

2 UNIQUE



Make your wedding a magical day

h, spring! With the air turning fragrant, temperatures rising and birds chirping, it is most certain that love is in the air. Weddings seem to have taken a turn toward the unconventional in out-of-the-ordinary settings. While there is no standard blueprint for an outdoor or home wedding, it's important to consider your situation, tastes, fantasies and expectations. Outdoor weddings can offer a bride and groom the most personalized of settings. One of my favorite wedding memories is of a casual summer barbecue in which the couple invited unsuspecting guests over for an afternoon of summer fun and grilling. The couple went into the house and changed into their ceremonial garb an hour after guests arrived for the barbecue. They returned to the sunny yard (to the surprise of guests), and exchanged wedding vows. Outdoor events lend themselves to a variety of special settings. You can create an atmosphere with lights, tents, colors, and of course, the natural surroundings that nature contributes.

Selecting a menu

It is important to design a menu that will be festive, as well as sensible to meet the needs of the environment. For example, on a scorching August day, you would not want a menu of mostly hot items. It would be better to serve an array of beautifully displayed, elegant cold foods. Menu selection directly relates to the logistics of the site. We often talk over an entire garage, or rent a small work tent to handle on site production. There are numerous foods I would not recommend trying to execute with limited resources. Of course, time of day will be an issue in menu planning. Stations, such as a pasta bar, are always a favored food concept of mine as they allow us to be creative. We can cook in front of guests which adds a little unconventional flair. Here are some summer strolling menu suggestions:

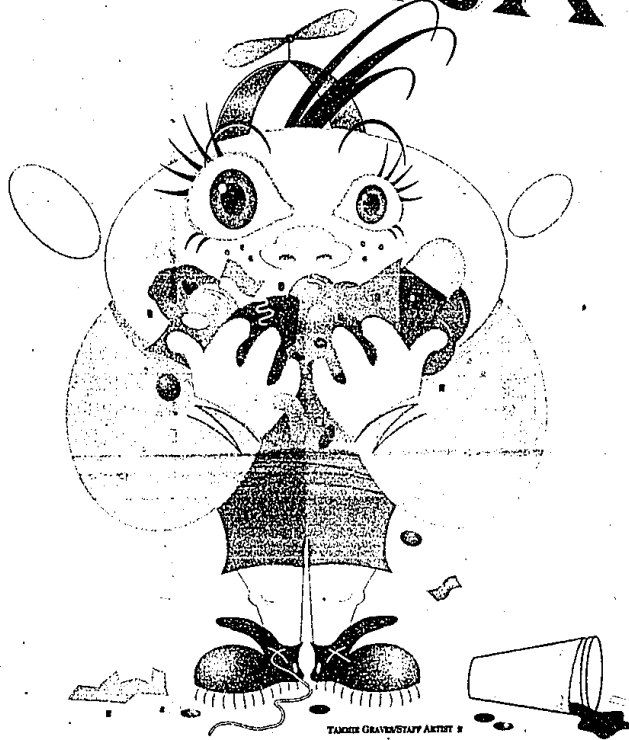
- European cheese wedges
 - Assorted fruits
 - Shrimp Gazpacho — served with pita chips, focaccia, savory biscotti, and gourmet crackers
 - Mediterranean Chicken Satay with sun dried tomato sauce
 - Roasted vegetable platter — Assorted roasted vegetables served with focaccia and other breads.
 - Roasted beef tenderloin or poached salmon platter served with heart rolls or crackers and an assortment of sauces.
 - Tex-Mex Bean Dip served with tortilla chips.
 - Salads bar with house fried chips
 - Shrimp, vegetable and grilled chicken quesadillas served with guacamole, salsa and sour cream
 - For passed hors d'oeuvres consider cucumber rounds with smoked salmon mousse; savory endive spears; seafood phyllo triangles; wild mushroom tarts; or cheese straws
- Beverages**
Instead of the usual pop, beer and mixed drinks, offer something unique. Set up a Vodka Martini Bar, serve micro beers, homemade lemonade, freshly brewed iced tea, fresh fruit

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LOOKING AHEAD

What to watch for in Taste next week:
■ Focus on Wine
■ "Never Cooked Before: Gotta Cook Now!" a new cookbook by Leonard Charles of Bloomfield Township.

Snack Attack



TAMARA GRAVENSTAFF ARTIST

SUPER SNACKS

Here are some snacks that have less than 1 gram of fat

- Two pretzel rods
- Two rice cakes topped with fruit spread
- Small whole wheat pita stuffed with sliced tomatoes, cucumbers, sprouts, and lemon juice/Dijon mustard sauce
- Cinnamon-rollin' bagel spread with apple butter
- Flour tortilla with vegetarian refried beans and salsa
- Eight ounces of Bloody Mary mix with a stalk of celery (without the vodka)
- One-half cup of applesauce sprinkled with nutmeg
- A dill pickle
- One cup of pasta tossed with fresh tomatoes and basil
- An English muffin spread with tomato sauce and mushrooms and heated to make a mini cheese-less pizza
- A frozen banana

- A cup of herbs tea stirred with a cinnamon stick
- Four small breadsticks
- Four ounces of fruit juice mixed with four ounces of club soda to make a fruit juice spritzer
- One frozen fruit juice bar
- Raw vegetables dipped in fat-free dressing
- One ear of corn, lightly salted
- A skewer of mushrooms grilled over the coals until lightly browned
- A steaming baked potato stuffed with hot vegetables
- Six melba rounds dotted with strawberry jam
- Three ginger snaps
- One slice of cinnamon toast
- A homemade oat bran muffin spread with raspberry jam
- A fruit kabob — assorted melon balls, pineapple and other fruit chunks on a skewer

Disarm junk food cravings with sensible snacks to nibble on

BY PEGGY MARTINELLI-EVERTS
SPECIAL WRITER

As I bring my new son, Jack, home from the hospital, I can't help but think that this is the only time in his life that I am able to provide him with the perfect diet. It won't be long at all before baby food will take the place of mother's milk. Once children begin to make choices, we start to offer snacks.

While Jack doesn't know about the choices of food that will be available to him in a few months, our other two children are aware of their snacking options and have formed definite preferences.

All of us — kids and adults alike — are constantly bombarded with temptations from food manufacturers to purchase their products. Our children see TV commercials for Dunkaroos and Crunchy M&Ms and immediately want those products. We are a nation of snackers.

We have grown up with the image of the Coca-Cola logo as a symbol of refreshment. It is often difficult to discriminate between what we want and what the manufacturers want us to want.

Since much of the packaged food, particularly snacks, that we find on our grocer's shelves are designed to appeal to our tastes, not our nutritional needs, they can be high in sugar and fat. It pays to read labels.

Healthy way to dine

Having said all that, I'm now going to tell you that it's OK to snack. Eating between meals is a healthy way to dine. It's also OK to eat that candy bar. Go ahead and have some chips if that's what you desire. All foods, including snacks, can fit into a diet, as long as they are balanced with wholesome foods.

- fruits
- veggies
- breads
- grains

The average American eats 16-20 pounds of snacks each year or roughly 40,000 calories from snack foods alone.

Snacking makes an important contribution to a healthy diet. Few children can get enough calories and nutrients from three regular meals. Children's stomachs are smaller and they need more frequent meals to meet their needs. Offer at least three snacks daily.

Where kids are concerned, we have to influence the type of snacks they eat. This can often be difficult, since our children receive so much pressure from advertising, peers, and tempting store displays.

It gets to the point that we can even feel guilty for not allowing our children to have the candy bar that beckons them from the display at the check-out aisle.

Now, having said that, now I'm going to tell you that it's OK to deprive your child of that candy bar, don't feel guilty!

Where snacking is concerned, I simply tell people that they should treat a snack as part of their food for the day, and use the same common sense that they exercise during meals.

Try to eat from the bottom of the food pyramid and also low on the food chain. That means eating fresh fruits and vegetables, breads and grains, limiting sugars, fats and oils.

So how do you get your child to choose the carrot stick over the chocolate-covered cookie? A few simple rules, well enforced, can help them learn to make good snack choices.

One fourth-grade teacher at Clarkston Elementary School has a good idea. Children in Keith Conklin's class are asked to bring a snack to school each day, to eat in the afternoon when hunger pangs can disrupt learning. However, he limits this type of snack that his students can bring to simply fruits or vegetables. Even though this also limits variety, Mr. Conklin is setting the stage for healthy

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You can have your cake and tuna too



MAIN DISH
MIRACLE
MURIEL WAGNER

What is one of the biggest nutritional bargains in your pantry? Would you believe that the familiar can of tuna is one of the healthiest foods that you can eat? Let me enumerate some of its virtues. To begin with, its first class complete protein matches that of any other meat, fish or poultry ounce for ounce. Water packed albacore tuna is rock bottom low in fat and saturated fat — even lower than a chicken breast. Despite the low fat content, tuna is high in Omega-3 fatty acids which lower cholesterol and triglycerides. Thoroughly rinsing tuna can lower the sodium content as much as 75 percent. This makes it acceptable for people on low sodium diets and a lot cheaper than the low sodium packaging on the grocery shelf. Of course, you know tuna is low in calories, it's probably been your favorite diet food for years. The question then becomes if tuna is so wonderful, why doesn't everyone eat lots of it? Because most people think that tuna means tuna salad on a plate or in a sandwich and that's that.

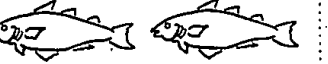
Part of what I do as a nutritional therapist is to help my patients to enjoy what they're eating and still meet their nutritional goals. No one wants to eat tuna salad ad infinitum — no matter how healthy it is.

I use this recipe to convince my patients that tuna can appear in many different delicious guises. Once it's well rinsed, tuna is a tasty cousin to chicken.

This recipe also illustrates how many prepared products take a lot of the "cook" out of cooking. I'm sure that you're familiar with ready prepared minced ginger and garlic. But the ready prepared red peppers really make me a relaxed cook. Gone is the time consuming task of broiling, cooling and peeling the blackened pepper skin. Look for ready prepared red peppers in the Italian food section of your local supermarket. I've even used pickled pimiento peppers, well rinsed, of course.

TUNA CAKES WITH GINGERED RED PEPPER COULIS

- 1 7/8 teaspoon hot pepper sauce, optional
- 1 cup prepared roasted red peppers
- 1 1/2 teaspoons garlic, minced



- 1 1/2 teaspoons fresh ginger, minced
- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
- 1/2 cup fine bread crumbs
- 3 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- 4 tablespoons nonfat mayonnaise
- 2 tablespoons green onions, chopped fine
- 2 cans (6 ounces each) white albacore tuna water-packed, rinsed, drained and chunked
- Fresh parsley or cilantro leaves for garnish (optional)

To prepare coulis (sauce) dice about 1/3 of red peppers and set aside. In a food processor or blender, puree the remaining red peppers, vinegar, hot pepper sauce and 1 teaspoon each of the garlic and ginger until smooth. (Sauce may be prepared a day ahead and refrigerated.)

Place bread crumbs in a shallow dish and set aside. Line two plates with wax paper. In medium bowl, thoroughly combine the mustard, mayonnaise, green onions, remaining diced red pepper, ginger and garlic.

Gently fold in the tuna. Divide mixture into 4 portions, patting each to form a firm cake. Then coat well with bread crumbs and transfer to the wax paper-lined

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