

NATIONAL PICNIC MONTH



*"Never plan a picnic."
Father said, "Plan a
dinner, yes, or a house, or
a budget, or an
appointment with the
dentist, but never, never
plan a picnic."*

— Elizabeth Enright,
The Four-Story Mistake

WHY GO OUTSIDE?

Explore the health benefits of being outdoors

HEALTHY PICNIC RECIPES?

Healthy picnic ready recipes for your next outdoor adventure

DANGEROUS PICNIC MISTAKES

Common picnic faux pas that can cause food poisoning

PERFECT PICNIC SPOT

Tips on how to find the best place for a picnic



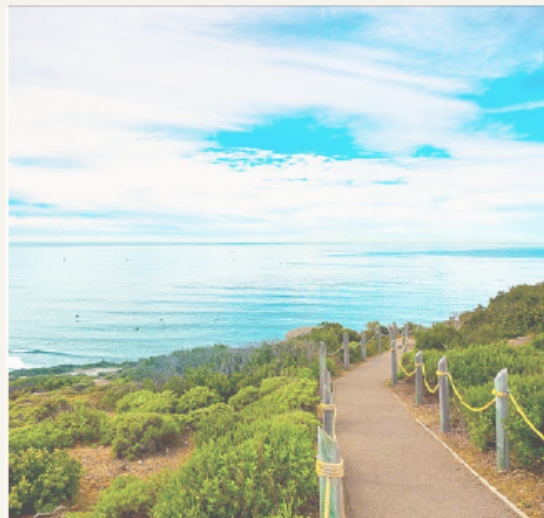
WHY GO OUTSIDE?

Imagine the last time you were outside and really enjoyed nature. Maybe you were in a garden and there was a small pond nearby with small fish in it trying to catch dragonflies as they landed on the water. You could hear the water trickling, the breeze flowing through the leaves in the trees. You felt refreshed, didn't you?

Apparently, there is a very good reason why you felt this way. Recent studies have shown that being near green space can help reduce stress and diminish depression and anxiety.

Hanging out in a "restorative" environment has also been proven to help alleviate mental fatigue and improve cognition! You can even get some of these benefits from looking at a picture of a natural scene.

In one study, three groups were tired out through a series of tests. After the tests, one group saw a picture of geometric shapes, one saw a picture of a "restorative environment", and one saw a picture of a non restorative environment (buildings, structures, etc). Only the group exposed to the restorative environment saw any improvements in the final attention test



Let's go outside!

***TIP:** A restorative environment can be anything or anywhere you want. Pick something you like and make it your background on your computer or your phone to get these benefits at work and on the go!

HEALTHY PICNIC RECIPES

There are so many delicious things you can pack for a picnic besides a turkey sandwich, and it's so much more satisfying to eat food you know is good for your body and is exciting too. These recipes are packed with fiber and nutrients to keep you full and maintain your energy levels at their best while waking up your taste buds!

GRILLED HALLOUMI & WATERMELON SALAD

Halloumi is a hard, salty cheese that won't melt on the grill!

- 1 8-9-oz package halloumi, cubed
- 1/2 c olive oil + 1-2 TBSP
- 1/2 c red wine vinegar
- 1 cup diced tomatoes
- 1 cup diced cucumber
- 1 cup cubed watermelon

Coat pan with 1-2TBSP of olive oil to prevent sticking and let it get hot. Saute cubed halloumi until it is brown and crispy on the outside. Toss all ingredients together in tupperware and shake it up!

Makes 7-8 servings

*If using a grill, cut halloumi into 1" thick slices and coat with the olive oil.



SUPER SANDWICH

- 2 slices sprouted whole grain bread
- 1/2 avocado
- 2-3 tomato slices
- lean meat of your choice (or smash chickpeas for vegan option)
- cayenne pepper to taste (optional)
- 1 wedge of lime
- lettuce

Smash avocado onto each slice of bread & sprinkle with a tiny pinch of cayenne pepper (unless you like things really spicy!), squeeze wedge of lime over top of avocado to prevent browning. Assemble sandwich with lean meat or smashed chickpeas,

*If using smashed chickpeas, season with salt, pepper, cumin, lemon, and garlic powder to taste.



DANGEROUS PICNIC MISTAKES

Think about the last time you were on a picnic. Maybe you packed some summer favorites like potato salad, ham and cheese sandwiches, and watermelon chunks. You probably packed them in a cooler and took them to the beach. By the time you got hungry, the ice was gone and the cheese in your sandwich had melted a little. The potato salad was only slightly cold. These are big no-no's in food safety and prevention is as easy as replenishing the ice when it melts!

Certain foods have to be kept at the right temperature so that bacteria cannot grow. They are called TCS foods. TCS stands for *Time/Temperature Control for Safety*. These foods have to be kept below 41°F. The range between 41°F and 135°F is called the *Temperature Danger Zone* (TDZ). It is within this range that dangerous bacteria like *E. Coli* and *Salmonella* can thrive. When you bring your favorite foods out on a hot, sunny day, you are bringing them into the TDZ. TCS foods include: dairy, eggs, meats, cut fruit & vegetables, sprouts, and cooked starches (like rice, baked potatoes, etc).

Another very common mistake is ordering burgers undercooked. Ground meat should always be well done. Ground meat is a breeding ground for bacteria because it has everything a bacterium could want: moisture, air, and food. If there is even a tiny bit of pink in your burger, that might also mean thousands of bacteria that can potentially make you very sick. Whole cuts of meat are very different from ground meats because they have less surface area for the bacteria to stick to in the first place.

It's also very important to keep raw meat away from things that don't need to be cooked. Raw meat can leak juices with lots of bacteria in it onto things like lettuce or fruit salad. Since you don't cook these foods, you don't get a chance to kill off the bacteria with heat. So, if you're packing raw meat for a barbecue, make sure you pack it separately in a sealed plastic bag.

HOW TO FIND A PERFECT PICNIC SPOT

Written by Dan Lawton

Nothing influences a picnic more than the spot. From beach-side barbecues to streamside feasts, locale is the most important variable of any picnic experience. Remember, all picnic spots aren't created equal and finding the right one can make or break your picnic experience. Here are some tips to help you find a stellar picnic spot.

Who's in your crew?

Are you picnicking solo? If so, you only have to think about your needs, but if you're planning for a group, you'll need to consider others as well. Picking a remote spot might sound tempting, but remember that bathroom facilities will be key if you're traveling with children. Also, if you're lugging a bunch of picnic gear, you might want to select a picnic spot you can drive to.

Urban or rural?

Are you seeking solitude or more enchanted by the urban mosaic of a big city? Campgrounds and wilderness trails are great spots if you're looking to get away from the noise and commotion of urban life and enjoy a stellar view, but don't overlook more city-central picnic spots, such as municipal parks or even the grounds of a state capitol.

Is water in the picture?

Lakes are not only incredibly scenic picnic spots, but they also provide swimming and fishing options. Both of these are great activities for before or after a picnic. If you're a skilled fisherman, you might even be able to catch your main course!

A picnic with a view

Nothing enhances a picnic like a majestic view, which is why many picnickers choose to feast on top of a summit or hill. This is a great option if you're in shape and adventurous, just make sure you have lightweight picnic equipment and a map of your route.

How popular is the spot?

Nothing irks some picnickers like sharing a spot with hundreds of other revelers. However, some families enjoy the bond of relaxing in an environment with others. If you think the spot you're gunning for is pretty popular, do some research to find out the size of the crowd. If you want something more private, either find a different spot or plan your picnic for a weekday.

The weather and the elements

Preparing for the elements consists of more than just checking the forecast. If you're picnicking in mountainous areas, you'll need to be prepared for cold setting in and higher elevations. If you're heading to low-lying ground, you'll need to wear appropriate footwear in case you encounter standing water.

The bottom line

Finding a great picnic spot isn't solving a mystery. If you simply identify what you're looking for and do some research, your bound to find a picnic spot that's perfect for you and your gang.

