

A moveable feast

Eclectic is a word that springs to mind when I look at this selection of recipes, but they're all things that taste great and work really well at a picnic – and all stand up well to the rigours of travel. Of course, the idea of a picnic is to be relaxed, so you can include as many (or as few) as you like.

Chicken liver pâté

This simple pate is delicious served with sliced bread, crackers and/or crudité's. I confess that I'm more than a little squeamish about offal, but I'll make an exception for this!

50g butter
2 cloves garlic
1 tsp chopped fresh thyme (½ tsp dried)
400–500g chicken livers
¼ C sherry
½–1 tsp salt
pepper to taste

Melt butter in a medium-large frypan. Add garlic and thyme and cook for 1–2 minutes, stirring frequently.

Tip chicken livers into the pan and cook over a medium heat, stirring and turning frequently (breaking up the larger pieces), for about 5 minutes, or until no longer pink in the centre.

Allow mixture to cool for a few minutes, then transfer to a food processor fitted with a metal chopping blade, and process until finely chopped. Add sherry, ½ tsp salt and a grind of pepper, and process until smooth.

Pour half the pâté mixture into a sieve held over a medium-sized pot or bowl. Gently shake/jiggle the sieve from side to side, tapping its rim on the edge of the pot, until the mixture has passed through. Rinse and dry the sieve, then repeat with the rest of the mixture.

Transfer the pâté into serving dishes or small airtight containers and store in the fridge until required.



Crispy coated chicken drumsticks

This is my oven-baked version of “fried” chicken – an American picnic classic. It is nice served warm, but is also very good chilled.

8 (about 1.25kg) chicken drumsticks
¾ C flour
1 tsp garlic salt
2 large eggs
2 tbsp water
1 C cornflakes, crushed
2 thick slices bread, crumbed (about 1½ C)
2 tsp paprika
1 tsp curry powder
2 tbsp olive or other oil

Preheat the oven to 200°C.

Measure flour and garlic salt into a large plastic bag and shake to combine. Whisk egg and water together in a flat shallow bowl.

Place cornflakes in another (medium) plastic bag and crush them lightly.

Add bread crumbs, paprika and curry powder and shake until well mixed.

Drop one drumstick at a time into the flour mixture and toss until evenly coated.

Again working one at a time, dip floured chicken pieces into the egg mixture, turning to coat evenly, then drop them into the bag of crumb coating, and gently shake the bag until evenly coated.

Arrange the crumbed chicken in a large baking paper-lined roasting dish and drizzle lightly with the oil. Bake 25–30 minutes or until golden brown and the juices run clear when the chicken is pierced at the thickest part.

(serves 4)



Having grown up in one of New Zealand's most famous “foodie” households, Simon Holst has inherited a passion for food and cooking. He has co-authored 23 cookbooks with his mother Alison, and five “solo” books, with combined sales of over one million copies. Simon also contributes food columns to newspapers and magazines, with the focus on practical, hassle-free and delicious family food.



Roast vegetable & pasta salad

The slight tang of feta goes really well with the sweetness of roasted pumpkin, and both work brilliantly with the earthy flavour of the cumin dressing. Pasta salads are great for picnics as they are reasonably robust and can take a few knocks in transit.

300–400g pumpkin
1 medium red onion
1 medium red pepper
2–3 ripe medium tomatoes, quartered
2 cloves garlic, chopped
4 tbsp olive oil
300g penne, rigatoni or other short pasta
2 tbsp lemon juice
2 tsp ground cumin
½–1 tsp salt
100g feta, crumbled
pepper to taste

Heat oven to 225°C.

Peel and de-seed the pumpkin and cut into 2cm cubes.

Cut the onion into 12 thin wedges.

Halve the red pepper, remove seeds and pith, and cut into 1cm strips.

Place the vegetables in a large bowl with garlic and two tbsp of oil and toss gently until coated. Spread the vegetables in a single layer in a Teflon or baking paper-lined roasting dish and place in oven.

After 10 minutes gently turn the vegetables and return to the oven for a further 10 minutes.

While the vegetables roast, cook the pasta in plenty of lightly salted, rapidly boiling water. Put remaining oil into a small bowl or jar, add lemon juice, cumin and ½ tsp salt and stir to combine. Drain the cooked pasta and return it to the cooking pot. Drizzle with the oil mixture, then stir to combine.

Gently stir the roasted vegetables and two thirds of the feta into the pasta. Season to taste with pepper and salt.

Sprinkle with the remaining feta and chopped flat leaf parsley.

Serve warm, at room temperature or refrigerate until required.

(serves 3–4)



Crunchy lemon & poppy seed muffins

2 C self-raising flour
1 C sugar
½ C poppy seeds
¼ tsp salt
Juice and finely grated rind of 2 lemons
6 tbsp canola (or other light vegetable) oil
2 large eggs
1 C milk
¼ C sugar

Heat oven to 200°C (190°C fanbake), with the rack just below the middle.

Measure flour, sugar, poppy seeds, lemon rind and salt into a large bowl.

Place oil, eggs and milk in another small bowl and beat with a fork until thoroughly combined. Tip the liquid into the dry ingredients and fold together until the flour is dampened.

Spoon mixture into 12 regular muffin pans (non-stick spray them first).

Bake 10–15 minutes until golden brown and the centres spring back when pressed.

Squeeze the lemon juice and mix with the second amount of sugar.

Allow muffins to cool in their pans for 3–4 minutes, then take them out and brush with the lemon/sugar mixture.

Cool on a rack.

(makes 12 muffins)



PHOTOGRAPHY Lindsay Keats