

Here are some tasty recipes for enjoyable backyard meals.

Let us know if there is something you would like us to put in our column, or if you have a recipe to share, please submit to ads@thedrummer.com.

Picnic Fruit Punch

Prep: 10 min. + chilling

Makes: 5 quarts

8 c. cranberry juice
3 c. pineapple juice
3 c. orange juice
1/4 c. lemon juice
1 liter ginger ale, chilled
1 med. navel orange, sliced

In a large container, combine juices; refrigerate. Just before serving, transfer to a punch bowl; stir in ginger ale and orange slices.

Classic Macaroni Salad

Prep/Total Time: 30 min.

Makes: 8 servings

2 c. uncooked elbow macaroni
1 c. fat-free mayonnaise
2 T. sweet pickle relish
2 tsp. sugar
3/4 tsp. ground mustard
1/4 tsp. salt
1/8 tsp. pepper
1/2 c. chopped celery
1/3 c. chopped carrot
1/4 c. chopped onion
1 lg. hard-boiled egg, chopped
Dash paprika

Cook macaroni according to package directions; drain and rinse with cold water. Cool completely.

For dressing, in a small bowl, combine the mayonnaise, pickle relish, sugar, mustard, salt and pepper. In a large bowl, combine the macaroni, celery, carrot and onion. Add dressing and toss gently to coat.

Refrigerate until serving. Garnish with egg and paprika.

Grilled Chicken Salad with Blueberry Vinaigrette

Prep Time: 20 min. + marinating

Grill Time: 10 min.

Makes: 4 servings

2 boneless skinless chicken breast halves (6 oz. ea.)
1 T. olive oil
1 garlic clove, minced
1/4 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. pepper

Vinaigrette:

1/4 c. olive oil
1/4 c. blueberry preserves
2 T. balsamic vinegar
2 T. maple syrup
1/4 tsp. ground mustard
1/8 tsp. salt
Dash pepper

Salad:

1 pkg. (10 oz.) ready-to-serve salad greens
1 c. fresh blueberries
1/2 c. canned mandarin oranges
1 c. crumbled goat cheese

Toss chicken with oil, garlic, salt and pepper; refrigerate, covered, 30 minutes. In a small bowl, whisk together vinaigrette ingredients; refrigerate, covered, until serving.

Grill chicken, covered, over medium heat until a thermometer reads 165°, 5-7 minutes per side. Let stand 5 minutes before slicing.

Place greens on a serving plate; top with chicken, blueberries, and mandarin oranges. Whisk vinaigrette again; drizzle over salad. Top with cheese.

Heirloom Tomato Salad

*Yields: 6 servings
Total Time: 15 mins*

1/4 c. olive oil
2 T. Champagne vinegar
1 T. pure honey or agave
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 pt. assorted-colored cherry or grape tomatoes, halved
2 T. finely chopped fresh chives, plus more for serving
1 lb. heirloom tomatoes, some sliced & some cut into wedges
Small basil leaves, for serving

Whisk together oil, vinegar, and honey in a bowl. Season with salt and pepper. Add cherry tomatoes and chives; toss to combine.
Arrange heirloom tomatoes on a plate. Season with salt and pepper. Spoon cherry tomato mixture on top. Garnish with basil and additional chives.

Three-Pepper Coleslaw

*Prep: 20 min. + chilling
Makes: 8 servings*

1 pkg. (10 oz.) angel hair coleslaw mix
1 med. sweet red pepper, finely chopped
1 med. green pepper, finely chopped
1 to 2 jalapeno peppers, seeded & finely chopped
3 green onions, chopped
1/4 c. white wine vinegar
2 T. lime juice
2 tsp. canola oil
1 tsp. sugar
1/2 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. pepper

Place the first 5 ingredients in a large serving bowl. In a small bowl, whisk the remaining ingredients. Pour over coleslaw mixture; toss to coat. Cover and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes before serving.

Chicken Caesar Pitas

*Prep Time: 20 min. + chilling
Grill Time: 10 min.
Makes: 4 servings*

3/4 tsp. dried oregano
1/2 tsp. dried basil
1/4 tsp. onion powder
1/4 tsp. paprika
1/8 tsp. dried mint
1 lb. boneless skinless chicken breasts
2 c. torn romaine
1 c. ready-to-serve brown rice
1/2 c. reduced-fat Caesar vinaigrette
8 whole wheat pita pocket halves

In a spice grinder or with a mortar and pestle, combine the first five ingredients; grind until mixture becomes fine. Rub over chicken.
On a greased grill, cook chicken, covered, over medium heat or broil 4 in. from the heat for 4-5 minutes on each side or until a thermometer reads 170°. When cool enough to handle, cut into 1/2-in. strips. Refrigerate until chilled.
In a large bowl, combine the chicken, romaine, and rice. Drizzle with vinaigrette; toss to coat. Serve in pitas.

Grilled Huli Huli Chicken

*Prep Time: 15 min. + marinating
Grill Time: 15 min.
Yield: 12 servings*

1 c. packed brown sugar
3/4 c. ketchup
3/4 c. reduced-sodium soy sauce
1/3 c. sherry or chicken broth
2-1/2 tsp. minced fresh gingerroot

1-1/2 tsp. minced garlic
24 boneless skinless chicken thighs (about 6 lbs.)

In a small bowl, mix the first 6 ingredients. Reserve 1-1/3 cups for basting; cover and refrigerate. Divide remaining marinade between 2 large shallow dishes. Add 12 chicken thighs to each; turn to coat. Refrigerate, covered, for 8 hours or overnight.

Drain chicken, discarding marinade.

Grill chicken, covered, on an oiled rack over medium heat for 6-8 minutes on each side or until a thermometer inserted into chicken reads 170°; baste occasionally with reserved marinade during the last 5 minutes.

Blackberry Icebox Cake

Yield: 8 - 10 servings

Prep Time: 20 mins

Total Time: 8 hours 20 mins

1 (16 oz.) frozen pound cake, thawed
1 T. salted butter
1-1/2 c. blackberries, halved, plus whole blackberries for garnish
3 T. blackberry jam
Zest of 1 lemon plus juice of 1/2
1-1/2 c. heavy cream
2 T. powdered sugar
Fresh mint sprigs, for garnish

Remove the pound cake from its pan and line the pan with plastic wrap, leaving plenty of overhang.

Slice the domed mound off the pound cake and set aside, then slice the remaining cake horizontally into 3 slices.

Melt the butter in a pan over medium heat. Crumble the cake mound into crumbs. Add to the pan and toast until golden brown all over, 1 to 2 minutes. Set aside to cool.

Mix together the blackberries, blackberry jam, lemon zest and juice in a bowl. Set aside.

Combine the heavy cream and powdered sugar in a bowl. Whip until firm peaks form.

Place one layer of cake in the bottom of the lined pan and press to slightly flatten. Top with a third of the blackberry mixture and a third of the whipped cream. Repeat the process 2 more times, ending with whipped cream. Loosely cover with the overhanging plastic wrap and chill in the refrigerator for 8 hours.

To serve, carefully lift the cake from the pan and remove the plastic wrap. Top with the toasted crumbs, a few blackberries, and a sprig of mint, then slice and serve.

Lemon Zucchini Drops

Prep Time: 20 min.

Bake Time: 10 min./batch

+ cooling

Yield: 3-1/2 dozen

1/2 c. butter, softened
1 c. sugar
1 lg. egg, room temp.
1 c. finely shredded zucchini
1 tsp. grated lemon zest
2 c. all-purpose flour
1 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. ground cinnamon
1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 c. raisins
1/2 c. chopped walnuts
lemon glaze:
2 c. confectioners' sugar
2 to 3 T. lemon juice

In a large bowl, cream butter and granulated sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in egg, zucchini, and lemon zest. Combine the flour, baking soda, baking powder, cinnamon, and salt; gradually add to the creamed mixture and mix well. Stir in raisins and walnuts.

Drop by tablespoonfuls 3 in. apart onto lightly greased baking sheets. Bake at 375° for 8-10 minutes or until lightly browned. Remove to wire racks to cool.

For glaze, combine confectioners' sugar and enough lemon juice to reach a thin spreading consistency. Spread or drizzle over cooled cookies.

Quote of the Week:

"What matters most are the simple pleasures so abundant that we can all enjoy them... Happiness doesn't lie in the objects we gather around us. To find it, all we need to do is open our eyes."

- Antoine de Saint-Exupér