

afternoon



DELIGHTS

Enjoying a picnic lunch with friends is a great way to spend a summer afternoon.

BY ROSLYN RALPH, FOOD EDITOR

Lazy, warm summer afternoons are perfect for picnics. Whether in the backyard or at a park with a gathering of friends, good food and fun activities are what summer is all about. Picnics can be sophisticated or simple, depending on your preferences and the age groups you are feeding. In this edition of Healthy Eating we have opted for a little more sophisticated fare.

We start with a caramelized onion tart

as an appetizer then move on to a wonderful Salade Niçoise for the main course. Finish with some fresh fruit and cookies and you have a delicious light meal. Serve with fresh-made iced tea or white wine.

Onion Tart

Caramelized onions can be made a day ahead and stored in the fridge. Use puffed pastry for the shell. Thaw pastry according to package directions. Make the tart the

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day before or the morning of your picnic. It's great at room temperature. *Serves 6.*

Ingredients

Caramelized Onions

- 2 large sweet onions, Vidalia or Spanish, sliced thin
- 1 Tbsp. olive oil
- 1 tsp. fresh thyme
- pepper to taste

Pastry

- 1 square thawed puffed pastry
- 1 egg beaten with 1 Tbsp. of water

Directions

Onions: Preheat oven to 400°F. Heat oil over medium-high heat in a frying pan. Add onions and cook till they start to brown. Reduce heat to medium and cook until golden brown and tender, about 10-15 minutes. If onions seem to be burning, add 1/4-cup of water and cook till all liquid is gone. Season with pepper and set aside to cool.

Pastry: Roll pastry into a rectangle about 1/4-inch in thickness. Moisten edge of rectangle with egg wash and roll up 1/2-inch around to create a lip. Transfer to a baking sheet. Spread onions on pastry. Brush egg wash around edge. Bake for 10 minutes or until pastry is puffed and golden brown. Sprinkle with thyme and let cool.

Salade Niçoise

This salad is a classic and is a meal unto itself. Originally from the city of Nice in France, it incorporates tastes of land and sea. Do all the preparation the day before your picnic and then pack the ingredients separately. Assemble individual servings and add the dressing. It's a bit time-con-

suming but worth it in the end. *Serves 6.*

Ingredients

Salad

- 2 tins solid water-packed white tuna, drained
- 1 tin oil-packed anchovy fillets, drained
- 3 eggs, hard-boiled and halved
- 3 small tomatoes, quartered
- 6 cups mixed salad greens, washed and dried
- 1/2 pound of green beans, blanched and chilled
- 1 yellow pepper, washed, seeded and cut into strips
- 12 small new potatoes, scrubbed and boiled till tender and halved
- 1/2 cup Niçoise olives (Kalamatas will also work)

Dressing

- 3 Tbsp. cider vinegar
- 1 Tbsp. Dijon mustard
- 1 cup olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1/2 tsp. each dried tarragon, chervil
- 1/4 cup fresh parsley washed and finely chopped
- salt and pepper to taste

Directions

Combine all dressing ingredients and store in a sealed container. Shake dressing vigorously just prior to adding to salad.

Arrange each plate with one cup of mixed greens. Add equal amounts of tuna and green beans. Arrange anchovies on top. Arrange potatoes, peppers, tomatoes and eggs on top or around the sides. Spoon equal amounts of dressing over salads and dot with olives. Serve. 🌿