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Summer is picnic season, and whether you're setting up an outdoor lunch on the beach, at your local park, or simply in your own backyard, all great picnics require convenience, cleanliness, and, of course, delicious, portable food that you can easily keep cool and fresh.

The following tips will make your next picnic a success.

Avoid Messy, Complex and Difficult Foods. Steer clear of tacos, which require major assembly, and super-messy like ribs, or foods like steak which require some serious knife skills. Switching mayonnaise-based potato salad recipes out with pasta salads featuring asian styled dressings with sesame oil and soy sauce or light lemon and olive oil dressing can reduce the threat of foodborne illness.

Pack Smartly. Lots of gadgets can improve your picnic experience: Picnic backpack



coolers, blankets which can be folded into handbags for easy portability, and even flatware with interchangeable fork, knife, and spoon heads. Tablecloth weights can keep everything in place, even on particularly gusty days.

Get Creative with Containers. From Mason jars with lids and straws to pasta salad in a jar and watermelon kebabs, there are plenty of ways to prevent spills, reduce the interest of insects and leave the mess at home.

Banish Bugs. If you aren't comfortable with spraying DEET around your food, consider foods like grapefruit and bananas, which naturally repel insects.

<https://www.thedaily meal.com/entertainment/9-tips-perfect-picnic>

www.thedaily meal.com/10-best-summer-pasta-salad-recipes

Father's Day Quotes



“He didn’t tell me how to live; he lived, and let me watch him do it.”

~ Clarence
Budington Kelland

“I believe that what we become depends on what our fathers teach us at odd moments, when they aren’t trying to teach us. We are formed by little scraps of wisdom.”

~ Umberto Eco

“His heritage to his children wasn’t words or possessions, but an unspoken treasure, the treasure of his example as a man and a father.”

~ Will Rogers, Jr.

“A father is a treasure; a brother, a comfort; a friend is both.”

~ Benjamin Franklin

“A father is someone you look up to no matter how tall you grow.”

~ Unknown

www.almanac.com/content/when-fathers-day

Epsom Salt: A Secret Weapon for Gardeners

Epsom salt, also known as magnesium sulfate, is typically used in baths for sore and achy muscles. It contains the minerals magnesium and sulfur, both found to be beneficial to plants and is considered a BFF for many gardeners. If you’re looking to earn a green thumb, or just want to use less chemicals outdoors, check out these ways that you can use Epsom salt outside.

1. Pest Control. Sprinkle some around your plants, or make a spray solution with 2 tbsp. Epsom salt and 1 gal. warm water to deter pests like snails, slugs, or groundhogs.

2. Greener Lawns. Bob Vila recommends spreading Epsom salt around your lawn with a seed spreader or by hand for greener grass.

3. Weed Killer. 1 gal. white vinegar, 2 cups Epsom salt, and ¼ cup of dish soap sprayed directly onto the weeds; dish soap helps it to cling while the salt dehydrates the weeds. Vinegar with 10% acidity or higher works the best.

4. Boost Pepper and Tomato Yield. Toss some at the base of the plant, 1 tablespoon for each foot of height; water

immediately. Applied every 2 weeks, this foliar spray recipe will also do the trick: 1 to 2 tablespoons Epsom salt + 1 gallon of water in a spray bottle. Cantaloupes benefit from a handful sprinkled in the soil during the last few weeks of growth. Peaches, strawberries, watermelons and citrus can also get a dose in the soil or foliar spray every 2 weeks.



5. Soil Nourisher. Epsom salt feeds soil because of its magnesium and sulfur content. It contributes to nutrient intake, chlorophyll production, and many farmers and gardeners find it to be an outstanding fertilizer. It’s good for household plants too!

Note: it’s wise to test your soil for low magnesium levels before drenching it with an Epsom salt mix. You can do it yourself with a soil testing kit or check with your local county extension office.

Sources: harvesttotable.com, garden.org, and epsomsaltcouncil.org

Up Your Grilling Game For Better BBQ and Burgers

Spectacular Sliders

2 lbs 80 % lean ground beef
1 tbsp good Dijon mustard
3 tbsp good olive oil + plus
extra for brushing the grill
1 tsp chopped thyme leaves
3 tsp chopped garlic
1 tsp kosher salt
1 tsp fresh ground pepper
6 ounces grated Gruyere
12 small Brioche buns
4 ounces baby arugula
3 medium tomatoes, sliced
in 1/8-inch-thick rounds
2 small red onions, sliced in
1/8-inch-thick rounds
Ketchup, for serving

Mix ground beef with mustard, olive oil, thyme, garlic, salt, and pepper, taking care not to compress the ingredients. Shape the meat into 12 (2-inch) patties of equal size and thickness.

Brush the medium-hot grill grate with oil to keep the sliders from sticking. Place the sliders on the grill and cook for 4 minutes. Turn the sliders over with a spatula and cook for another 4 to 6 minutes, until medium-rare, or longer for sliders more well done. For the last 2 minutes, place 1/2-ounce Gruyere on the top of each burger and close the grill lid. Remove the sliders to a platter and cover with foil.

Divide baby arugula among the 12 bottom buns, top with a slider; finish with a slice of tomato and red onion. Cover with the top of the bun and serve hot with ketchup.

The following tips can help improve your grilling technique...and your results.

Even if you're using regular briquettes, try adding some wood chips to enhance the smokiness of your meat or veggies. It can help turn regular barbecue into amazing barbecue with very little effort.

When you're grilling, maintaining the natural moisture of the food is key. Again, with your meat, you want to avoid sticking holes in it or cutting into it. And whatever you do, don't press it down on the grill.

Meat thermometers are fine, but piercing the meat allows moisture to escape, leading to dryer burgers and steaks. As meat cooks, it becomes firmer so touch can determine how cooked your meat is, and the more you practice, the better you'll be able to gauge it.

Use your own hand as a comparison: The fleshy pad of your palm just below your thumb is a perfect analog to how meat feels at different degrees of done-ness. On your left hand, lightly touch the tip



of your thumb to your index finger. Then, press your right index finger into the fleshy pad of your palm on your left hand right below your thumb; it should feel slightly squishy. This represents how rare meat should feel.

For medium-rare, touch your thumb to your middle finger. For medium, touch your ring finger to your thumb. For well-done, use your pinky.

Only flip your meat once while cooking it, to preserve the juices.

When finished grilling, let it rest for a few minutes tented under a piece of foil, so all those free-flowing juices end up getting reabsorbed and re-incorporated into the meat. You will taste them with each luscious bite!

www.thedistilledman.com/8-tips-to-improve-your-grilling/

It Happened In ...



June 4th 1944 – World War II: Rome was liberated by the U.S. 5th Army, led by General Mark Clark.

June 10th 1652 – In Massachusetts, silversmith John Hull opened the first mint in America, in defiance of English colonial law. The first coin issued was the Pine Tree Shilling.

June 18th 1983 – Dr. Sally Ride, a 32-year-old physicist and pilot, became the first American woman in space, beginning a six-day mission aboard the space shuttle Challenger, launched from Cape Canaveral, Florida.

June 29th 1861 – American surgeon William Mayo was born in LeSeuer, Minnesota. The Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, became an internationally known medical center assembling specialists from different medical fields to better perform diagnoses and treatment.

<http://www.historyplace.com/specials/calendar/june.htm>

Considering Inflation in 2018

A moderate hike in April prices of 0.2% is consistent with inflation rising this year to a 2.6% rate.

That's an increase from 2017's 2.1% and reflects higher overall prices, particularly for gasoline. Cutbacks to Iranian and Venezuelan production of crude oil — right as the peak summer driving seasons starts — are boosting gas outlays.

Housing costs will rise 3.5% this year, slightly more than last year's 3.1%.¹

Costs for medical care will spike 2.7% this year after 2017's unusually low 1.6% tick up. Prices for nonhousing services will jump 2.7%, compared to 1.8% last year. Finally, auto insurance rates are climbing substantially as fixing complex gadgets on newer vehicles gets more expensive.¹

The Consumer Price Index, a measure of the average cost of consumer items that people purchase for day-to-day living, such as food, clothing, shelter and medical services, is now well above the 1.8 percent annual average increase over the past 10 years. Federal Reserve officials would be content to let

inflation briefly run above their 2 percent target as the economy continues to recover, according to minutes from the central bank's most recent meeting.²

The negative effects of inflation and what they can do to retirement savings are well known, and inflation can also affect credit cards and variable rate student loans and mortgages, as well as equity or stock investments and bonds.



If you are considering a rebalance of your retirement portfolio to protect against inflation, be aware that some Annuities can include Cost Of Living Adjustment Riders to protect against erosion of retirement savings. Another way to address future price increases is to have contractual income streams starting at different times. Just like you can ladder CDs or bonds with different maturities, you can also ladder lifetime income.

1- www.kiplinger.com/article/business/T019-C000-S010-inflation-rate-forecast.html

2 - www.cnbc.com/2018/05/23/fed-indicates-it-will-let-inflation-run-above-2-percent-goal-for-temporary-period.html