

Pack love in picnic baskets, moving day baskets

Picnic baskets filled with lots of goodies and packed with love can make a big hit with family and friends. For the gourmet exters, a beautifully packed picnic basket can be a tasteful delight.

Baskets are filled with lots of colorful picnic baskets, or be creative — make up your own picnic baskets using round, oval or any shape and all different sizes. These baskets also can be used as serving pieces for breads, fruits, crackers, utensils, whatever. Splashes of colorful napkins, plates or silverware add to the eye appeal.

Moving day baskets for friends or family moving to another city or across town are indeed a welcome sight. Give them a break from running to the local fast food restaurant. Pack a basket filled with homemade goodies that can be a real "moving feast."

Make a hee-ho, difficult day very festive and fun. Don't plan on electricity for your meal or even furniture. Take along some blankets or folding chairs to sit and relax. Any box can be used as a table.

PITA BREAD sandwiches, fruit kabobs, tossed salad, fresh veggies with dip and cookies can be a welcome meal. If it's easier to take a brunch-type meal, consider bagels, muffins, fruits, cheeses, assorted crackers, French bread and popcorn for snacking during the afternoon.

Don't forget to pack beverages in an ice-filled cooler or a thermos of hot coffee. It's also a good idea to take along a couple of trash bags since these may already be packed. If you are taking along a bottle of wine, champagne or sparkling juice, bring a corkscrew and/or a bottle



Lois Thieleke
home economist, Cooperative Extension Service

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opener. On moving day, who can find anything!

Chicken, shrimp or tuna salad, either for sandwiches or on a bed of lettuce, can be easy to pack. Keep in mind food safety. You don't want friends or family to get food poisoning from your good deed. Salads with meat, eggs or fish need to be kept in a cooler with lots of ice to ensure food safety. Cold foods must be kept below 40 degrees, hot foods above 140 degrees and, of course, keep foods clean.

For a real touch of class, purchase some inexpensive wine glasses or tumblers. Paper cups set many teeth on edge. Use colorful cloth napkins or terrycloth finger towels instead of paper. Decorate a pop bottle with sparkly paper and add a fresh flower for the centerpiece. Make moving day fun and festive for your friends or family.

Picnic baskets are also fun for Meadow Brook or Pine Knob or any outdoor activity. Instead of stopping for a fast food box or bag dinner, try

something exciting. Use a large thermos for chilled soups such as gazpacho, vichyssoise, split pea or fruit soup. Serve with breadsticks, crackers, French bread, muffins or a varied selection of quick breads. Make mini-loaves of different kinds of breads like banana, cranberry, nut, lemon or zucchini ahead of time and freeze. These always are a hit with friends.

FINGER FOOD suggestions are guacamole and chips; cantaloupe

wrapped with prosciutto; and kabobs of cheese, pickles, olives and small onions. Tidbits of shrimp, salmon and crab, and pate are easy to serve, but remember these must be kept cold. Fresh vegetable/relish trays should be kept cold, not for safety reasons but so they look fresh.

Marinate a melée of fresh vegetables in Italian salad dressing overnight to develop their flavor. This can be used as a main dish or side dish. A homemade taco salad (minus the big shell) or a combination pasta and vegetable salad are all meals themselves. On a hot night, how about a tomato stuffed with a cold shrimp salad? Luckily, these can all be transported easily.

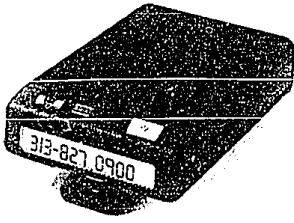
Fresh fruits in the summer are always a big hit with picnic-goers who have a sweet tooth. Pound cake or angel food cake cut into cubes,

served with fresh berries or a praline sauce, give an interesting twist to a picnic. Cookies or brownies are also favorite finger food desserts.

Whether your picnic is at the home of a friend who is moving, or in the backyard, around the pool, at the local park or at a concert, food safety is the most important consideration

when deciding what foods to take along. Look at your picnic equipment to make sure cold foods stay cold and hot foods stay hot.

A picnic should be special, festive, fun and, most of all, it should be safe and easy to manage. And when the compliments roll in, you can say, "It wasn't any trouble at all."



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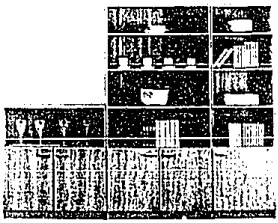
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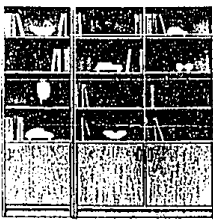
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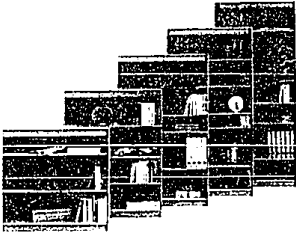
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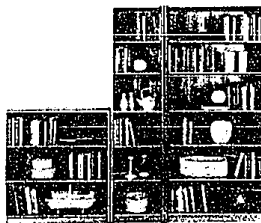
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