

Picnic Recipes

Mom's Sweet and Sour Tomatoes

2 large beef steak tomatoes, sliced thin
1 large Bermuda onion, sliced thin
1½ teaspoons sugar
¼ cup apple cider vinegar, diluted with 1 teaspoon water.

Pull onion rings apart and line a large baking dish with onions and tomatoes. Sprinkle the sugar over the onions and tomatoes; pour approx. ¼ cup apple cider vinegar diluted with a small amount of water, over onion/tomato mixture, to taste. Sprinkle with oregano, if desired. Marinate 2 to 4 hours, covered in the refrigerator. Note: My mom would sprinkle a little Accent over the tomatoes. This salad is a great side dish to most BBQ meats

Mom's Famous Cucumber Salad

3 cucumbers, regular garden variety
½ cup oil
¼ cup white or rice vinegar
4 cloves garlic, diced
1½ teaspoons accent
Salt and freshly grated black pepper, to taste
Fresh dill springs to garnish

Peel and seed the cucumbers, then dice into small dice. Add cucumbers and the rest of the ingredients to a non-reactive bowl and mix well. Cover and chill for several hours. Serve either in a large bowl or on a platter, garnish with fresh dill sprigs, if desired. Great!

Marinated Cherry Tomatoes

24 Large Cherry Tomatoes, halved
¼ Cup plus 2 Tablespoons chopped fresh Basil
¼ Cup plus 2 Tablespoons Olive Oil
3 Tablespoons Red Wine Vinegar
½ Teaspoon salt
1/8 Teaspoon pepper

Place tomatoes in a zip-lock bag. Sprinkle in Basil. Combine vinegar, olive oil and salt and pepper. Pour into bag, zip shut and marinate up to 24 hours in the refrigerator. During the marinating period, move the tomatoes around in the bag so they all get coated with the oil and basil. Remove with slotted spoon and serve. They taste great.

Spinach & Strawberry Salad w/Pepper Vinaigrette

6 oz. Fresh baby spinach – stems removed, if needed, washed & dried, leaves torn if large. Approximately three cups of spinach is what you will have and need.
12 Fresh strawberries washed and diced into large pieces.
2 TBSP light olive oil.
1 TBSP vinegar (can used flavored, I use Tarragon vinegar or rice wine vinegar)
2 tsp honey
¼ tsp freshly ground black pepper
Dash hot pepper sauce, to taste
Dash cayenne pepper, to taste
Dash of sugar - optional
Toasted sesame seeds for garnish – either white or black or both

Stem, wash and dry spinach. Tear into bite size pieces. Wash and hull the strawberries. Dice them into large chunks. Place in bowl and lightly sprinkle with sugar, toss and allow them to macerate for 10 to 15 minutes. Mix pepper vinaigrette ingredients and whisk. Note: I make the dressing ahead of time and place it in a small mason jar so that I only need to shake it just prior to serving. Toss the spinach with the dressing. Remember, just enough to coat the leaves, a light touch! Gently mix in strawberries and plate salad, preferably on chilled

plates. Sprinkle with toasted sesame seeds, white or black or both, on top for garnish.

Watermelon Salad with Mint Leaves

1 (5 pound) watermelon
1 Vidalia or other sweet onion
¼ cup red wine vinegar
Salt and pepper
½ cup extra-virgin olive oil
2 tablespoons chopped fresh mint leaves plus 6 springs for garnish
4 ounces feta cheese, crumbled

Cut the flesh from the melon and cut into bite size pieces, removing and discarding the seeds and set aside. Peel and slice the onion into rings.

In a small bowl, combine the vinegar, salt and pepper and whisk until salt is dissolved. Slowly whisk in the olive oil, a few drops at a time. Add in the chopped mint, taste, and adjust seasonings.

In a large bowl, combine the melon, onion, and feta. Pour the dressing over the melon mixture and toss gently until everything is coated and evenly mixed. Garnish with mint springs. To serve, divide salad among individual plates and garnish with additional mint leaves.

Vegetable Pasta Salad

1 16-ounce package rotini pasta, uncooked
4 cups broccoli flowerets
2 cups sliced peeled carrots
1 large sweet red pepper, cut into julienne strips
¾ cup celery
Handful of grape tomatoes, large ones cut in half
Small can sliced black olives
Sliced Pepperoni – optional

1½ cups commercial Italian salad dressing

Cook pasta according to package directions, omitting salt. Drain. Rinse in cold water, and drain again. Place cooked pasta in a large bowl now add broccoli and remaining ingredients, tossing well. Add the salad dressing and toss again. Cover and chill at least 4 hours or overnight.

Farmers Market Gazpacho in Mason Jars

2 peeled cucumbers, diced into ¼ inch pieces
3 red bell peppers, seeded and diced into ¼ inch pieces
3 green peppers, seeded and diced into ¼ inch pieces
4 celery stalks, peeled and diced into ¼ inch pieces
2 medium size tomatoes diced into ¼ inch pieces
1 medium onion, diced into ¼ inch pieces
2 lemons
2 cups tomato juice, low-sodium
3 cloves garlic, minced
1 tablespoon ground cumin
1 cup fresh cilantro, chopped
Salt and pepper to taste – optional
Hot sauce – to taste – optional

Combine all ingredients except salt, pepper and lemons in a bowl. Remove 2 cups of this mixture and reserve. Using a stick blender or food processor, puree the remaining mixture in the bowl.

Add the 2 cups of the reserved mixture to the pureed mixture. Season with salt and pepper (optional) and hot sauce (optional) and the juice from the lemons. Cover mixture and refrigerate for at least two hours or overnight. When ready to serve, pour into small mason jars and garnish with some reserved chopped veggies or cilantro.

New Orleans Style Muffaletta Sandwiches

(This classic Southern sandwich gets better as the flavors develop. Make it the night before and store it in the refrigerator wrapped tightly in plastic wrap)

2 large round loaves crusty Italian bread
1 (16 oz.) jar Giardiniera (Italian vegetable salad in a jar)
1½ cups pitted green olives
1 clove garlic peeled
¼ cup red wine vinegar
¾ pound thinly sliced ham
½ pound thinly sliced salami
¼ pound thinly sliced provolone cheese
2 cups arugula

Slice the loaves of bread in half horizontally. Remove some of the insides from the bottom half of bread to create space for fillings.

Drain the Giardiniera and olives. In a food processor, add Giardiniera, olives, garlic, and vinegar and pulse until finely chopped. Spread half of this olive mixture on the bottoms of the two loaves of bread.

Top with the ham, salami, and provolone. Spread remaining olive mixture over provolone and top with the arugula. Replace the bread tops and press down firmly. Wrap tightly in plastic wrap and refrigerate to allow flavors to meld. When ready to serve, unwrap and slice each loaf in 8 wedges, securing each wedge with a toothpick or small skewer.

Fun Banana Boats:

Here's what you need:

8 bananas
1 bag caramel bits or caramels cut into bits
1 bag chocolate chips, preferably the mini chips
1 bag mini marshmallows
1 package original graham crackers, crushed into crumbs

Here's what you do:

Split the bananas, with the skin on, lengthwise, but don't cut all the way through. The goal is to create a boat to hold the ingredients. Load the bananas with about ¼ cup of the caramel bits and the chocolate chips. Using a spoon, spoon some of the crumbled graham cracker onto each loaded banana. Top with some mini marshmallows. Now, wrap each banana individually in 8 x 10- inch squares of foil and place on baking sheet. Have mom or dad place in a preheated 300-degree oven for 4 to 10 minutes, just long enough to melt the chocolate. Once warm, open the foil packets and enjoy, using a spoon to scoop out the goodies.

Note: You can pack everything to go and assemble if you are going on a picnic or camp-out. Once the grill has been used to cook whatever else you are preparing, assemble the banana boats and heat to melt the goodies.

Lemon-Caper Potato Salad:

3½ pounds small white or red potatoes
½ cup extra-virgin olive oil
3 lemons, juiced and zested
3 tablespoons minced shallots
2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
3 tablespoons chopped fresh dill
Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
2 tablespoons rinsed and drained capers

Scrub the potatoes and cut into quarters
Place in a stockpot and fill with enough water to completely cover the potatoes by 1 inch. Bring the water to a boil, reduce the heat, and simmer until the potatoes are just tender. Drain in a colander

In a bowl large enough to hold the potatoes, whisk together the olive oil, lemon juice, lemon zest, shallots, parsley and dill until well combined; season with salt and pepper to taste.

Add the warm potatoes and capers to the bowl. Toss gently with a wooden spoon or your hands (wearing disposable plastic gloves) to coat with the dressing. Serve warm, or refrigerate and served chilled.

Chef Cal's Cheesy Corn on the Cob

½ cup mayonnaise

5 – 6 ears of corn, husks and silk removed

1 cup shredded Parmesan Cheese

Chili Powder

1 teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Remove husks and silk from the corn, trim ends as needed. Brush a thin layer of mayonnaise on each ear of corn.

In a separate bowl, blend the Parmesan cheese, a dash of chili powder, salt and pepper together. Sprinkle this mixture over each ear of corn ensuring that all sides have some cheese on them. Wrap each ear of corn in heavy duty foil.

Place the wrapped corn on a grill; turn occasionally and cook for about 10 – 12 minutes, making sure corn is not burning. The kernels should just begin to brown. Remove from grill, unwrap and enjoy.

Chef Cal's Baby Back Ribs

4 to 5 pounds baby back ribs – Note: one Costco Package of Baby Back Ribs has three racks per package; two packages will feed 6 to 10 folks.

2 tablespoons kosher salt

1 tablespoon paprika

$\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon granulated garlic powder

1½ teaspoons granulated onion powder

1 teaspoon ground black pepper

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon cayenne pepper

$\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ cup apple cider

Un-wrap the ribs and place on a cutting board. You need to remove the membrane on the backside of each rack of ribs. Just insert a small knife under the membrane, along one of the rib bones and then gently lift so it comes away from the meat. Now insert your finger and gently remove the rest of the membrane. This will allow the seasonings to penetrate the backside of the ribs.

Place the ribs on a sheet pan. In a small mixing bowl, combine the kosher salt, paprika, garlic powder, onion powder, black pepper and cayenne. Stir well and then use approx. 1 tablespoon of spice rub to cover each of the ribs. Rub this mixture into the ribs, first on the meaty side, then on the backside of the ribs. Cover and allow the ribs to sit overnight in the refrigerator, or at least several hours in the refrigerator for the dry rub to get into the meat. Note: You can also use any commercial dry rub you want.

On day two, preheat the oven to 275 –degrees.

Remove the meat from the refrigerator and allow it to come to room temperature, about 20 - 35 minutes. Make sure the ribs are meaty side up in the sheet pan. If you have a rack you can put in the sheet pan that is better since it keeps the meat out of the sauce. If not, do not worry, it will still be fine. Carefully pour the apple cider into the pan; now wrap the ribs with aluminum foil to make a tight seal all around the sheet pan. Use heavy-duty foil or two layers of regular foil. Place the sheet pan in the oven and bake for 2 to 3 hours. You want the internal temperature of the ribs to be about 160-degrees when tested with an instant read cooking thermometer. Remove the ribs from the oven, keep them

covered and allow them to cool; now lift one edge of the foil and pour out any juice that is in the bottom of the pan. Reseal then refrigerate. You can, if doing more than one rack, rotate the racks halfway through the cooking time.

To finish the ribs, you can either use a grill or an oven. If grilling, build a hot fire and then spread the coals out evenly. Place the ribs meaty side up first and just grill to get some color on the back of the ribs. Now turn and continue to grill watching so that the ribs with sauce do not burn. You can cook without sauce and then baste while on the grill. Keep in mind most sauces have a brown sugar base, so watch that it does not burn. Remove from grill and serve. If using the oven, just place the ribs on a sheet pan, covered and sauced, and bake for about 35 to 45 minutes at 350 degrees. You will smell the ribs cooking. Uncover and baste again and then cook for an additional 10 to 20 minutes, basting the ribs and turning them over as you cook. Once the meat starts to fall off the bone, they are done. Remove, pop a cold one and enjoy! I must warn you, once you start on a rack of these ribs there is no going back, just give in to the BBQ. And, hope that dad shares this with the rest of the family!!!!

Steak Teriyaki

1 flank steak
1 cup soy sauce
2 cloves garlic – mashed
1/3 cup sugars (½ white & ½ brown)
1/3 tsp ground ginger

Mix last four ingredients. Marinate steak 5 hours up to 24 hours in mixture, turning occasionally, piercing with fork occasionally. Keep covered, and refrigerated, if marinating the longer time. Grill outdoors 7 minutes per side. Remove from grill and slice on the bias and serve. YUMO!

Beer Cheese Jalapeno Poppers

1 bottle Pilsner or larger beer
4 oz. cream cheese, softened

4 oz. shredded sharp Cheddar
2 Tbsp. chopped scallions
¾ tsp. minced fresh garlic
12 Jalapenos, halved lengthwise, ribs and seeds removed
4 strips thick-sliced bacon, diced and cooked till crisp

Heat the full contents of the bottle of beer in a saucepan over medium-high heat to a boil. Reduce heat to medium and simmer beer until reduced to ¼ cup.

Preheat the grill to medium. Brush grill grate with oil or spray with grilling oil.

Combine reduced beer, cream cheese, Cheddar, scallions, and garlic for the filling. Stuff jalapeno halves with 1½ - 2 tsp. filling; sprinkle with bacon. Grill poppers until filling is bubbly and jalapenos are charred, about 10 minutes.

Note: Poppers can be filled up to a day in advance and stored in the refrigerator until ready to grill. This makes them great for picnics as they only need to be kept cool until the grill is ready.

CHEF'S ORANGE OLIVE OIL CAKE

4 – 5 juice oranges, enough for 1½ cups fresh juice.
3 cups all-purpose flour
1 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. baking powder
1 ¾ tsp. kosher salt
6 large eggs, room temperature
3 cups sugar
¼ cup good extra virgin olive oil
Confectioner's sugar for sprinkling on cake when ready to serve

Preheat oven to 350-degrees. Butter and flour a 10-inch tube pan/angle food cake pan.

Grate the zest of 4 oranges. Squeeze the juice of these oranges plus more to equal 1½ cups. Combine with the zest and set aside.

In a medium bowl whisk together the flour, baking soda, baking powder and salt. Set aside.

In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment add the eggs and beat on medium speed until well combined, about 1 minutes. Slowly add the sugar and continue beating until thick and pale yellow, about 4 minutes.

Reduce speed to low and gradually add flour mixture alternating with olive oil, starting and ending with the flour mixture.

Pour in the orange juice and zest mixture. Mix well to combine, about 2 minutes. Pour the batter into the prepared pan. Bake the cake until a toothpick comes out clean with a few moist crumbs sticking to it, about 60 minutes. The cake will rise to the full height of the pan.

Remove pan from the oven and place on a cooling rack for 15 minutes. Remove the cake from the baking pan after that and place it on a wire rack to cool completely. Just before serving, dust the cake with the confectioner's sugar.

This is a very moist cake and will keep well at room temperature either covered with plastic wrap or in an airtight cake carrier type container for several days.

ITALIAN BEEF BARBEQUE

Prep time 6 minutes, cook time 7 –8 hours slow cook, or 5 –6 hours fast cook

3 – 4 pound piece of bottom-round beef

1 – 16 oz. Jar Pepperoncini

1 – 0.7 oz. pack of dry Good Seasons Italian Salad Dressing Mix

1+ ½ – 16 oz. Jar water

Trim fat from beef. Cut beef in half and place into a crock-pot. Pour the Pepperoncini into to crock-pot. Open the dry Good Seasons Italian Salad Dressing Mix and pour into empty Pepperoncini bottle. Fill with water and shake, pour over beef. Now add about another half bottle of water, shake again to get rid out any residue in jar and pour this over the beef too. Put lid on crock-pot and cook, either 5 – 6 hours at High or Fast Cook, or 7 – 8 hours at Low or Slow cook.

Meat is done when it pulls apart with a folk. Take meat out of crock-pot and using two forks, shred the beef. Drain liquid through strainer, reserving both the liquid and the cooked Pepperoncini peppers. You can chop up the peppers and mix in with the meat. Use the reserved liquid to moisten the meat. Reserve the liquid as it can be used when the beef is re-heated; sometimes it needs a little extra liquid.

Enjoy

This can serve 6 to 8 as a main meal or can serve up to 20 as an appetizer. Spread on crackers, on mini rolls, or on seeded buns. You can mix regular barbeque sauce into this mixture to achieve a richer texture. If you add the chopped up Pepperoncini peppers, this dish becomes spicy.