

# Picnic Pointers

## Tips For Packing A Creative Picnic

(NAPSA)—When it comes to stocking a picnic basket, there's no reason to settle for the same old fare. With a few expert tips and a bit of creativity, you can create a casual repast that will have family members—not to mention Yogi Bear—salivating.

The first “pique-niques” were social events where each guest provided a share of the food. They later became outdoor excursions to a place in the country where friends could meet and provisions be shared. The word “picnic” was adopted in England sometime after 1800 and, by the mid-1800s, the concept had caught on in the U.S.

“Almost any occasion can be perfect for picnicking,” says Sarah Leah Chase, picnic expert and author of *The Nantucket Open-House Cookbook*. “And I wouldn't think of heading off for a summer day at the beach or a stargazing adventure without a charming picnic basket brimming with fun-filled treats.”

One tip, Chase suggests, is to use top-quality ingredients. For example, when making salads, quiches and sandwiches, go for real mayonnaise, such as *Hellmann's*® and *Best Foods*® brands. These creamy condiments add smooth texture to favorite picnic foods, such as this delectable recipe:

### Seashell Pasta Salad

*Prep time: about 20 minutes*

- 4 oz. small seashell pasta, cooked, drained and cooled**
- 1 pkg. (9 oz.) frozen baby peas, thawed**
- 3 oz. thinly sliced prosciutto or ham, minced**
- ¼ cup pine nuts, lightly toasted**
- ½ cup *Hellmann's*® or *Best Foods*® Real Mayonnaise**
- ⅓ cup prepared pesto (purchased or homemade)**
- 1 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice**
- Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste**



**Top-quality ingredients and a sense of occasion can make for fresh, fun picnic fare.**

**1. In large bowl, combine pasta, peas, prosciutto and pine nuts.**

**2. Stir in mayonnaise, pesto and lemon juice until well combined. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Chill until ready to serve. Garnish with basil sprigs, if desired.**

**Makes 4 to 6 servings.**

Chase offers these additional tips to help enhance the occasion:

- Make food safety a top priority by keeping chilled food cold with freezer packs or coolers.

- Celebrate seasonal and regional foods, including new variations on old picnic standbys—chicken, tuna, potato salad, etc.

- Don't be afraid to pack a little extra food. Picnicking is conducive to making friends and sharing. Europeans always pack picnics for train journeys and many lifelong friendships have begun by breaking a baguette with fellow travelers.

- Take a cue from professional party planners and sit in a circle, using a round tablecloth instead of a rectangular, well-worn blanket.

- Contrary to myth, don't hold the mayonnaise. Add it to salad mixtures during initial preparation. The acid and salt in commercial mayonnaise actually helps to protect food from spoilage.

- Unleash the whimsy. Search out an old-fashioned picnic basket for carrying the meal.