

LLI PROUDLY PRESENTS “PICNIC’S IN THE PARK”

Picnics take many different forms, from summer gatherings in the back yard, outdoor dining in national/state parks, gatherings at sporting events, beach parties, or tailgating during football season. No matter what shape your picnic takes, here are some helpful hints to make it a sure-fire happy experience.

Things to remember:

1. Cold foods must always be kept cold
2. Frozen water bottles serve two purposes – cold drinks and keeping other items cold.
3. Assemble some food items on site to avoid them getting soggy or warm during travel.
4. Don't forget to bring serving utensils and other items such as knives, forks, tongs or spatulas for grilling. Corkscrews (tape onto wine bottles so you don't forget them), openers, plastic cling, foil, zip bags and either paper towels or cloth towels for clean-up. Also a small cutting board.
5. A large bowl that can serve double duty, as a container for salad and then be used as a sink for cleaning up. Trash bags
6. Don't forget to bring trash bags, plus charcoal for the grill, lighter fluid and matches. Also some form of oven mitt/glove to handle hot items.
7. Bug spray or candles to decrease the number of bugs who want to be with you.
8. A very simple first-aid kit, just in case. Fully charged phones. Maps

9. Plenty of fresh water. Salt and pepper.
10. Drop cloth to put under the blanket, an extra blanket in case the first one gets wet. One or two wet clothes in zip bags to use for wiping things up.
11. Rain gear, just in case, picnic/camp cover, possibly a tent
12. Pillows to sit on, lawn chairs and beach chairs to sit on.
13. Flashlights and whistles for kids, sunglasses for everyone
14. Be sure you let someone know where you are going
15. A portable radio/cell phone so you can get weather reports
16. If you are going into a state park or wooded area, lotion for poison ivy
17. If you are going to the beach, a good high PF sunscreen lotion
18. Going to the beach, sandals so you can walk on "hot sand."
19. Table covers and table cover tie-downs, a supply of hand wipes
20. Leashes for pets and be sure to check that pets are allowed.
21. And last but not least, a roll of toilet paper to keep in the car, just in case
22. Skewers – To soak skewers, place them in a large empty soda bottle and fill with water. This way the entire skewer is soaked and it won't burn when placed on the grill. Some manufacturers of ready-made salad dressing sell smaller size bottles. They are great for picnics since they do not need refrigeration until they are opened.

TIPS ON PACKING FOOD:

Packing food for a picnic is largely a matter of common sense. With a little careful planning, your food will arrive at the intended picnic site undamaged and ready to eat. A general rule is to pack heavy or sturdy items first, and to put more delicate items on top of them.

There is no need to buy lots of special equipment for picnics, but an insulated cooler with ice packs is essential for keeping food cold and fresh, especially in summer. Disposable plates and glasses are lighter and safer to carry than china and glass.

Selecting Containers: Packing foods – use square food containers where possible, since they are easier to stack than round ones and therefore take up less space. Round plastic containers often have tight seals, so use these for transporting liquids.

Choosing a thermos – Use a wide-necked food thermos to keep foods such as fruit salad cold, they can also be used to keep casseroles or soups hot. Pre-chill or pre-heat your thermos using just boiled water or ice water in them prior to putting your picnic food in them.

Using boxes – If you do not have a picnic basket, use a large cardboard box or plastic file type box instead. It will hold more and will be easier to pack than a traditional picnic basket. Some file-type plastic boxes fold flat when not in use for ease of storage.

Transporting salads – Pack salad greens loosely, the greens should be washed and dried, then packed in large plastic bags with a paper towel to prevent moisture buildup. Other ingredients can be prepped and stored in small zip type bags. Greens need to be kept cool, packed with the other cold storage items.

Packing a dressing – To keep the crispness of a salad, toss it with the dressing at the picnic site. Transport the dressing in a screw-top jar packed in the same container as the salad.

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