

Shrimp with pasta and fruit fabulous picnic fare

What better time for National Picnic Month than July? The weather is perfect and the full bounty of summer fruits and vegetables is available for outdoor feasting. Make your next picnic a real adventure with some delicious new ideas for healthy, mouth-watering dishes featuring the best foods summertime has to offer.

Make salads the stars of your picnic with low-fat creations that let the flavor of the fresh produce shine through. Fix a red bean salad with rinsed and drained kidney beans, chopped red pepper, finely chopped cabbage, chopped green onion, cubed feta cheese, chopped fresh parsley and minced garlic, tossed with a dressing of two tablespoons lemon juice and one tablespoon vegetable oil.

A cool salsa adds a colorful note to picnic meals. Just combine plain, low-fat yogurt with chopped fresh parsley and fresh coriander and a bit of cumin, then pour the mixture over thin-sliced

cucumber, chopped tomatoes and finely chopped onion. Remember that cold picnic foods, including salsa, should be thoroughly chilled before packing to prevent spoilage.

With a selection of delicious salads, you can serve a simple entree such as grilled chicken breast or salmon steak. Or, mix chunks of the meat with fruits, vegetables, grains and/or pasta in a main dish salad. For a chicken and melon salad, combine balls of honeydew or cantaloupe, cubes of cooked chicken breast, sliced celery, seedless red or green grapes and gently stir in a dressing made of four ounces each of low-fat sour cream and low-fat plain yogurt, and 1/4 teaspoon of curry powder.

For dessert, there's nothing as simple, sweet and cool as ripe, chilled fruit, such as a pear, a nectarine or a juicy slice of watermelon. Serve fresh berries or sliced peaches with your favorite low-fat frozen yogurt, or try blackberries (strawberries, kiwi, sliced

peaches or grapes are fine, too) with an orange cream sauce made by combining 4 tablespoons of granulated sugar, 1 tablespoon orange juice, the grated rind of one orange, and 1/4 cup of plain low-fat yogurt.

SHRIMP AND FRUIT PASTA SALAD

6 ounces ready-to-eat shrimp, thawed or fresh shrimp, peeled and steamed
1/2 cup celery, sliced
1/2 cup chopped green pepper
1 peach and 1 nectarine, thinly sliced
1 cup uncooked bow-tie macaroni

Dressing:
2 tablespoons oil
2 1/2 tablespoons white wine vinegar



1/2 teaspoon Dijon style mustard
1 small garlic clove, minced

Cook the macaroni according to package directions. Drain and rinse with cold water. Combine the dress-

ing ingredients. Add the shrimp, celery, pasta and pepper to the dressing. Mix gently, cover and refrigerate for several hours. Line pocket bread with fruit slices and fill with salad mixture.

Each of the six servings contains

150 calories and 6 grams of fat. For a free pad of banana-scented Post-it notepaper, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to the American Institute for Cancer Research, Dept. SNB, Washington, DC 20036.

Colorful salad combines Southwest flavors

AP — Corn dance carrot salad is inspired by a Santa Fe restaurant that specializes in Native American foods. In this colorful salad, carrots are cut into thin strips and fresh corn kernels are added to a dressing of two tablespoons lemon juice and one tablespoon vegetable oil.

CORN DANCE CARROT SALAD

1 pound carrots

2 ears corn on the cob or 2 cups frozen corn kernels, thawed
1 bunch fresh sage or basil leaves
1 red and 1 green bell pepper, halved, seeded and sliced
1/2 teaspoon red chili flakes (optional)
1/4 cup vegetable oil
1/4 cup red-wine vinegar
1 1/2 tablespoons sugar
1/4 teaspoon thyme
1/4 teaspoon rosemary, crushed
1/4 teaspoon pepper

15-ounce can red kidney, black or pinto beans, drained

Salted greens or sage leaves

Paprika

Trim carrots and cut into narrow, short sticks.

Remove husks from corn. With large knife, cut raw kernels from cob.

Hold sage leaves together in clump, finely slice crosswise to get a measure of 1/4 cup, packed.

Combine carrots, corn, sage, bell pepper and chili flakes, if using, in a bowl.

For dressing, combine oil, vinegar, sugar, thyme, rosemary and pepper in jar. Shake well.

Toss beans with about 2 tablespoons dressing. Toss remaining dressing with carrot salad. Spoon carrot salad into center of each of four dinner plates with bean salad alongside. Toss each plate with a few greens or sage leaves. Sprinkle paprika on plate rim in four lines like north-south-east-west on a compass. Makes 4 servings.

Recipe from: California Fresh Carrot Advisory Board

More people are cooking for one or two

By CHRISTINE VENEMA
SPECIAL WRITER

If you cook for one or two, you have plenty of company.

Statistics show that more than half of the households in the United States now consist of one or two persons. Even though singles and twosomes now outnumber families with two adults

and one or more children, most cookbooks and supermarkets still gear to the needs of larger households.

For many singles, the solution is to grab a burger at a local fast-food restaurant, pop a packaged dinner into the oven, microwave or cook a big meal and eat leftovers for what seems like forever.

While these approaches may be fine once in a while, a steady diet of this can be expensive and/or boring.

Cooking for one or two is not difficult, and may offer some advantages over cooking for larger families.

With only yourself, and one other person to please, you have more freedom to experiment with new foods, flavors and recipes. Eating schedules can be more flexible when you do not have to serve meals according to other people's schedules.

In the supermarket, small cans and packages generally cost more per unit. A cheaper family-sized package is no bargain if it goes stale or spoils before it is used.

However, singles and twosomes can use some family-sized food items to their advantage. For instance, buy regular sizes of bread, rolls and pastries and keep them in the freezer. Then remove portions as they are needed. Be sure to store the bread products in moisture/vapor-proof wrap and containers to avoid freezer burn.

Buy frozen vegetables in plastic

whenever possible. This makes it easy to remove the amount needed for a meal and put the rest back in the freezer.

You may want to buy a cookbook that is specifically written for one or two. Collecting recipes that can be easily decreased by halves or thirds is another option. Look for simple recipes that are easy to cook or put together from prepared ingredients.

When cooking more elaborate meals for one or two, make foods in large batches as a time saver. Then label and freeze the individual portions for use later.

When packages of meat, cheese and produce come in large sizes, do not be afraid to speak up. Most grocers would be happy to pack what you need into smaller portions.

If you have questions about food safety and nutrition, be sure to call the Michigan State University Extension, Wayne County, at (313) 494-3013.

Christine Venema is a home economist for the Wayne County Michigan State University Extension service.

Let them eat cake

AP — Chocolate mayonnaise cake became a favorite in the 1940s — and remains so today. The following recipe is from "Reader's Digest Down Home Cooking: The New, Healthier Way," edited by Beth Allen (Reader's Digest, \$28).

CHOCOLATE MAYONNAISE CAKE

2 cups sifted all-purpose flour
1/2 cup unwatered cocoa powder
1 1/4 teaspoons baking soda
1/4 teaspoon baking powder
3 large eggs
1 1/2 cups sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 cup reduced-calorie mayonnaise
1 1/2 cups cold water for the chocolate frosting:
12 ounces semisweet chocolate chips
1 cup reduced-fat sour cream
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 squares (1 ounce each) semisweet chocolate, melted
Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Butter and flour two 9-inch round cake pans; line the bottoms with wax paper.
Onto a piece of wax paper, sift the

flour, cocoa, baking soda and baking powder.

In a large bowl, with an electric mixer on high, beat the eggs, sugar and vanilla for 2 minutes or until fluffy. Reduce the speed to low and blend in the mayonnaise.

Using a wooden spoon, stir the flour mixture into the egg mixture, one-third at a time, alternating with the water, and beginning and ending with the flour. Divide the batter evenly between the pans; bake in a 350-degree F oven for 30 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out with moist crumbs. Cool the cake in the pan on a rack for 10 minutes. Turn out onto the rack, peel off the paper and let stand 5 minutes more.

While the cake cools, make the frosting: In a small saucepan, stir the chocolate chips over moderately low heat until melted. Remove from the heat; stir in the sour cream and vanilla. Ice the cake between the layers, on the sides, and on top with the chocolate frosting. Then drizzle with the melted chocolate. Makes 16 servings.

Nutrition facts per serving: 289 cal., 14 g fat, 5 g pro., 41 g carb., 0 g fiber, 218 mg sodium, 43 mg chol.

Tips for packing food to go

There is nothing worse than food poisoning to spoil a wonderful vacation! "With food, safety should be given first consideration," said Sylvia Treitman, home economist for the Michigan State University Extension Service of Oakland County.

"Some foods travel better than others for long periods of time. Foods, such as custards and cream-filled desserts, are best left at home."

Sandwiches, fresh fruits, carrot and celery sticks may be the safest standbys. They are easy to pack, easy to eat, easy to keep

cold and safe. Here are some tips for safe food travel:

- Food should be very hot or very cold before you pack it.
- Pack ice chest full of ice to keep things longer. Use plenty of ice on top of food.
- For long trips, a plastic chest is a good investment, as it keeps food longer than a plastic foam chest.
- Prefreeze meat sandwiches and drink boxes to provide a handy source for keeping other foods cold.

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