

Family Living Focus

by
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Salads To Go

It's time for summer salads "to go" — to picnics, to covered dish suppers.

It is always a challenge to plan ahead to keep food really cold until you're ready to eat. There are new devices that can help do the chilling job. For example, there are padded insulated carrying bags that hold casseroles or 9x13-inch pans with chiller units that fit the bag to keep the food cold. There are also double-walled platters and bowls that can be frozen ahead of time and then used to keep the salad chilled.

One of the important techniques to use for maximum food safety is to make sure that when you prepare a salad mixture, all the ingredients like salad dressing, celery, vegetables, pasta, tuna or other meats or whatever—are pre-chilled so that you have a chilled mixture when the recipe is complete. Chill chopped potatoes or freshly cooked pasta or rice before making the salad. If you mix warm foods together you will have a thick mixture that is very slow to cool.

Just to set the record straight—again—salad dressing and mayonnaise are not inherently perilous foods. Both contain large amounts of vinegar

that make them acidic and not hospitable for bacteria by themselves. What does happen though, is that when they are mixed with lots of other protein foods, the acidity is diluted and the contamination potential is increased so it is a good idea to keep salad mixture at 40 degrees or less. If any food has been in the danger zone between 40 and 140 degrees for more than two hours you should think about discarding it. At a picnic, keep most food in the cooler until you need it. Do not return warm food to the cool food container in the cooler. Keep it separate or discard it.

It is also very important to be attentive to sanitation when you are mixing salads together. Because you have a variety of ingredients, many of which must be chopped or cut and handled, you have more opportunities for cross contamination. Be sure also to thoroughly wash fresh produce that goes into salad mixtures, chasing down any soil particles lurking in the greens. Wash your hands often—with soap. Folks have been asking about some of the waterless hand cleaners that are appearing on the market. Do read the instructions about how to use them but they are not

designed for use before handling food with bare hands.

If your picnic involved raw chicken or burgers, try to have as much of the handling done before you get to the picnic so you don't have to handle raw meat with your hands—especially if there are poor hand washing facilities. Maybe this is the time to toss some disposable gloves into your picnic basket.

Be sure to segregate the raw meats or poultry from other foods that will not be cooked so there is no transfer of bacteria. Think about a separate cooler or at the very least a sealed container inside the regular cooler to keep juices confined. Don't put the cooked burgers back on the plate that held the raw burgers.

Do not use loose ice that has

been a cooling agent in a chest for putting into drinks. It could have picked up bacteria. A better way would be to put the ice into several small zipper-type bags to keep it clean while it cools. Try to get the cooler chilled ahead of time so that when you put in the chilled food, the whole system will keep you at safe temperatures for longer time. Keep the cooler in the air conditioned part of the vehicle if you can.

Here's one of my favorite summer salads—"Bloody Mary Turkey Salad." It is called Bloody Mary because part of the marinade/salad dressing is made with Bloody Mary Drink mix — a spicy hot tomato juice plus red wine vinegar, balsamic vinegar, oil, herbs and garlic. It's a big hit and easy to prepare. Here's the recipe:

BLOODY MARY TURKEY SALAD

2 pounds deli-style cooked turkey breast sliced 1/4 inch thick, then into thin strips
1 1/2 cups Bloody Mary Drink Mix

1/3 cup red wine vinegar
1/4 cup Balsamic vinegar
1 tablespoon oregano
1/3 cup salad oil
4 cloves garlic, thin sliced
1/2 pound sliced mushrooms

Combine ingredients in 1/2 gallon zipper bag the day before and refrigerate. Turn bag several times. At serving time, arrange mixed greens, sliced carrots, radishes, cucumbers, tomato wedges, green pepper strips, hard cooked egg wedges, olives on a large tray. Place turkey with marinade in a bowl. Guest can put down green and veggies and top with turkey. Enjoy!



Maryland Fair Contestants Needed

(Continued from Page B15)

Fair. Parking on the Fairgrounds for a minimal fee and free parking at the Park and Ride location on Deereco Road are avail-

able on a first-come, first-served basis. The Fairgrounds encourages the use of the Light Rail with an easily accessible Light Rail

stop at the Fairgrounds' Cow Palace Gate. For fairgoers' convenience, Carrollton Bank ATM Machines will be located in front of the 4-H Building, the Cow Palace, the Exhibition Hall and in the center of the Grandstand on the upper and lower levels. For general information call (410) 252-0200, ext. 226.

Pa. Dutch Festival July 30-August 1

Authentic buggy rides are to be only part of the fun when the Pennsylvania countryside comes to the city during the Pennsylvania Dutch Festival at Reading Terminal Market, July 30-August 1. The festival runs from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. and features authentic Pennsylvania Dutch handmade quilts, brooms, woodcrafts, cakes, pies, donuts, ice cream, preserves and more. On August 1, the festivities include Amish buggy rides around the Reading Terminal Market, as well as live horses, sheep, goats, chickens, donkeys and calves. For more information about the Pa. Dutch Festival, call (215) 922-2317.

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