

## **July Is National Picnic Month**

National Picnic month is when we celebrate the love of being outside enjoying each others company by having a nice relaxing picnic. It's a time to celebrate the open air, nature all it has to offer.

How can you celebrate National Picnic Month?

Get outside and have a traditional Picnic! - Go find yourself a traditional picnic basket and fill it with all your favorite foods. Don't forget to pack the traditional plaid blanket for the ground!

### **PACK YOUR PICNIC BASKET**

Pack your picnic basket with what you need 1st on top such as a tablecloth or silverware on top.

Put small items such as insect repellent, sunscreen and sunglasses on top of the picnic blanket, since you will likely need them before anything else.

Place the items you will need last, such as trash bags and antibacterial wipes, in the bottom of the picnic basket or pack

Keep cold food cold and warm food warm to prevent spoiling. Don't place warm food in your cooler. Wrap the dish in towels.

Store any uncooked food (if you are grilling) separately from cooked, prepared food.

Put the plastic containers of food in the bottom of the cooler. The most perishable foods that need to be kept the coldest should be placed at the very bottom.

Packing cupcakes for lunch? Slice them in half and place the bottom of the cupcake on the frosted piece. That way, icing won't stick to your plastic bag.

Scatter ice or cold packs around the food and place beverages on top. You can freeze beverages in plastic bottles to help keep your food cold. When they melt you will have icy cold drinks. Freeze a few juice boxes to help keep things cold and for a cool drink later in the day.

Place your food in zippered baggies and then on top of the ice in your cooler. This keeps food from getting wet once your ice starts melting.

Last, but not the least, carry wash cloth, soap and enough of garbage bags. Be a responsible citizen and tidy the picnic place, before hitting the road again!!

### **THE PICNIC MENU**

Choose a menu that is easy to make, easy to pack and easy to clean up

Some easy picnic ideas and recipes for picnic appetizer recipes could be:

- Cheese cubes and ham cubes

- Cheese platter include grapes or strawberries to complement the cheese

- French bread with spreadable cheese or cheese slices

- Grapes, watermelon cubes and strawberries on a skewer

- Salad on a Skewer

- Bring a container full of different vegetables and let each person assemble their own salad on a skewer.

Some great fresh vegetables for picnic ideas and recipes are:

- Cherry tomatoes, Olives, Cucumbers cut in chunks, Broccoli florets,

- Cauliflower florets

Great Picnic recipes may include:

Fresh Salsa and Chips

2 tomatoes chopped, 1/2 cup onions chopped, 1 clove garlic minced, 1/4 cup green peppers chopped fine, 2 tablespoons cilantro, 1 can small green chilies, optional, 1/2 lime juiced, Salt to taste

Chop ingredients finely. Pour into a plastic container for the picnic.

Fiesta Salad

2 cans corn, drained, 2 cans black beans, drained and rinsed, red bell pepper, chopped, 2 tomatoes, chopped, 1/2 red onion, chopped finely

Toss into plastic bowl with a lid.

Fiesta Salad Dressing:

3 Tablespoons olive oil, 1 teaspoon vinegar, 1/4 teaspoon cumin, 1/2 teaspoon chili powder, pinch of salt and pepper, 1 garlic clove, minced.

Prepare dressing in a jar with a lid. Shake and pour over salad at the picnic.

Apple Smiles

Apple, Peanut Butter, Miniature Marshmallows

Cut apples into wedges. Smear peanut butter on one side of 2 wedges. Stick a few marshmallows on the peanut butter on one of the apple wedges and top with the other apple wedge - peanut butter side down. When you look at this it looks like a

Edible Sail Boats

Celery Stick, Peanut Butte, Fruit Roll Snack, toothpicks

Cut a 3-4 inch section of a celery stick. Spread peanut butter in the groove of the celery. Cut a small triangle from the fruit roll snack and attach to a toothpick. Stick the toothpick in the celery. Now you have a sailboat snack.

**PICNIC THEMES**

Supermarket Stop Picnic

For super simple picnic prep, grab your picnic basket then stop at a grocery store for everything else. Bring the girls along and let them help with the pickings!

The Dipping Picnic

Kids love to dip stuff, and this picnic is really easy. Buy a selection of dips and things to dip such as fruits and veggies, bread, chips, pretzels, cookies and crackers. A sweet dip for dessert and dips with a little protein, like hummus, add variety to ranch or bleu cheese favorites. You may also want to bring along cheese sticks, cubed cheese, summer sausage or another protein source.

Dress Up Picnic

Get dressed up for a themed picnic. You can do a 1950's theme or a beach theme or a Shakespeare theme or an animal theme or whatever. Try to bring foods that go with that theme. For example, a 1950's theme might have hot dogs and cherry coke; you would wear retro style shorts and a shirt that ties up in front.

Teddy Bear Picnic

Begin with a storybook. *The Teddy's Bears Picnic* by Jimmy Kennedy, *Teddy Bears' Picnic Cookbook* by Abigail Darling and Alexandra Day, *We're Going on a Bear Hunt* by Michael Rosen, or *The Bears' Picnic* by Stan and Jan Berenstain. Enjoy a Teddy Bear Treat: Spread peanut butter on a plain rice cake. Add two small pretzel twists for the ears and M&Ms for the eyes, nose and mouth. Upon arrival, have girls introduce their teddy bears: their names, where they got them, something special about them, etc.

## **PICNIC FUN**

### **TELL STORIES.**

Trade stories and information. Actually stop and listen to one another for a change. Discuss the things that you never bother discussing like what your favorite travel experience was or where you see yourself in five years or what you have always wished that you hadn't done. Talk and get to know the people that you are with.

### **READ A PLAY ALOUD TOGETHER**

If you have a big enough group then this can really be fun. Whether you actually get dressed up and re-enact the play or you just read the parts aloud while seated, it can bring a lot of fun to the picnic. People who don't want to participate can just watch and enjoy the experience. Reading short stories or poetry is another option.

### **PLAY CARDS**

As long as it's not windy out, the group can have a great time playing card games with one another during a picnic. You might bring a cribbage board or some board games along as well. You don't want to bring games that have too many pieces but you can bring things like checkers or chess.

### **GET ACTIVE**

One of the best things to do at a picnic is to get active with the people you are there to spend time with. Volleyball, badminton, hiking, biking, Frisbee, tag ... these are all games that you can play at a picnic with a group of almost any size.

### **FLY A KITE**

What picnic is complete without a kite? Alternatively you might bring other "kids toys" such as hula hoops to the picnic. Have a good time. You are out there to play and enjoy yourselves!

### **PICNIC CHARADES**

Before you head out to your picnic, write up to 50 picnic related words on little pieces of paper. Use words and phrases like cookie, fork, napkin, table cloth, picnic basket, picnic table, games, volley ball, etc. Put the pieces of paper in a decorated tin can or bucket. You can play the original charades game or an easier version. Easy: Make sure that you have one of every item on your list in a pile on a picnic table. At your picnic, take turns pulling a paper from the tin and finding that item without saying anything. Once the child finds it, he shows it to the others and they must shout the name.

### **EGG AND SPOON RACE**

A basket of eggs, apples, potatoes or stones is placed in front of each team and a spoon given to the first member of each team. Empty baskets are placed on the distance line opposite the position of each team. At the signal to go the first player on each team, keeping the left hand behind the back, takes one egg from the basket by means of the spoon and carries it on the spoon to the basket at the distance line. Returning to the base line the spoon is handed to the second member of the team who repeats the performance of the first. The game continues until the last player on each team, after carrying the egg forward, returns across the base line. The team first succeeding wins. Should a player drop an egg, he must gather up as much of the egg as possible and carry it to the far basket and there deposit it before returning with the spoon to the next member of his team.

### **NATURE HIKE**

Cut masking tape into 7" strips, and attach to each child's wrist, sticky side out. As the children find pretty leaves, sticks or flowers, they can attach them to their nature bracelet.

### PAPER AIRPLANES

Make paper airplanes, fly them and have different flying contests!

### PAPER HATS

Use paper plates (cut the center out for a summer bonnet) or regular party hats and add provide stickers, ribbons, and flowers for decorations.

### BUG CATCHER

Catch some really cool bugs outside! You will need: 2 clear plastic cups (10-12 oz) (Solo brand works well), fine netting, elmer's glue, scissors, razor knife (adults only), paper plate. Directions: Cut a square of net, a little larger than the opening of the cup - about 4"x4" Cut all the way around one of the cups, about one inch from the bottom. Make the finished edge as smooth as possible. Place about 2 Tbs of glue on a paper plate. Taking the cut cup, rub the mouth of the cup in the glue until the entire rim has glue on it. Gently stack the cut cup with the glue inside the clean uncut cup.

Lay the square of net on top of the cup with the glue - gently press the net into the glue. If gaps appear between the net and the cup, additional drops of glue may be needed. Allow this to dry for about 1/2 hour. Cut around the cup to trim off the excess net. Separate the cups to catch your bugs, then restack.

### TEEN PICNIC FUN

a teen magazine contest is a total hoot! Ahead of time, pick out 4 or 5 different teen magazines. Scour the magazines and make note of up to 20 or 30 facts about their favorite stars, cute guys and hair and make-up challenges. On the day of the picnic read one note off at a time, in the form of a question? (For example, if a note was made that Miley had her 15th birthday party bash at an expensive hotel, the question would be what recent teen singer had her 15th birthday bash at an expensive hotel?) The girls must then choose a magazine and find the answer in the magazines! The girl who gets the most answers right, wins the pile of new magazines!

