Summer Picnic: Make It Healthy, Make It Fun

A picnic can be a great way to incorporate family or friend time with healthy eating and fun exercise while enjoying the outdoors.

Physical Activity:
- Fit in the guidelines for physical activity before or after your meal with fun activities the whole family can play.
- Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans:
  - Adults: Minimum of 30 minutes a day of moderate/vigorous activity, 5 days a week.
  - Children: 60 minutes of moderate/vigorous daily activity per week.

Wholesome Picnic Picks:
- Pack your basket with fresh fruits and vegetables for refreshing sides and snacks. Find those weekly at your local Farmers’ Market. See below.
- Choose lean meats such as fish and chicken or select other high protein sources like beans and nuts.
- Select 100% whole grain options for breads and side dishes.
- Choose sandwiches and pastas as easy options that include vegetables and whole grains.

Make the Most of Local Farmers’ Markets
1. Find the nearest farmers’ market
   - Easy access to a farmers’ market will make it more likely to be of use. Locate a market near you— http://coloradofarmers.org/
2. Make a list
   - The farmers’ market is full of local fresh produce, but don’t buy more than you will need. Show up with a list and you’ll be less likely to throw any away.
3. Arrive early
   - Arriving early will allow you to have a larger, fresher selection to choose from.
4. Ask the vendors
   - Ask questions about what fresh produce they recommend and what recipes they have.
5. Take cash, shopping bags, and an adventurous spirit!

Photo by https://www.flickr.com/photos/houndstooth4/5822569873/
Food Safety

When enjoying a beautiful day at the park, food safety tends to be at the back of our minds. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1 out of 6 Americans are affected by a foodborne illness each year. Don’t let your family or friends be the “one”.

- Wash hands before preparing, serving or eating and keep wet wipes handy when clean water isn’t available.
- Provide tongs, spatulas, spoons and other serving utensils to prevent touching the food.
- If you are going to cook meat, fish, or poultry products for or during your picnic, be sure they reach the recommended internal temperatures using the chart available at http://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/charts/mintemp.html
- Keep hot foods hot, and keep cold foods cold.
  - Prepare in advance by purchasing a cooler and ice or a thermos.
  - Do not leave foods in the temperature danger zone (41-140°F) for more than two hours.

Physical Activity

Have limited or no equipment available? No problem. Many fun activities can be done without having to purchase anything. Here are some ideas:

- Create an obstacle course with the trees, pond, and playground equipment if available.
  - Map out an obstacle course that can be run safely. Create activities to do at each station, such as jumping jacks, push-ups, sit ups, etc. Run back to home base. This can be done either as competition or just for fun, and can include any number of individuals.
- Establish a game of tag
  - Keep in mind safe boundaries of the surrounding area.
- Lead a session of yoga or Pilates.
- Utilize the park around you to go for a walk or run. Remember to stretch after your hard day at play by using trees, playground equipment and the grass.
Roasted Vegetable Pasta

This dish can be served warm or chilled and is great for a picnic side dish!

Ingredients

- 3 cups uncooked whole-grain penne
- 1 package baby portabella mushrooms, halved
- 2 cups grape or cherry tomatoes
- 1 red onion, sliced
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1/4 cup dry white wine
- 1 cup frozen petite green peas, thawed
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley
- 1/4 cup thinly shaved fresh Parmesan

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 475°F.
2. Cook pasta as directed on package. Drain and set aside.
3. Cut mushrooms, tomatoes and onions into similar sized pieces. Toss with olive oil and salt in a large bowl until they are well coated. Spread vegetables evenly on a baking sheet.
4. Bake for 15 minutes. Remove from oven to stir. Sprinkle wine over top of the vegetables and bake for another 7 minutes. Vegetables should be browned lightly and with a soft texture. Note: Summer is a great time to grill vegetables instead of heating up the oven. Place vegetables on aluminum foil in step 3 instead of a baking sheet, and grill for 10 to 15 minutes.
5. In a large bowl, combine the pasta and vegetables. Fold in the peas and top with parsley and cheese.

Cook time: 22 minutes   Serving Size: 1.5 cups   Number of Servings: 4

Nutrition Facts

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<th>Amount Per Serving</th>
<th>Calories</th>
<th>Calories from Fat</th>
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<td>Iron</td>
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“Cool” Summer Drinks

- **Fruit Infused Water**- Add berries, watermelon, and/or mango to a pitcher of water and chill for 2 or more hours.
- **Mint Peach Iced Tea**- Brew or steep green tea bags and chill. Add sliced peaches with a sprig of mint leaves.
- **Cucumber Melon Refresher**- Add a sliced cucumber and diced honeydew to a pitcher of water. Splash lime juice to taste.