

Take it outside: perfect picnic pairings for summer and beyond

(ARA) May 17, 2011-- With the arrival of summer and the availability of fresh fruits and vegetables, a picnic is a perfect way to entertain without busting the budget. The word "picnic" originated in the 1700s, probably from the French words "piquer," meaning "to pick" and "nique," meaning "nothing serious." The same idea applies - put together some easy dishes and let the outdoors provide style and charm.



The same is true for wine - forget fancy stemware, and picnic with glasses or cups and an easy-to-handle, 3-liter premium box wine, such as Octavin Home Wine Bar. The availability of premium wine at a wonderful value provides a first class accompaniment to the meal at affordable prices. After all, it seems like everything tastes better when eaten en pleine air. Here are some ideas that will make your picnic planning a breeze. Hint: leave the hotdogs and warm sodas at home.

Pack it up:

Assemble your perfect picnic kit in a box or basket and keep it handy. Be sure to include a tablecloth, napkins, a blanket, plates, glasses, a cutting board and a sharp knife. Keep stainless steel or plastic containers at hand to pack up food at a moment's notice. Throw in insect repellent, suntan lotion, candles and anything else you think might enhance your picnic experience.

Picnic fare can range from a baguette with cheese or leftovers from an elaborate four-course meal. Quiche Lorraine, baked salmon and roasted chicken are classic choices in the grand picnic tradition. Set up your picnic bounty as you would a dinner party.

Wine adds a note of sophistication and is the perfect partner for any kind of picnic spread. Plan on one to two glasses per person. "Since wine is so versatile, it can go with everything from an elaborate cheese platter to a bucket of cold fried chicken," says Adam Richardson, international director of winemaking for Underdog Wines & Spirits, makers of the [Octavin Home Wine Bar](#).

One logical choice for picnics and entertaining outdoors is 3-liter bag-in-box wines, since they are easily transported and won't break. More earth-friendly and wallet friendly than bottled wines, the quality of wine casks (also called bag-in-box) has skyrocketed over the last few years. Premium, [artisan wines](#) from all over the world are now offered in Octavin packaging, so finding a worthy pairing is easier than ever. "Whites stay cooler longer inside the box and reds are sheltered from the sun," Richardson says. Hint: Chill reds as well as whites if you're planning to be out in the heat of the day.

Premium cask wines are a convenient no-waste way to pair your picnic items with flavorful wines. Each 3-liter cask contains 20 glasses of wine so you can enjoy any remaining wine for at least six

weeks beyond your picnic event, because the package protects the wine from harmful oxygen that destroys wine left in bottle.

Perfect picnic in the park

Assorted cheeses and charcuterie

Rotisserie chicken

Chipotle slaw

Fresh fruit

Pairing suggestions: R Mueller 2009 Riesling and Pinot Evil Pinot Noir

Chipotle Coleslaw

Courtesy of Chef Barbara Llwellyn of Underdog Wine Bar

Serves 4 to 6

2 cups shredded red cabbage

2 cups shredded green cabbage

1 medium carrot, grated

1/2 bunch cilantro leaves, rough chop

Dressing

1 cup mayo

1/2 cup sugar

1 ounce apple cider vinegar

1/2 ounce R. Mueller Riesling

4 tablespoons prepared horseradish

1 canned chipotle pepper, fine diced

1 tablespoon canned chipotle sauce

2 teaspoons salt

1 teaspoon black pepper

1 teaspoon celery seed

1/2 teaspoon caraway seed

Combine all dressing ingredients in bowl, whisk until combined. Toss both cabbages, carrots and cilantro together and combine with dressing. Let sit for 15 minutes in the refrigerator, then serve.

For more information about wallet-friendly Octavin wines, www.octavinhomewinebar.com.

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