat juices don't touch other foods to avoid cross contamination.

Select your favorite meat items for your picnic or grab a bucket of chicken and enjoy with the recipes below!

BASIL POTATO SALAD

Store salad in a cooler with ice

1 1/3 cups fresh basil leaves
1 cup low-fat buttermilk
1/3 cup reduced-calorie mayonnaise
3/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon pepper
5 pounds small red potatoes
1 1/3 cups sliced green onions
1 1/2 cups chopped celery

Combine first 3 ingredients in a blender; process until basil is finely chopped. Pour into a small bowl; stir in salt and pepper. Cover and chill.

Place potatoes in a large Dutch oven; cover with water, and bring to a boil. Partially cover, reduce heat, and simmer 25 minutes or until tender. Drain; let cool. Cut each potato in half crosswise; cut each half into 4 wedges. Place potatoes in a large bowl; add basil mixture, onions and celery, tossing gently to coat. Cover and chill. Makes 14 servings.

FRUITED SPINACH-PASTA SALAD

Store salad in a cooler with ice

- 3 cups uncooked pasta
- 4 cups fresh spinach leaves, stemmed and chopped
- 4 oranges, peeled and sectioned
- 1/2 cup coarsely chopped red onion
- 1 (6-ounce) can frozen orange juice concentrate, thawed
- 1/2 cup low-fat mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon paprika

Cook pasta according to package directions, omitting salt and fat; drain. Combine pasta and next 3 ingredients in a bowl; toss gently. Combine juice concentrate, mayonnaise, and paprika; stir with a wire whisk. Pour over pasta; toss. Makes 7 (1 cup) servings.

CORN RELISH

- 1 1/2 cups fresh, canned (drained), or frozen (thawed) corn
- 1 red pepper, seeded and chopped
- 1 green pepper, seeded and chopped
- 1/2 medium onion, chopped
- 2 stalks celery, chopped
- 2 tablespoons canola or vegetable oil
- 1/3 cup granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup white vinegar
- White pepper to taste

Combine corn, red and green pepper, onion and celery in a medium bowl. In a small saucepan, combine the oil, sugar and vinegar. Heat the mixture until the sugar dissolves, stirring frequently. Pour the oil and vinegar mixture over the corn mixture and mix thoroughly. Season with white pepper to taste. Cover and refrigerate until well chilled.

BUCKWHEAT BROWNIES

- 1/2 cup unsalted butter
- 4 ounces bittersweet chocolate, chopped (70% Cacao or darker preferred)
- 1 1/4 cups sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 6 eggs
- 1/2 cup flour
- 1 cup buckwheat flour
- 1/4 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon kosher salt



Preheat oven to 350°F. Line a 9-inch square baking pan with foil and lightly grease the foil. Melt the butter and chopped chocolate in a saucepan over low heat. Stir often. When melted, pour into a large mixing bowl and whisk in sugar and vanilla.

BUCKWHEAT BROWNIES (continued)

Separate eggs. Add egg yolks to chocolate, beating well after each.

In separate bowl, whisk together flours, cocoa powder, baking powder and salt. Add half to liquids, beating well before adding remaining dry ingredients.

Beat egg whites until peaks form, fold into batter until blended. Pour into prepared pan and bake for 30 minutes or until done. Place on wire rack to cool. May be frosted, dusted with powdered sugar or served plain. Yields 9 brownies.

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Deborah Rhoades, MA, RD, FAND, is a licensed Registered Dietitian, Fellow of the Academy of Nutrition Dietetics, and Extension Educator in Family and Consumer Sciences.

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