



With the weather warming up, al fresco dining can tempt you out of your dining room.

Take it all outside: How to pack the perfect picnic hamper

If you're wanting to make the most of the warm weather, there's nothing better than packing a picnic basket, grabbing a blanket, and heading to the nearest park with your friends for an afternoon of eating and drinking in the sunshine. But a picnic hamper doesn't have to be boring. And while sandwiches are a tried and true picnic staple they're by no means the only option.

Here are some ideas to make your picnic spread a little more interesting this summer.

Cheese

There's nothing like cheese and wine to kick off a picnic for two. So head into your local delicatessen and stock up on your favourite brie, gouda or camembert. You can pair it up with a glass of red to set the mood for the rest of the evening.

Sandwiches

From salami to roasted vegetables, you can fill a sandwich with just about anything. If you've got a hungry crowd, loading up a few baguettes is a great way to feed the masses. While they generally travel well, make sure you pack your sandwiches wisely and place them towards the top of your hamper, so they don't get squashed under the weight of your heavier items.

Something warm

Being outdoors can be tiring and sometimes, people are looking for something a little heartier than a simple sandwich. So why not give your oven a workout before your next picnic by baking some savoury treats to share. From a French onion quiche to cheesy pull apart bread, these simple options will transform your picnic into a feast.

Salads

What is a picnic without a good salad? Packing a few salads is not only healthy but it's a great way to cater for your vegetarian guests or those who have committed to a strict diet over the summer. The pumpkin salad with cauliflower, quinoa and pomegranate is one of our favourites this season and will add colour to all your spreads.

Fruit

With mangos, pineapple and cantaloupe finally in season, it's a great idea to

pack a container full of your favourite summer fruit before heading out to your picnic. Make sure it's all pre-cut because dealing with food scraps is no fun when you're outside and the wind picks up.

Sweets

Last but not least, you cannot forget a homemade dessert to bring along to your picnic feast. Whether it's traditional scones with jam and cream or white chocolate macadamia brownies, your effort will go a long way in making the picnic unforgettable.

Remember, when travelling with food, the way you pack your picnic hamper is important. So put the heaviest objects in first and make sure your cold items are at the bottom. Separate containers for every item will also help to keep them in tact on your journey. Don't forget napkins, plates and cutlery because there's nothing worse than going home because you can't eat any of your delicious treats.

