

PACKING A PICNIC BASKET

The essentials: A nice picnic basket. 2 large and 4 small plastic plates (preferably 2 real plates), forks and knives to eat with (semi-elegant utensils are preferable to plastic and are a nice touch), a sharp knife to cur fruit and cheese with, cloth napkins, wine or Champagne glasses and of course, a nice blanket to sit on. Don't forget gum or mints and a small pack of handy-wipes.



Now for the fun part...

Find a grocery store with a well-stocked deli and peruse the selections. Be daring and experiment if you're so inclined. A quarter pound each of five or six cheeses and meats will tantalize the taste buds while seafood, pasta or fruit salads, fresh shrimp or add variety. Apples, pears, bananas, strawberries or any other non-messy fruit give a touch of colour to your spread. Request a small container of ice to keep perishables fresh and be sure to remember crackers, French bread and condiments like Grey Poupon to accent your deli selections. ...And lest I forget, Champagne, Wine or Sparkling Cider for that "*Romantic*" toast.

Don't Spill The Wine

One of the hardest things to do is to keep wine or Champagne glasses from tipping over while at your picnic. Here's a great tip: Use 2 of the small plates (preferably 2 real plates and not plastic.. they're more sturdy) you brought with you and place them firmly flat on the ground, then place your glasses on the plate. Simple and easy!

THE IMPECCABLE PICNIC

A nice blanket to sit on is essential. If it's windy, use some of the items from your basket to hold the corners down until you get settled. Lay out the cloth napkins with the silverware on it and your set. Spread out all the fixin's on the two large plates and use the smaller plates to eat from.

Keep in mind that if you do picnic, it's important to know which parks allow glass containers and / or alcohol. Although you probably won't be bothered if you're discreet and in an out of the way area, it's always a good idea to have an enclosed container to hold your bottle. If you really have to, pour your drinks into a plastic bottle beforehand.

If you're going to extend the picnic into the evening hours, bring two blankets so that when the evening turns chilly you can sit on top of one and cuddle up under the other. A small vase with flowers is a nice touch. A candle can also add a balanced and polished look, however, if you do use a candle, be sure it's an enclosed candle.

That's it! Simple and easy, and bound to please that special someone. Follow the above recommendations and you'll be sure to have an impressive spread that just might win the heart of your date. If what you've put together isn't enough to impress, you may be with the wrong person!

If time allows, search out your picnic spots beforehand for the best views and privacy. *Bon Appetit!*