

# MAKING LIFE MORE FUN

## Perk Up Your Outdoor Picnics With A Few Simple Tips

(NAPSA)—Whether you're celebrating a special occasion or simply enjoying the great outdoors, picnics can be a perfect way to bring together friends and family when the weather is warm. And with a little planning and creativity, you can make your outdoor picnic an experience to remember.

"Everyone loves to take advantage of the great outdoors when the weather is nice, and hosting a picnic with loved ones is an ideal way to enjoy a sunny day," said party planner Gail Davis, president of Gail Davis & Associates, an event planning company in the Dallas/Fort Worth area. "Two of the keys to making your picnic stand out is to introduce fun and innovative recipes or create a themed event. Your friends and family will appreciate the time and effort you put into making the picnic a truly memorable time."

To help get you started, here are a few tips and tricks, plus a recipe, for creating an unforgettable event that is fun for friends and family alike.

• **Pick a perfect place.** To select the right location for your picnic, put some thought into whom you are inviting. Is it a special someone or a group outing with friends? If it's a romantic date you're planning, Davis suggests taking your loved one to an outdoor Shakespeare in the Park festival. If you are planning a group outing with friends, try hitting the local beach or lake to soak up the sun and participate in water activities. The best places to have picnics tend to be locations that have multiple activities that you can enjoy.

• **Tie it together with a**



**With a little planning, it's possible to create a memorable outdoor picnic.**

**theme.** With a little effort, picnics can become fun, themed events. Why not try an afternoon tea with your garden as the setting? Decorate patio tables with wicker baskets filled with fresh vegetables or flowers. If you're going to spend the day at the beach, go for a Hawaiian luau theme. Include a luau-inspired menu with items such as roasted pineapple, mahi mahi and other tropical delectables. Decorate your picnic blanket or table with Hawaiian leis and conch shells, and make sure your guests wear grass skirts. If you like firing up the grill, try hosting a Western barbecue picnic with authentic Texas steaks, hamburgers and ribs. Decorate your picnic tables with Western-themed centerpieces, such as miniature bales of hay or cowboy hats filled with flowers.

• **Plan out your picnic.** Make sure you have everything you need before you get to the picnic site. Don't forget important items such as a picnic blanket, napkins, paper plates, utensils, cups, small cutting board and knife, corkscrew, ice, beverages, condiments, trash bags for clean-up, sunscreen, bug repellent and

an ice chest. By creating a list and planning ahead, you can ensure a good time for all.

• **Create the quintessential cuisine.** The main attraction of a picnic is the food. Why not spice up your meal with some interesting fare? How about an international fest with food from around the globe? Or if you want to stick to the basics, use all-American foods, such as hot dogs, baked beans and apple pie. And don't forget the beverages. According to Davis, nothing is more refreshing on a warm day than an ice-cold lemonade or iced tea. To make transporting drinks easier, try a ready-to-drink bottled iced tea or lemonade such as Country Time Iced Tea with Lemon or Country Time Lemonade Flavored Drink.

These simple tips and the following recipe can help create a truly fun and festive picnic outing that you will remember for years to come.

### Tomato and Pineapple Salsa

- 9 cups fresh tomatoes, diced**
- 3 cups finely diced pineapple**
- 2 cups sliced green onions**
- 3 fresh or canned jalapeño chilies, seeded and chopped finely**
- ½ cup chopped fresh cilantro**
- ½ cup Country Time Lemonade Flavored Drink**
- 6 cloves garlic, finely chopped**

**Combine all the ingredients in a mixing bowl. Combine gently until evenly mixed. Serve ½ cup per serving with grilled fish, chicken or serve with chips.**