

The International Journal for Direct Support Professionals

A Table In The Shade: Summer, Picnics and Fun

By: Marilena Candito

The summer – it is finally here! Not only is it time for outdoor activities, longer days and shorter nights, it is Canada's 150th birthday. To help celebrate, all the provincial parks are free this summer. That is totally awesome!

This is a great excuse not only to get out there but also to pack a picnic and explore or visit a new park you have never been to before. Picnics are great; they are fun to plan, fun to shop for, and fun to pack. Everyone loves to get involved. The other bonus about picnics is they are great on the 'fly.' Last minute idea – no big deal. Get in the car, or hop on your bike and go.

I know picnics are all about the food but, before we get to that, and I promise we will, I would like to stress some of the safety aspects of having a great time, and staying healthy.

- 1) Wash your hands frequently, wash/clean surfaces often; bring towelettes, soap and water, set up a wash station, use hand sanitizer. Keep bacteria away.
- 2) Bring extra plates – one for raw uncooked food, and one for cooked food. This helps eliminate cross contamination. You do not want to end your day in a hospital because of food poisoning.
- 3) Marinade meat overnight in the fridge, and do not use the marinade to baste your food when cooking – discard it. If you want, make extra and put it in a jar to take with you.
- 4) Cook food fully to its proper internal temperature. Bring a meat thermometer if you need to; never partially cook food, and leave it to cook further later. (See Canadian Government Cooking Food Chart at the end of the article)
- 5) Use a well-insulated cooler with plenty of ice and ice packs, or freeze tetra packs if you like. They make great cold drinks but also great slushies. Food should be kept at 40 degrees Celsius. When packing your food, remember cold air descends.

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- 6) Remember to pack food for everyone's likes/dislikes and needs.
- 7) Keep raw food, fish, cooked ready to eat food, and eggs separate.
- 8) The weight – yes the weight. You have to carry this cooler – you do not want to be throwing your back out.

Did you know that there are many types of picnics? They are no longer about lunch time. There are:

Breakfast picnics – bring breakfast food.

Fireside picnics – bring food that is easily roasted on an open flame.

Sunset picnics – little appetizer type foods.

Finally, what some call a five-star picnic, or what I refer to as the cheaters picnic – you buy everything already made and take it with you – no preparation involved.

I am going to focus on the "typical" lunch-time picnic in this article.

Remember I mentioned packing for likes, dislikes, and needs of the group with whom you are going picnicking? This is very important as it is an outing for everyone. When preparing food the night before, try and stay away from anything with mayonnaise as it can be a problem if it is left in the sun for too long.

Make sure that you do not have far to walk as you may be bringing a heavy cooler, or more than one, depending on the size of the group. Park close!

Most importantly, if mobility is an issue and access difficult, have the picnic in your own back yard, or set up the kitchen/dining room, and have your picnic in the house. You don't have to stress; it's about having fun, and not feeling like you are missing out.

Here are some easy recipes to make ahead and take with you, or to grill. I hope you enjoy them but, most of all, I hope that you all have a happy and safe summer filled with laughter and lasting memories. Enjoy!

German Potato Salad

This is my mom's recipe. No mayonnaise and tons of flavor. It gets better left overnight.

Ingredients

- 3 pounds new potatoes, skin off or on depending on your taste
- 1 yellow onion, quartered
- ½ pound bacon, or cooked pancetta, diced (vegetarians leave this out)
- 1 large red, or green onion, diced
- ¾ cup red wine or cider vinegar (Start with ¼ cup at a time. Can be over-bearing if it is too strong)
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- ¼ cup canola oil or olive oil
- Salt and freshly ground pepper

California Veggie Sandwich Martha Stewart Recipe

www.marthastewart.com/

Ingredients

- ¼ red onion
- Red-wine vinegar
- 2 slices multigrain bread
- Fresh goat cheese – optional – can use sharp flavoured spreadable/grated cheese
- Thinly sliced cucumber
- Alfalfa sprouts
- Sliced avocado
- Carrot, grated
- Radish, grated

Directions

1. Sprinkle onion slices with a few dashes red-wine vinegar, let sit 10 minutes. Lightly toast bread. Spread 1 slice with goat cheese and layer with cucumber, alfalfa sprouts, onions, avocado, and grated carrot and radish. Top with other slice bread.
**** Remember the dairy products need to be kept cool at all times. So if you have made these the night before, the entire sandwich needs to stay in the cooler. You may want to keep the cheese in the cooler, and put the sandwich together at your picnic spot.

Turkey Wraps

allrecipes.com

Ingredients

- 1 (8 ounce) package cream cheese with chives
- 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- 6 (8 inch) whole wheat tortillas
- 1 ½ cups finely shredded iceberg lettuce
- 12 slices thinly sliced deli turkey
- ¾ cup shredded Swiss cheese
- 1 large tomato, seeded and diced
- 1 large avocado, sliced
- 6 slices bacon, cooked and crumbled

Chicken and Bacon Shish Kabobs

allrecipes.com

Ingredients

- ¼ cup soy sauce
- ¼ cup cider vinegar
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 2 tablespoons canola oil
- 10 large mushrooms, cut in half
- 2 green onions, minced
- 3 skinless, boneless chicken breast halves – cut in chunks
- ½ pound sliced thick cut bacon, cut in half
- 1 (8 ounce) can pineapple chunks, drained

Cilantro Lime Grilled Tofu

allrecipes.com

Ingredients

- 1 (14 ounce) package firm tofu
- ¼ cup lime juice
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 5 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 teaspoons chilli powder
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- Salt and black pepper to taste
- Add all ingredients to list

*****Remember the safety tip. Meat, deli and tofu need to stay refrigerated overnight and in a well-insulated cooler during the day. Do not use marinade. Bring extra and throw out what you marinate in.

Pureed Food Ideas

Pack them in a thermos and take a few options for the day.

www.netwellness.org/healthtopics/diet/pureedentreesalads.cfm

Roast Meat and Potatoes

- 3 ounces cooked roast beef (beef, chicken or pork)
- ½ cup mashed potatoes
- ½ cup gravy
- 1 cup hot water or broth

Put meat in blender and process until smooth. Add remaining ingredients and puree to desired consistency. Yield: 1 serving

Steak and Mushrooms

- 3 ounces cooked steak
- ½ cup mashed potatoes
- ¾ cup mushroom gravy or soup
- 1 cup hot milk

Put steak in blender. Blend until finely minced. Add remaining ingredients and blend until smooth. Yield: 1 serving

Macaroni and Cheese

- 1 cup baked macaroni and cheese
- 1 cup hot milk

Add all ingredients to blender. Blend well. Yield: 1 serving

*****All hot pureed food should be packed in a thermos for the day.

Sweet Strawberries

The Pioneer Woman
thepioneerwoman.com/

Ingredients

- 2 pints strawberries, hulled and cut in half
- ½ cup sugar
- ½ tsp grated lemon zest
- ½ tsp vanilla
- 1 sprig fresh mint, for garnish

Directions

1. Put the strawberries in a bowl, add the sugar, zest, and vanilla and stir. Leave to macerate for 30 minutes at room temperature. The sugar will soften the fruit and draw delicious juices out to make delicious syrup.
2. Top with a sprig of fresh mint before serving!

These can be pureed also. Keep them sealed and in a cooler until you are ready to eat. Take them out, let stand for a bit, and serve.

3-Ingredient Nutella Croissants

<https://www.gimmesomeoven.com>

Ingredients

Use puff Pastry or Pillsbury Crescent Rolls or the Biscuit Dough

Directions

1. Simply roll out a sheet of puff pastry. Cut it into thirds and then sixths, so that you have six long skinny triangles. Spoon some Nutella onto each triangle.
2. Then roll into a croissant shape and pop them on a baking sheet. Repeat with the remaining puff pastry sheet. Then bake the dozen all together until they puff up and are golden and flaky.
3. When these are hot, add a little coffee or tea, put in a blender, and they can be pureed easily, then packed in a thermos to stay warm.
4. These should be kept in a well-sealed container out of the sun. They do not need to go into a cooler but they also cannot stay out in direct sunlight as they will become one big melted mess.

Once again, enjoy and have a great summer everyone!

About the Author:

Marilena graduated from Humber College as a Child and Youth worker. She has worked at Vita for over 30 years, and has held a variety of positions including Direct Support Worker, Supervisor and Nutritionist.

Please refer to the grilling Internal Temperature Chart below when cooking:

Government of Canada

<https://www.canada.ca/en/...canada/.../safe-internal-cooking-temperatures-chart.html>

Safe Internal Cooking Temperatures Chart

Meat, poultry, eggs and fish	Temperature
Beef, veal and lamb (pieces and whole cuts)	
Medium-rare	63°C (145°F)
Medium	71°C (160°F)
Well done	77°C (170°F)
Pork (for example, ham, pork loin, ribs)	
Pork (pieces and whole cuts)	71°C (160°F)
Ground meat and meat mixtures (for example, burgers, sausages, meatballs, meatloaf and casseroles)	
Beef, veal, lamb and pork	71°C (160°F)
Poultry (for example, chicken, turkey)	74°C (165°F)
Mechanically tenderized beef (solid cut)	
Beef, veal	63°C (145°F)
Steak (turn over at least twice during cooking)	63°C (145°F)
Poultry (for example, chicken, turkey, duck)	
Pieces	74°C (165°F)

Whole	82°C (180°F)
Egg	
Egg dishes	74°C (165°F)
Seafood	
Fish	70°C (158°F)
Shellfish (for example, shrimp, lobster, crab, scallops, clams, mussels and oysters) (Since it is difficult to use a food thermometer to check the temperature of shellfish, discard any that do not open when cooked.	74°C (165°F)
Others	
Others (for example, hot dogs, stuffing, leftovers)	74°C (165°F)
Game	Temperature
Chops, steaks and roasts (deer, elk, moose, caribou/reindeer, antelope and pronghorn)	
Well done	74°C (165°F)
Ground meat	
Ground meat and meat mixtures	74°C (165°F)
Ground venison and sausage	74°C (165°F)
Large game	
Bear, bison, musk-ox, walrus, etc.	74°C (165°F)
Small game	
Rabbit, muskrat, beaver, etc.	74°C (165°F)

Game birds/waterfowl (for example, wild turkey, duck, goose, partridge and pheasant)

Whole	82°C (180°F)
Breasts and roasts	74°C (165°F)
Thighs, wings	74°C (165°F)
Stuffing (cooked alone or in bird)	74°C (165°F)

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