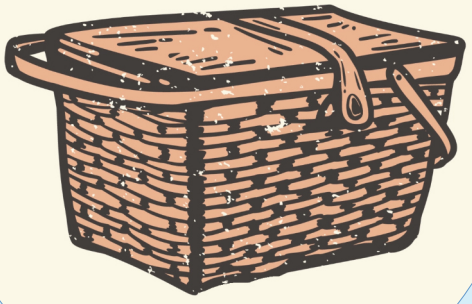

Picnics Lookbook 2022

Barb of Sweet Mac Shop

Picnics don't have to be boring.

I was once asked to do small bites and nibbles for a stand-up crowd of over two-hundred women (no sit-down dinner). And if you think I pulled this off alone, you would be wrong. A number of amazing women helped assemble the vision we put together.

All of these skewers have several components. Working ahead of time and prepping everything is a easy way for a quick assembly on the day of your party. Just keep the breads in a airtight container, keep the cooked meats in separate containers in the fridge. I put together the dessert cups and macarons the night before, so that the skewers were the last thing I had to do.

a note from Barb

When you are thinking that large, with thise kind of guidelines, a few supplies will help you succeed:

- Picks: I like the bamboo kind with the swirled knot on top, but I also find the large flat picks good for sandwiches
- Good quality ingredients: Buy high quality meats and cheeses. When they only have a bite, they will remember if it's bad.
- Large serving trays. If you are serving from a table, a tiered tray is great. But get creative, if you don't have a lot of serving dishes. Look for sturdy, flat surfaces that can be covered with plastic wrap: halkboards, cutting boards, trays.
- And if you are serving from a picnic blanket, inexpensive flat containers with colorful lids can be found at Walmart or Target. I've even lined gift boxes with foil for some items.

Refer to our blog for the link to all these supplies on Amazon.

CEASAR SALAD ON A STICK

First, make the croutons for the lowest layer: brush sourdough bread with olive oil (or use a spray), and cut of the crust edges with pizza roller. Toast both sides either in a griddle or a pan; cut into small 1 ½" squares.

We purchased some rotisserie chicken from the grocers, let it cool, and deboned it. Cut the meat (both light and dark) into small chunks.

Cut shavings of parmesan cheese.

Assembly:
Thread a crouton onto your bamboo pick, sliding it all down to the handle. Lay out leaves of romaine lettuce. and if too large, cut in half. Fold each leaf into fourths, about the size of the bottom crouton. It's okay if it hangs over a bit, but you don't want to be flopping all over. Since this is the "salad" stick, the lettuce part should be the bigger part of the stick.

On top of the lettuce, thread a chicken cube, then a Parmesan cheese shaving onto each toothpick, respectively.

Arrange skewered sticks on a serving platter and drizzle Caesar salad dressing over each.

CAPRESE SKEWERS

small balls of mozzarella
fresh basil leaf
cherry tomatoes
balsamic glaze
bamboo picks

Thread the tomato, basil and mozzarella stick through a bamboo skewer. Arrange on platter, and drizzle with balsamic glaze.

So much of this is just casually assembled: have your children help assemble their own fun picnics on a stick. Be sure to carry a container to capture all the used sticks, so they aren't tossed into the grass.

Some of the helpers for our picnic were not able to get the mozzarella balls. Instead they used a clever hack: Get cheese sticks, and cut them into segments.

Balsamic glaze is sold in the grocery store and brings a rich taste to this caprese on a stick.

Unless you are at a picnic, life is no picnic.

DECORATOR'S TIP: We presented this and others on platters that use all the elements of design: wood, metal, glass and paper.

MINI REUBEN SANDWICHES

While Reuben sandwiches can be made with corned beef, for ease in handling, we went with pastrami, which is easily found in the deli section of your supermarket.

Two slices of bread will yield four mini-Reubens, if you need to gauge your quantity.

INGREDIENTS

- *rye bread*
- *pastrami lunch meat*
- *Swiss cheese*
- *dill pickle slices*
- *Thousand Island dressing*

DIRECTIONS

1. Toast two slices of bread, and then spread Thousand Island salad dressing on one side.

2. Cut Swiss cheese into squares. Segment the meat, so you'll have a folded over piece about the size of the toasted squares.

3. Assemble:
On one toast square layer up the pastrami, the pickle slice and top with the Swiss cheese.

   Cap with another pickle, another bit of Thousand Island dressing, then a toasted square.

   Insert pick through center, and arrange on platter.

This has both black olives and kalamata olives for a variety of tastes. That's one of the tricks for an unboring picnic: vary the textures and the flavors.

CHARCUTERIE ON A STICK

Ingredients:
Kalamata olives, pitted
black olives, pitted
mozzarella bits/squares/balls (see note on page 4)
chunks of pepperoncini
basil leaf (optional)
grape or cherry tomato
salami, small diameter

How to put together:
Fold your slice of salami in half and thread it onto a pick Next comes the two olives (be gentle), and then the mozzarella.
For a punch of flavor, include a segement of jarred jalapeño pepper, and a basil leaf.

Top all with a tomato.

BLT ON A STICK

If you want to hand out two of these at once, just double them up on one skewer.

INGREDIENTS

- *regular white bread*
- *bacon*
- *leafy lettuce (butter or similar)*
- *Roma tomatoes, cut into slices*
- *mayonaise*
- *round cookie cutter*

DIRECTIONS

1. Cook bacon and lay on a paper towel until cool. Cut into segments to match the cookie cutter's dimension.
2. Cut rounds out of white bread. If you are making ahead, cut these then store in an airtight container until you are ready to assemble.
3. Lay out your leafy lettuce (we used butter lettuce), and cut circles out of the lettuce.
4. Assemble: Spread (or squirt a small amount) of mayonaise on inside of bottom circle of bread. Layer up the rest: bacon, tomato slice, lettuce circles.

To make a salami flower: Cut from one outside edge to the center. Bring the cut edge up on itself, letting it make a cup shape.

FUN STUFF IN A CUP

These can be filled with almost anything. We used folded salami, cheddar sticks, sliced vegetables, olives, bell pepper strips, olives, cheese & bread sticks, olive, and cucumber sticks. We also added apple and orange slices, too.

A fruity one could made by using only fruit: orange slices, apple slices, grapes and a strawberry or two (if doing this, include a pick for people to use for eating), and bit of caramel sauce in the bottom.

When life gives you lemons... make lemonade and go on a picnic.

Pour a bit of ranch dressing in the bottom of the cup; fill with celery and carrot sticks.

Mom's Lemonade
1 part sugar
1 part hot water
1 part fresh lemon juice
4 parts ice and water, mixed

Mix the hot water and sugar together until mostly dissolved. Add lemon juice, stir. Finish up with ice/water to taste. Stir.

SLIDERS 1

Begin with fresh, small rolls that are tender–we like Hawaiian rolls.
Spread with a little mayo and some mustard, and layer in slices of ham and swiss cheese.

SLIDERS 2

Begin with fresh, small rolls that are tender–we like Hawaiian rolls.
Place a large spoonful of Chicken Salad (recipe below) in the roll–don't overfill!

CHICKEN SALAD

1 cup of mayonaise
1 teaspoon nutmeg
1 teaspoon seasoned salt
salt and pepper
Mix above ingredients together.
Add: about a ½ cup of grapes, cut in half
All the meat from one rotisserie chicken, cut off the bones, and into small chunks. Stir well.
NOTE: Since this has mayonaise in it, keep refrigerated until serving time. Don't leave out for more than a couple of hours.

There's nothing better than cake than more cake.

Harry Truman

DESSERTS

CUTE CAKE IN A CUP #1: Oatmeal Cookie Butter Cake

You can absolutely pick any cake you want, just make sure it has components that create the fun layer look.

Extra bits needed: mini chocolate chips, Biscoff cookies, and a bottle of Biscoff Cookie Butter. Crush one package of cookies, set aside.
Make your favorite cake recipe in a large baker's half-sheet, as it's better to have the cake thin. We used *Cake by Courtney's* Oatmeal Biscoff Cake.

Layer them up:
- crushed Biscoff cookie crumbs
- a square of cake (it's okay if it crumbles)
- small scoop of American Buttercream (place it with an ice cream scoop)
- Drizzle of Biscoff Cookie Butter (I put it into a plastic bag and snipped off the corner)
- mini chocolate chips.

Tuck in a Biscoff cookie for garnish.

CUTE CAKE IN A CUP #2: Peach Crisp Cake

Make your favorite cake recipe in a large baker's half-sheet, as it's better to have it thin. We used *Cake by Courtney's* Peach Crisp Cake with Cinnamon Oat Crumble (links are on my website). Set aside.

Prepare a batch of the cake's frosting, the peach compote and the crumble.

Now it's time to layer:
- crumble
- cake
- peach compote
- crumble
- small scoop of American Buttercream (place it with an ice cream scoop)
- a few more crumble sprinkles on top

Put a lid on these, and using washi tape, tape a spoon on top.

Have a great summer, full of picnics!

Barb, of SweetMacShop