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SUMMER LOVIN'

Simple Entertaining Ideas for the Perfect Outdoor Party

Easy ways to elevate your next BBQ to savour the flavours of the season

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THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT SUMMER THAT NATURALLY DRAWS US OUTDOORS. By mid-July, patios are bustling, gardens are in full bloom and weekends revolve around gathering friends and family around the barbecue. Whether it's an impromptu afternoon cookout, a sunset dinner with neighbours or a casual evening spent with family, this time of year invites us to slow down and enjoy life's simple pleasures.

Barbecuing has always been about more than just the food for us. It's about embracing the relaxed rhythm that summer brings in a format that makes entertaining simple – a favourite theme of ours. And while there's nothing wrong with the classics – a burger and a cooler of cold drinks are staples for a reason – it's fun to add a few thoughtful touches to make your gatherings feel a little more special, without adding too much extra work!

The good news is that elevating your BBQ game doesn't have to mean complicated recipes or hours spent in the kitchen. A refreshing cocktail, a simple grilled dessert or an easy seafood dish can transform an ordinary meal into something memorable. Even small details, like sending guests home with a homemade spice blend, can add a thoughtful finishing touch that people will remember long after the coals cool. This season, embrace the joy of easy entertaining with a few fresh ideas that celebrate the flavours of summer and make the most of those long, sunny days!

THE COCKTAIL

A BEERGARITA combines the bright citrus notes of a margarita with the refreshing finish of a light beer, creating a drink that's ideal for hot afternoons and relaxed evenings. It's simple to make, easy to serve in batches and guaranteed to become a favourite at your next barbecue. Garnish with plenty of lime and let the conversation flow.



Beergarita

YIELD: 1 drink + 1 cup of simple syrup | **PREP TIME:** 5 minutes + 1 hour to cool | **COOK TIME:** 10 minutes

Ingredients:

Lime Simple Syrup:

1 cup granulated sugar

10 strips lime zest (about 2 limes)

- In a small saucepan over medium heat, bring 1 cup of water to a boil.
- Add the sugar and lime zest, stirring until the sugar dissolves.
- Let cool for about 1 hour, then remove the lime zest.
- Refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 1 week.

Beergaritas:

Coarse salt

¼ cup lime juice (about 2-3 limes)

2 oz tequila

½ oz Grand Marnier (or Cointreau)

½ oz lime simple syrup

2 oz Corona beer

Lime slices for garnish

• Pour some salt onto a small plate. Rim a tall Collins glass or pilsner glass by rubbing a lime wedge around the rim and dipping the rim into the salt.

• Fill the glass with ice and add the lime juice, tequila, Grand Marnier, and simple syrup. Stir gently. Top with Corona and garnish with the lime.

SHEILA SAYS: *Rimming a glass is a simple way to instantly elevate your cocktail while changing both the flavour and the experience.*

THE STARTER

EVERY BARBECUE BENEFITS from a simple appetizer that guests can enjoy while the grill is heating up. Creamy burrata paired with crusty grilled bread and peaches delivers the perfect balance of richness, sweetness and texture. Stone fruit reaches its peak in July, and grilling peaches brings out their natural sweetness while adding subtle smoky notes. It's a dish that looks impressive but comes together in minutes!



Grilled Peaches, Bread, Burrata

YIELD: 6-8 servings | **PREP TIME:** 30 minutes | **COOK TIME:** 10 minutes

Ingredients:

1 large white baguette

½ cup olive oil

Sea salt and black pepper

5 ripe peaches

1 small burrata ball

2 Tbsp honey

5 mint leaves

½ cup pistachios, lightly salted, optional

Method:

• Preheat the grill to medium-high.

• Slice the baguette into 1-inch-thick slices. Brush with the oil and season lightly with salt and pepper.

• Halve and pit the peaches. Brush the cut sides of the peach with the oil.

• Grill the bread for about 30 seconds on each side, just until grill marks appear. Set aside on a platter.

• Grill the peaches, cut side down, for about 2 minutes. Transfer to the upper rack of the grill, close the lid, and cook until soft and warmed through, about 3 minutes.

• Arrange the grilled bread, grilled peaches, and burrata on a large platter. Drizzle them with honey, garnish with mint, and serve with a small bowl of pistachios on the side (if using).

SEB SAYS: *For a barbecue meal, I like to use the grill for every course, from the appetizer all the way to the dessert. It creates an easy flow for food service throughout the gathering, without as many trips in and out of the house.*

THE MAIN

SHRIMP IS ONE OF THE QUICKEST proteins to cook on the grill, making it perfect for warm-weather meals when you'd rather spend time with guests rather than in the kitchen. Butterflying the shrimp allows them to soak up even more flavour from a rich garlic-butter marinade – creating tender, juicy bites with very little effort. Whether served as an appetizer or the main event, this dish brings restaurant-worthy flavour to your backyard.



Butterflied Shrimp With Garlic Butter

YIELD: 6-8 servings | **PREP TIME:** 20 minutes | **COOK TIME:** 10 minutes

Ingredients:

1 cup butter

¼ cup chopped Italian parsley

1 Tbsp minced garlic

2 lb shrimp (6/8 size), shell on and deveined

¼ cup olive oil

Sea salt and black pepper

2 lemons, cut into wedges

Method:

• In a medium bowl, mix together the butter, parsley and garlic until smooth and well incorporated.

• Using a sharp paring knife, butterfly the shrimp by carefully slicing them along the length of their backs (where it has been deveined), making sure not to cut all the way through. Gently press the shrimp flat and set aside.

• Preheat your grill to medium-high.

• Brush the shrimp with the oil and grill, cut side down, for about 3 minutes. Flip the shrimp and grill until the flesh turns white and opaque, about 3 minutes.

• Transfer the grilled shrimp to a platter and place about 1 tsp of the garlic butter mixture on top of each one while still hot so that the butter melts.

• Season to taste with salt and pepper and serve with lemon wedges on the side.

SEB SAYS: *Remember to devein your shrimp or ask your fishmonger to do it for you! This eliminates potential grit and a bitter taste, ensuring a clean flavour and perfect texture when grilled over high heat, while also improving the visual presentation.*

THE PARTING GIFT

SMALL JARS OF HOMEMADE DRY RUB make charming and practical party favours, and they're surprisingly easy to prepare. Fill glass jars with your signature spice blend and encourage friends to use them on everything from chicken and ribs to roasted vegetables. It's a simple gesture that keeps the summer entertaining spirit going long after the last guest has left.



Dry Rub Parting Gift

YIELD: Makes enough to fill 6 (4 oz) mason jars | **PREP TIME:** 10 minutes

Ingredients:

3 Tbsp chili powder
3 Tbsp garlic powder
3 Tbsp black pepper
3 Tbsp dry mustard powder
3 Tbsp onion powder
3 Tbsp sweet paprika
3 tsp dry basil
3 tsp dry oregano
3 tsp dry tarragon
3 tsp dry thyme
3 tsp fennel seeds
1 tsp cayenne pepper, optional

Method:

• In a small bowl, whisk together all the ingredients until fully combined.
• Write instructions on a small note card for your guests: Rub 2 chicken breasts liberally with the spice rub, then marinate in the fridge for 2 hours or overnight. When ready, grill the chicken over high heat until the internal temperature reaches 165°F and the juices run clear.

SHEILA SAYS: *Everyone loves a parting gift. Writing the name of your guest on the tag takes it that extra step further!*

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Summer gatherings don't need to be elaborate to feel memorable. A few seasonal ingredients, simple recipes and thoughtful details can turn an ordinary barbecue into something worth celebrating. So fire up the grill, pour a cold drink and savour every moment of the season while it lasts!



Seb and Sheila Centner

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