

## Everything Tastes Better Outdoors

**Picnic season is upon us, so pack up the cooler and blaze a trail to your nearest park, lake, beach or backyard!**

By Maggie Oster

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Going on a picnic is one of life's most delectable pleasures, whether it's a romantic tête-à-tête or a rollicking family affair.

Anytime you combine great food with fresh air and sunshine, you're bound to have fun.

Have a picnic to celebrate a special occasion, to simply while away a few pleasant afternoon hours or to watch the glorious, changing colors of a setting sun.

No matter the reason or the season, what's important is to get into the picnic habit, with its inherent joyful approach to life.

### Oh, The Places We Can Go

Choosing where to have a picnic is part of the adventure. No doubt there are any number of parks, lakes, beaches, state or national forests and many other possibilities near you from which to choose. Go hiking or skiing and eat by the side of the trail. Buy fresh vegetables at a U-pick farm or a bottle of wine at a local winery and utilize the picnic areas provided for guests. On our farm, impromptu and very informal picnics most often occur in the fields as a break from work. At more relaxed times, our picnics are the endgame for a hike to the creek that runs through the farm or to a wooded promontory overlooking the countryside.

Of course, a picnic can certainly be in your own backyard, but part of the charm of a picnic is to be at least a bit removed from your most immediate, day-to-day surroundings. Try to think of a picnic as a mini vacation that takes you away from your usual routines. Perhaps you have a gazebo that seldom gets used or maybe there's a part of the yard with a large, sheltering tree and an old-fashioned picnic table.

### On the Menu

Picnic food? A couple of deli sandwiches or some wine, cheese and bread readily make a picnic. Supermarkets have a huge range of ready-made and prepared foods that can be used for a quick picnic on short notice.

From there, the edible options are endless, dependent only on your time, energy and pocketbook. Remember, this is supposed to be fun, so, for the most part, aim for simplicity. A few well-made dishes that travel easily should be the goal. Homemade dishes made from fresh vegetables and fruits, from your own garden or a farmers' market, bring great flavor, top-notch nutrition and the ultimate satisfaction.

### Spicy Oven-fried Chicken

Choose a high-quality chicken, such as organic or free-range, for this updated, healthy version of an old-fashioned, picnic favorite. [More picnic recipes >>](#)

### Ingredients

1/2 cup buttermilk  
1 tsp. Dijon mustard  
1/2 tsp. garlic powder  
1/2 tsp. hot sauce, such as Tabasco  
2 cups cornflakes cereal  
1/3 cup all-purpose or white whole-wheat flour  
1 tsp. dried thyme

1 tsp. paprika  
1/2 tsp. salt  
1/2 tsp. ground black pepper  
2 lbs. chicken parts, skin removed

**Preparation**

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F. Line a baking sheet with foil. Set a wire rack on the baking sheet and coat it with nonstick cooking spray.

In a shallow dish, combine the buttermilk, mustard, garlic powder and hot sauce. With a sealable plastic bag and rolling pin or in a food processor, crush and combine cornflakes cereal, flour, thyme, paprika, salt and pepper. Pour this mixture into another shallow dish. Dip the chicken pieces in the buttermilk mixture, then place one or two pieces at a time in the cornflakes mixture, rolling to coat. Shake off excess and place on the prepared rack. When all the pieces are on the rack, spray with nonstick cooking spray. Bake the chicken until golden brown and the internal temperature is 165 degrees F, about 40 minutes. Serves 6.