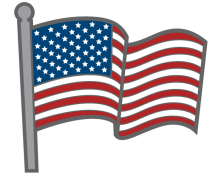


Healthy Picnic Eating Tips



For me, Memorial Day is like the unofficial beginning of summer. It means lots of socializing, get-togethers with friends, picnics, sunshine, barbecues, and outdoor activities.

It also means lots of opportunities to indulge in those oh-so-yummy-but-not-so-healthy weekend cook-out treats! Here are a few tips to help you indulge without the bulge this picnic season.

1. **Make a plan.** Think about where you will be, who you will be with, what foods will be available, what foods are really special to you vs. those you could probably do without, what are your personal triggers to overeat and how you can minimize them. Once you've thought about all of these things, make a plan of action. It's much easier to deal with a difficult social eating situation if you've already planned for it.
2. **Let your family and friends be the focus.** It's hard not to be consumed by food when hotdogs, potato salad, potato chips and ice cream is everywhere. But remember, picnics are a time to reunite with good friends and family, to share laughter and cheer, to celebrate and to give thanks. Try focusing more on family and friends and less on food to help you get through this picnic season a little lighter.
3. **Eat before you go to a party.** It is not a good idea to arrive at a party famished. Not only are you more likely to overeat, but you are also less likely to resist the temptation of eating the higher fat and higher calorie foods. Try eating a piece of fruit, a small carton of yogurt, or a piece of string cheese before you go.
4. **Downsize your portions.** It is okay to treat yourself to a nice drink, dessert, chocolate or sweets without guilt but don't completely "go rogue" eat whatever you want and tell yourself you will start over on Monday. Moderation is always the key

to healthy eating and weight control. Go for small portions. This way you can sample all the different foods available.

5. **Make healthier versions of your favorite dishes.** Traditional picnic foods taste good but are loaded with extra fat and calories that are not good for your health. There are plenty of low fat and low calorie substitutes that are amazingly tasty. Give them a try, and share your cooking creations with friends and family.
6. **Slow down when you eat.** It takes 20 minutes from the time you eat until your brain gets the signal that you are full. Remember, it's not a contest to see how many plates you can fill. Eat slowly, put your fork down between bites and take a moment after you eat to sit back and relax. Once those 20 minutes are up, you likely won't need that second helping.
7. **Keep up your exercise routine.** Although the summer may be a busy time, it is important to not skip your exercise routine. If you're having trouble finding time to workout, try doing half of your regular routine, park your car further away from stores, do a few laps around the mall when shopping or exercise first thing in the morning before your day gets started.
8. **Limit the booze to help you lose.** Alcohol contains many "empty calories" that can contribute to weight gain. Liquors, sweet wines and sweet mixed drinks contain 150-450 calories per glass. By contrast, water, tea, and coffee are calorie-free. If you choose to drink, select light wines and beers, and use non-alcoholic mixers such as water and club soda. Limit your intake to 1 or 2 alcoholic drinks per day. And, watch out for extra calories in soda, fruit punch, and lemonade.
9. **Maintain perspective.** Overeating one day won't make or break your eating plan. And it certainly won't make you gain weight! It takes days and days of overeating to gain weight. If you over-indulge at a picnic, put it behind you. Return to your usual eating plan and exercise routine the next day without guilt or despair!

If you happen to be hosting your Memorial Day BBQ, try some of the attached recipes for a lighter, healthier, but still amazing delicious meal. Have a great long weekend everyone!!