

Picnic Recipes – why they are in here and any special notes/comments.

Mom's Sweet & Sour Tomatoes – An easy fix, can be made the night before. When taking to a picnic, just keep cool. This can be chopped up for easier serving. Use nice plump beef-steak tomatoes and either white or sweet onions.

Mom's Famous Cucumber Salad – You can use either regular cucumbers or English cucumbers. My mom used regular cucumbers. This salad tastes best when it is allowed to marinate several hours or overnight.

Marinated Cherry Tomatoes – This is great to use in the cooler months when tomatoes are not at their peak. During the summer, this gives you a fantastically sweet tasting tomato. Note: Ask me about Bloody Mary Tomatoes if we have time.

Spinach/Strawberry Salad – I have fixed this for you before. It travel well and is always a big hit. Take the parts of the salad to the picnic and then mix it all together there, it will taste a lot better.

Watermelon Salad with mint leaves – A truly great summer picnic style salad. It is easy to prepare and very refreshing on a warm summer day. Remember to dice the watermelon into bite-size pieces.

Vegetable Pasta Salad – You can vary this salad with any type of pasta and all sorts of vegetables. You can add meat (pepperoni or other style sliced Italian meats). You can add chicken, shrimp or crab. Let the season and what looks good at the market be your guide. Cook the pasta al dente and rinse it to remove some of the starch which will enlighten the pasta flavor.

Gazpacho in Mason Jars – The fun part of this is the use of mason jars to serve. This makes it easier to have just the right amount and to carry to the site. You can of course keep the gazpacho in one large container and then transfer to the mason jars on site, thus not taking too much room in your cooler.

Muffaletta Sandwich – If you have ever been to New Orleans you know how good this sandwich tastes. The secret is to take some of the bread out of the bottom half of the loaf to make room for the pepper/olive mixture. Then follow the

directions and wrap tightly in plastic wrap, then foil. Now store in the refrigerator with a heavy frying pan or other weight on the sandwich which is what makes it so great tasting as the sauce gets into the bread. On site, just slice it like a pie and enjoy!

Fun Banana Boats – What can I say they are fun to prepare since the children can help you in assembling the banana boats? You can bring everything to the picnic (nothing needs refrigeration) and assemble there and cook on the grill.

Lemon-Caper Potato Salad – I made this last year for the first time, I think for a LLI class. Everyone loved it. The best part is that it contains no mayonnaise so you don't have to worry about it taking it on a picnic.

Chef's Cheesy Corn on the Cob – Hey, sometimes you just have to go outside of the box and do something no one expects. The mayonnaise keeps the corn moist along with the cheese. It is fun to serve and taste great.

Chef' Baby Back Ribs – I have found that pre-cooking the ribs prior to putting them on the grill allows the meat to taste great without burning. Once you have baked them, you only need to cook on the hot coals long enough to get a little char on the ribs. Just remember, most BBQ sauces base is brown sugar, so watch that they don't burn. Also, remember to remove as much of the back membrane as possible since that does not taste good when cooked and it blocks the rub and sauce from penetrating the meat.

Steak Teriyaki – Of all the dishes I fixed for my family, this is one that is always asked for. When the children were in college and coming home, this is what they wanted me to fix. The marinating sauce is simple. Double zip-bag it so you can turn it over several times while marinating it overnight. Then get the grill really hot and place on the grill. The meat will shrink as it cooks and the sugars will crisp up, but that is the great flavor. The steak should be cooked rare. And slice on the bias so the meat is tender. Fix this once and you will be a believer. I have fixed this so many times and I can tell you, there is usually nothing left over.

Beer Cheese Jalapeno Poppers – I found this recipe and thought it would be fun to try. I have fixed stuffed Jalapeno Peppers before, but always stuffing them from

the wide top part down into the pepper. Here we slice the peppers in half and then stuff and cook. I hope you enjoyed them.

Chef's Orange-Olive Oil cake – I chose this recipe because the cake is very moist and does not need refrigeration. You can make it a day ahead of time and keep it in a plastic cake carrier. I also think it is interesting to tell someone you have an olive oil cake. The orange is the surprise!

Chef's Italian Beef BBQ – What can I say? This is one tasty dish and can be prepared a day in advance using your crock pot. Once cooked and shredded the meat can be placed in an aluminum pan or glass baking dish to reheat. By saving the juice, it allows you to re-moisten the meat. Grinding up the peppers can add additional spice to the meat. You can serve as is or add additional BBQ sauce to give it more “tang”. I have used this for a full meal, served on large seeded buns, or as an appetizer served on small buns. Either way, it is usually a hit. Plus the fact that it only has three ingredients plus water makes it one of the easiest dishes to prepare.

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