

Dining On Asphalt

Tailgating Serves Up Tantalizing Tastes

(NAPSA)—Tailgating—it's becoming as much a part of football season as the sport itself. In fact, for many ravenous football fanatics, the tastiest part of the game is the cookout before the kickoff.

The fine art of dining on asphalt remains a mainstay of football fun, according to Mike Zeller, Corporate Developmental Chef at the Wisconsin-based Johnsonville Sausage. The fare can range from simple to extravagant.

"Spike up your tailgating bash with a seasoned sausage like bratwurst," suggests Zeller. "Its savory flavor complements the hearty fare that football fans crave. And it's easy to prepare and simple to serve in any outdoor setting."

Zeller suggests grilling fresh bratwurst—a subtly seasoned pork-based sausage of German origin—and serving it on a crusty hoagie bun. Add kick by topping the brat with a pungent relish of raw red onions and crumbled blue cheese—Roquefort, Stilton or any favorite blue-veined variety.

While you're stoking the coals, skewer up some veggie kabobs

with harvest-fresh zucchini, yellow squash, cherry tomatoes and carrots. In the cooler, stash a chilled pasta salad featuring ricotta-filled tortellini and broccoli, and flavored with fresh thyme. For dessert, serve a buttery old-fashioned pound cake. Top cake slices with maple glazed apples, a tart confection sweetened with brown sugar, butter and maple syrup. And wash it all down with a mug of hearty beer or hot cider garnished with a cinnamon stick. What a way to celebrate the season.

For more recipe ideas from The Kitchens at Johnsonville, visit the Johnsonville Web site at www.johnsonville.com.

BACKFIELD BRATWURST WITH ONION AND BLUE CHEESE

- 1 medium red onion, thinly sliced
- 1 cup (4 oz.) crumbled blue cheese
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 2 tbsp. red wine vinegar
- 1 tbsp. steak sauce

- 1 tsp. fresh chives, chopped
- 1 tsp. parsley, chopped
- ½ tsp. garlic, minced
- ¼ tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. black pepper
- 5 links Johnsonville fresh bratwurst
- 5 hoagie buns

In a bowl, combine the first ten ingredients; cover and refrigerate for at least two hours or overnight. Prepare bratwurst according to package directions; place in bun and top with two tablespoons of onion mixture. Yield: 5 servings.

TIGHT END TORTELLINI 'N THYME SALAD

- 2 pkgs. (9 oz. each) refrigerated cheese tortellini
- 2 cups fresh broccoli florets
- 2 cups fresh cauliflower florets
- 1 cup fresh carrots, thinly sliced
- 1 cup bottled Italian salad dressing
- 1 tsp. fresh thyme, minced
- Salt and pepper to taste

Prepare tortellini according to package directions; drain and rinse with cold water. In a large bowl, combine remaining ingredients. Add tortellini; toss and refrigerate until served. Yield: 8-10 servings.

END ZONE TART APPLE TOPPING

To serve over pound cake

- 6 large tart apples, peeled, cored and thinly sliced
- ¼ cup butter
- ¼ cup brown sugar, packed
- ¼ cup pure maple syrup
- ¼ tsp. maple flavoring
- Pinch of salt

Melt butter in a nonstick skillet; add sugar and syrup. Cook over medium-high heat for one minute. Add apples; cook and stir for 5-6 minutes or until apples are tender. Serve over pound cake. Yield: 3 cups topping.



Pump up your pigskin party with a terrific tailgating menu that features hearty brats topped with onions and blue cheese, and paired with a tangy thyme-flavored tortellini salad.