

French Country Picnic

BY CHEF MARJORIE PEROTTI-BREWSTER



low-stress prep for delightful outdoor dining

IT'S PICNIC TIME!



1

Summer and warmer weather are quickly approaching, and it is once again time for picnics in parks, the woods or even your backyard.

With this Picnic Menu, I will walk you through everything from the shopping list, what equipment you will need and a 4-day timeline to help make it fun and free of stress.

THE MENU

Cold Cucumber & Fresh Mint Soup

Chicken Galantine

Cold Potato Salad
with Fresh Herbs & Dijon Vinaigrette

Cheese, Cornichons
& Crusty Bread Platter

Asparagus
with Roasted Garlic Dipping Sauce

Individual Summer Fruit Tarts

2

TIMELINE

DAY 1

Shop for the ingredients to make the pastry dough and the summer fruit of your choice.

Make a double recipe of your pastry dough.

Once it is chilled, roll out the dough and fit into either 6 individual tart tins, or two 8” removable bottom tart tins. Roll out second pieces for the tops. Fill the tart tins (tin) with the summer fruit of your choice. Sprinkle the tops with the sugar, cinnamon, cornstarch mixture and cover with the top piece of pastry dough as directed in the recipe.

Seal each tart with plastic wrap and place in the freezer. On the day of the picnic, you will remove the tarts from the freezer, allow to thaw for 30 minutes, and then proceed as directed in the recipe to bake them.

Now is a good time to set aside what serving items you will need. If you are transporting to an off-site picnic area, you will also need a way to keep several of the dishes cool.

DAY 2

Grocery shopping today. Review your recipes and create a list. You can safely buy all of the ingredients with the exception of the bread, which will need to be purchased the day of. If you will be serving wine for your picnic lunch, this or any beverage should be included on your list. Don’t forget cheese, pâté and cornichons for the bread platter (no recipe).

If you have chosen not to debone the chicken yourself, arrange for your butcher to do it at this time.

Make the stuffing for the Chicken Galantine. Place them in separate bowls and refrigerate.

Make the Dijon mustard Vinaigrette and the Roasted Garlic Dipping Sauce for the asparagus.

DAY 3

Brine, stuff and roast your chicken.

Prepare the Cold Cucumber Soup.

Peel the stems from the asparagus and cook as directed. Store in the refrigerator on a platter covered with plastic wrap.

Cook and slice the potatoes. Gently stir in 3 tablespoons of the Vinaigrette, then cover and store in the refrigerator. Don’t add the herbs and peas until the day of the picnic.

DAY 4 - PICNIC DAY!

Remove the fruit tarts from the freezer. Let them stand at room temperature for 30 minutes. Cut a few holes in the top. Use a pastry brush to brush the tops with just a bit a water, sprinkle with sugar and place on a sheet pan to bake as directed in the recipe.

Remove the trussing strings from the Chicken Galantine and place on your serving platter.

Taste the Cucumber Soup, and correct for seasoning. Have some whole, small mint leaves and a bit of Greek yogurt ready to garnish each portion.

Arrange your cheese tray...and remember, you need to get the bread.

Add the herbs and peas to the potatoes. Add more Vinaigrette and salt and pepper if needed.

Arrange the asparagus tray with the Roasted Garlic Dipping Sauce.

TIPS

Particularly if you are transporting your picnic, it's best to have what non-food items you need packed and ready to go ahead of the actual date. You will need knives, serving pieces, plates and flatware, glasses, ice, and salt and pepper for those who like a bit more of each.

Really important are some cloth or paper towels along with water to clean up a bit of mess. Just look at each food or beverage you are serving and think of what you need, and pack it away ahead of time.

If your picnic is in your own backyard, this, of course, really isn't necessary, but off-site it's extremely important.

RECIPES



SERVES 6

COLD CUCUMBER & FRESH MINT SOUP



INGREDIENTS

- 3 English (hothouse) cucumbers (900g) partially peeled and seeded
- 1/2 cup Greek yogurt (full fat is best) (143g)
- 1/4 cup chopped red onion (40g)
- 1 cup chopped green onion (white and green part) (100g)
- 1 Tbsp chopped fresh mint leaves (2g)
- 2 Tbsp chopped fresh tarragon (2g)
- 2 Tbsp fresh lime juice (30g)
- 1 cup half-and-half (237ml)

DIRECTIONS

Mix all ingredients in a large bowl. Allow to set for about 10 minutes.

Transfer in batches to a blender or food processor and blend until you have a smooth and creamy consistency.

Refrigerate over night if possible for the best blending of flavors.

NOTE: You may wish to add the red onion in two batches. They lend a bit of color to the soup, and it can turn it a not so appealing pinky green...the flavor is great, but the color is a bit off-putting. Also, ingredient amounts can be varied depending on taste, so feel free to add more or less.

CHICKEN GALLANTINE



PREPARING THE CHICKEN

DEBONING

Have the butcher remove the bones of the chicken, or you may debone the chicken yourself. It really is easier than you might think. If you have never done this before, refer to the YouTube video featuring Jacques Pèpin's Chicken Galantine. Save the bones to make chicken stock at a later time.



https://youtu.be/i_ZkAHCR1D0

BRINE INGREDIENTS

- 1/3** cup kosher salt (91g)
- 2** cups boiling water (474ml)
- 2** bay leaves
- 1** Tbsp whole peppercorns (3g)
- 3** sliced cloves of garlic
- 1** sliced lemon
- 1½** quarts cold water
(about 1 1/2 liters)

BRINING

Brine the deboned chicken.

Place the salt, bay leaves, peppercorns, garlic and lemon in a tub or bowl large enough to hold the chicken. Pour in the boiling water and stir to dissolve the salt.

Now add the cold water (if you are in a rush, have ice cubes make up part of the total amount of water).

As soon as the brine has cooled to at least room temperature, add the deboned chicken. Make sure it is completely covered by the brine.

Allow to set in the brine for 2 hours.

PREPARING THE STUFFING



STUFFING INGREDIENTS

- 10 oz baby spinach (285g)
- 1 cup diced mushrooms (80g)
- 4 oz chicken or duck liver pâté (114g)
- 1 medium shallot, chopped (5g)
- 1 Tbsp vegetable oil (15g)
- 2 Tbsp Madeira wine (30g)
- Salt and pepper to taste

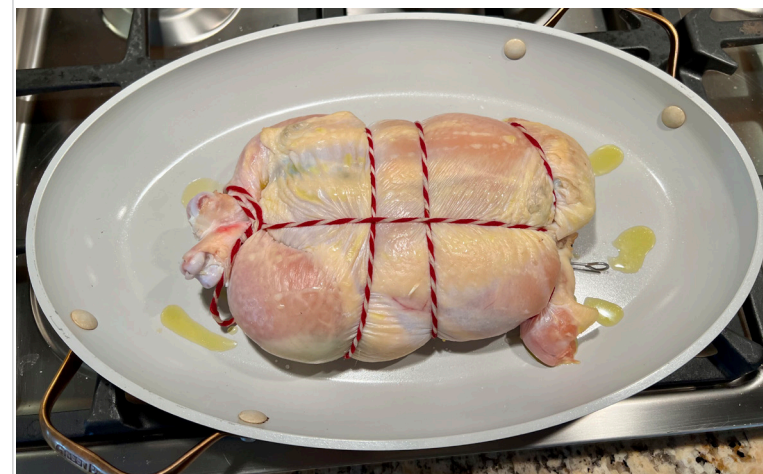
DIRECTIONS

Steam the spinach in a pot with two tablespoons of water. When cooked, remove and as soon as it is cool, gently squeeze out the excess liquid.

Clean and dice the mushrooms and chop the shallots. Heat the oil in a sauté pan and add the mushrooms and shallots. Cook for about a minute then add the Madeira and salt and pepper. Continue to sauté until all the liquid has been absorbed.

Slice the pâté into small pieces and set all ingredients aside until you are ready to assemble your Chicken Galantine.

ASSEMBLING THE GALLANTINE



DIRECTIONS

Remove the chicken from the brine and pat dry. Sprinkle the inside cavity with a bit of salt and pepper, and spread the spinach, mushrooms and pâté as shown on the left.

Fold the back of the chicken over the stuffing, roughly reshaping it, and truss with kitchen twine.



Place the trussed chicken, breast side up, in a roasting pan and roast in a preheated 350° oven for 30 minutes, then lower the temperature to 325° and roast another 20 to 25 minutes. Chicken is done when internal temperature reaches 145°. Remove the chicken from the oven and allow to cool completely before removing the trussing string.



COLD POTATO SALAD

WITH FRESH HERBS & DIJON VINAIGRETTE

INGREDIENTS

- 2#** red and white skin new potatoes (912g)
- 1/2** cup English peas (70g)
just barely cooked
- 1** cup chopped fresh assorted herbs (90g)
- 3** green onions (white and tender green stems), chopped
- 3** Tbsp Champagne vinegar (45g)
- 1** Tbsp minced shallots (4g)
- 2** Tbsp Dijon mustard (30g)
- 2/3** cup extra-virgin olive oil (160ml)
- 1/2** tsp salt (3g) or to taste
Freshly ground pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

Wash and slice the potatoes into small wedges. Sprinkle with some salt and steam over boiling water until just tender.

While the potatoes are steaming, mix your vinaigrette. Place the chopped shallots, Champagne vinegar, salt and Dijon mustard in a small bowl and whisk until completely combined. While continuing to whisk, slowly pour in the olive oil. The oil should combine with the vinegar/Dijon mixture to form a dressing the consistency of honey.

Once the potatoes are cooked, put them in a mixing bowl and toss them (while they are still very warm) with about 1/4 cup of the dressing. Allow to cool completely, cover and place in the refrigerator until the day you are serving.

Several hours before you are ready to eat, toss the potatoes with additional vinaigrette, the chopped onions, peas and herbs of your choice—the herbs are typically flat leaf parsley, tarragon, basil and a bit of mint. You might also add chopped pistachios or even chopped hard-boiled egg. You may wish to add more salt and pepper.

ASPARAGUS

WITH ROASTED GARLIC DIPPING SAUCE

INGREDIENTS

- 2#** asparagus (big stalks work best) (912g)
- 1/2** cup mayonnaise (85g)
- 6** large cloves of roasted garlic
- 1** tsp Dijon mustard (5g)
- Salt and white pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

Snap off the tough ends of each asparagus and peel away the thin outer layer. Place the stems in a pot of boiling, salted water and boil for 3 to 4 minutes. The stems should have a slight bend but still be crunchy.

Remove the stems and place in a bowl of water and ice cubes to stop the cooking, and also to help them retain their bright green color.

For the Roasted Garlic Dipping Sauce, take 2 tablespoons of the mayo (either homemade or store-bought) and mash the garlic cloves into it to make a smooth paste. Combine with the remaining amount, and stir in the mustard and salt and pepper to taste.





INDIVIDUAL SUMMER FRUIT TARTS

INGREDIENTS

- 2# Double recipe of Pâte Brisée
<https://flourfig.com/recipes/pate-bri-see/>
- 4 cups sliced summer stone fruit
(peaches, apricots, nectarines or plums)
- 2 tbsp lemon juice (30ml)
- 1/3 cup cornstarch (40g)
- 2 tsp cinnamon (5g)
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar (100g)

DIRECTIONS

If you are using peaches, you will want to remove the skin. However, the skin can remain on with apricots, nectarines or plums. Simply remove the pit, cut into evenly sized slices, place in a bowl and toss with the lemon juice.

Next, mix the cornstarch, cinnamon and sugar together, and pour that mixture over the fruit, and toss to evenly cover the slices.

Roll out the pastry dough to fit the bottom crust for 6 individual removable bottom tart pans, or two removable bottom 8" tart pans. Next roll out pieces of the remaining dough in circles to cover the tops of each of the tarts.

Place a nice scoop of the fruit into each of the tart tins. Very lightly moisten the edges of the dough, and place the top piece of dough over the fruit. Press gently to "cement" the top and bottom pieces of dough. Cut a few slits in the top of each tart, brush lightly with water and sprinkle with sugar.

Place the tarts on a sheet pan and bake in a 350° oven for 40 minutes or until the crust is golden brown and you can see some of the fruit juices bubbling through the slits.



FLOUR & FIG

more recipes at
flourfig.com