

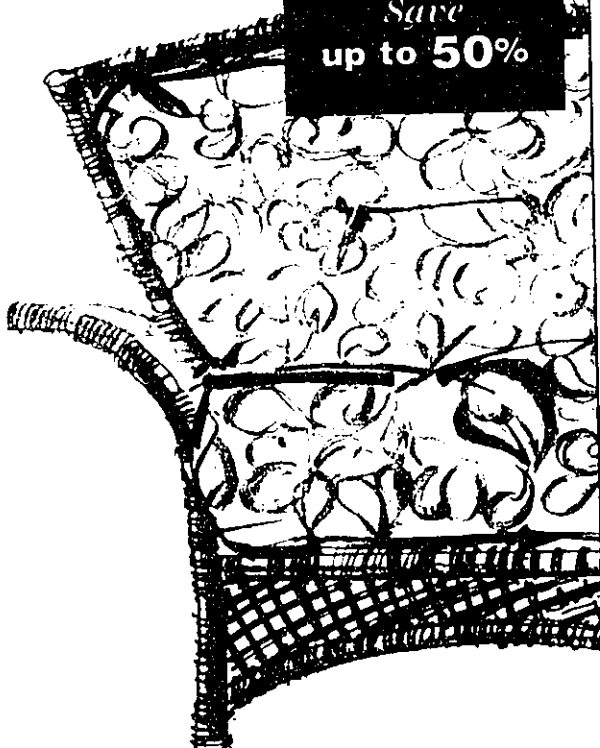
Our entire inventory of woven furniture is now on sale from such leading manufacturers as Brown Jordan, Lane Venture and Lloyd Flanders. If it's in stock, it has been reduced 50-50%. If you choose to special order, you'll still save 50-55%. This selection also features wicker designed for outdoor use! A must see.

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casual concepts

INVITING IDEAS Backpack in style for happy trails



RUTH
MOSSOK JOHNSTON

The kids are out of school, the weather is finally beautiful, and we have some vacation time coming up - what to do with these components? Plan a hike - go for a nature walk, "smell the roses," or at least seize the opportunity to see the roses.

Ten years of going to camp has left its imprint on me. I love the outdoors, the smell, sounds, and beauty of what surrounds me. I'm fortunate that my house is fairly secluded with woods and wildflowers - but I don't stop there - I enjoy a quiet day out on the nature trails or visiting my dear friend Betty-Lee in Indiana. She has 80 untouched serene acres. If the weather doesn't cooperate, I take out the movie "Indian Summer," get out a box of Kleenex, and call a few old Camp Petosega friends who I still keep in touch with.

Planning a day out on the trails is invigorating, and sure builds up a hearty appetite!

The days of having to eat jerky while camping or hiking are long gone - sure you can still bring some jerky along, but with the thermal and insulated containers available, it's no longer your only option.

As always, my foremost concern is food safety - keep cold things cold! Plan to bring along finger foods and easily handled edibles - food that don't require utensils. Take plastic, resealable bags for leftovers and discards. Make sure backpacks are durable and lined - if you're borrowing your child's school backpack, clean it out and line it with a plastic bag (the kind they pack your groceries in at the store are ideal). Water bottles now come with shoulder straps, perfect for long walks. Bring along prepackaged wet towels for hands - baby wipes do the trick. Backpacks can be filled with elegant edibles or simple camp-type foods.

Here are a few of my favorite take alongs:

- Vegetable chips (you can purchase these at gourmet food shops and upscale groceries). If you get really ambitious, you can make home-made vegetable chips and deep fry or bake.

- Pickle spears - homemade or store bought. Slice and drain pickles, wrap tightly in a moist paper towel, and then in plastic wrap.

- Sandwiches made with bread slices, lavash (paper thin bread for roll-ups) or biscuits (the cracker type). Make sure filling is something that does not spoil easily. Peanut butter on Quaker Caramel Corn - fat-free corn cakes - is delicious!

- Jerky or dried meats - the game-type are fun - Butcher Boy Meat Products in Warren (810) 770-0600 even has Alligator Chew in what appears to be a tobacco tin.

- Nuts and dried fruits - or a combination - make your own trail mix with your favorite nuts and dried fruits. Try using dried blueberries, cranberries and cherries, not just the common ones like figs, apricots and raisins.

These snack straws are easy to make and quite tasty - make them as spicy as you choose - wrap them carefully, they are delicate. These are quick to prepare, but they do need overnight refrigeration - allow enough time for preparation. It's easiest to make them in a food processor.

SPICY CHEESE STRAWS

1 pound extra sharp Cheddar cheese
1 3/4 cups all purpose flour
3/4 cup butter or margarine
Cayenne pepper to taste
Curry powder to taste

Grate cheese in a food processor or with a cheese grater. In the bowl of a food processor fitted with the steel blade, add the flour, cheese and butter - process slightly, add a pinch of cayenne and curry (desired amount). If you have a small food processor, do this in two separate batches. Process the dough until it looks like dough and is well mixed.

Remove the dough and chill covered or wrapped in plastic overnight. When you remove it from the refrigerator the next day - divide the dough into four sections.

Soften enough to be able to roll - roll out the dough between two sheets of waxed paper to about 1/4-inch thickness. Using a small sharp knife, cut the dough into narrow strips approximately 3 inches long.

Place the dough strips on an ungreased baking sheet - bake at 400 degrees F. until the cheese straws are slightly browned - cooking time should be 8 to 10 minutes. Do not overcook! Cool and serve - or pack up for your trek. Yield: approximately 100 pieces

Ruth Mossok Johnston is an author and food columnist who lives in Franklin.

Auction, 3-day preview scheduled

The Frank H. Boos Gallery, 420 Enterprise Court, Bloomfield Hills, will have an auction 6 p.m. Thursday-Friday, June 27-28.

A three-day preview will take place noon to 8 p.m. Monday-Tuesday, June 24-25, and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesday, June 26. Call (810) 332-1500.

The auction will feature property belonging to the estate of Gwendolyn Bevan of Southfield, the Dominican Sisters of Oxford and other collectors.

Included will be contemporary and 20th century prints and paintings, furniture, Stouben and other glassware, and an automobile.