NO-FUSS SUMMER ENTERTAINING

AUGUST 2002

AMERICA'S FOOD AND ENTERTAINING MAGAZINE

# EASY DOES IT

SIMPLE BARBECUES & PICNICS MAIN-COURSE SALADS **SUPER SANDWICHES** FRESH PEACH DESSERTS



## **PLUS**

**NEW RESTAURANTS IN NEW YORK, LOS ANGELES, HONG KONG & VANCOUVER** 

**RED POTATO AND** GREEN BEAN SALAD WITH DIJON VINAIGRETTE







With his wife, Joy, sitting in the co-pilot's seat, Alex Stewart banks the yellow-and-white floatplane into a turn, then brings it in for a whisper-smooth landing on Dabob Bay. Just offshore, he cuts the engine, and as the plane glides toward the beach, a great-outdoors silence falls again over this pristine corner of Puget Sound.

"This is it. We're here," Alex says, scanning the forest-backed beach as a few crabs skitter away into the sea grass. Alex and Joy and four friends—Tony and Sandi Chapman and Scott and Marsha Spengler (Tony and Scott are pilots, too)—unclasp their seat belts and set to unloading the plane. The Stewarts carry the picnic basket and Tony grabs the cooler; inside is a lunch of fresh crab, homemade dill bread, and pasta salad with sundried tomatoes and artichokes.

After wading to the beach, the group selects a picnic site, and Joy pours raspberry

lemonade. While Alex and Scott get a fire going, Marsha and the Chapmans head for the shoreline, buckets in hand, to collect oysters to grill. Across the water the Olympic Mountains loom, shrouded in clouds, but on the beach the August sun shines.

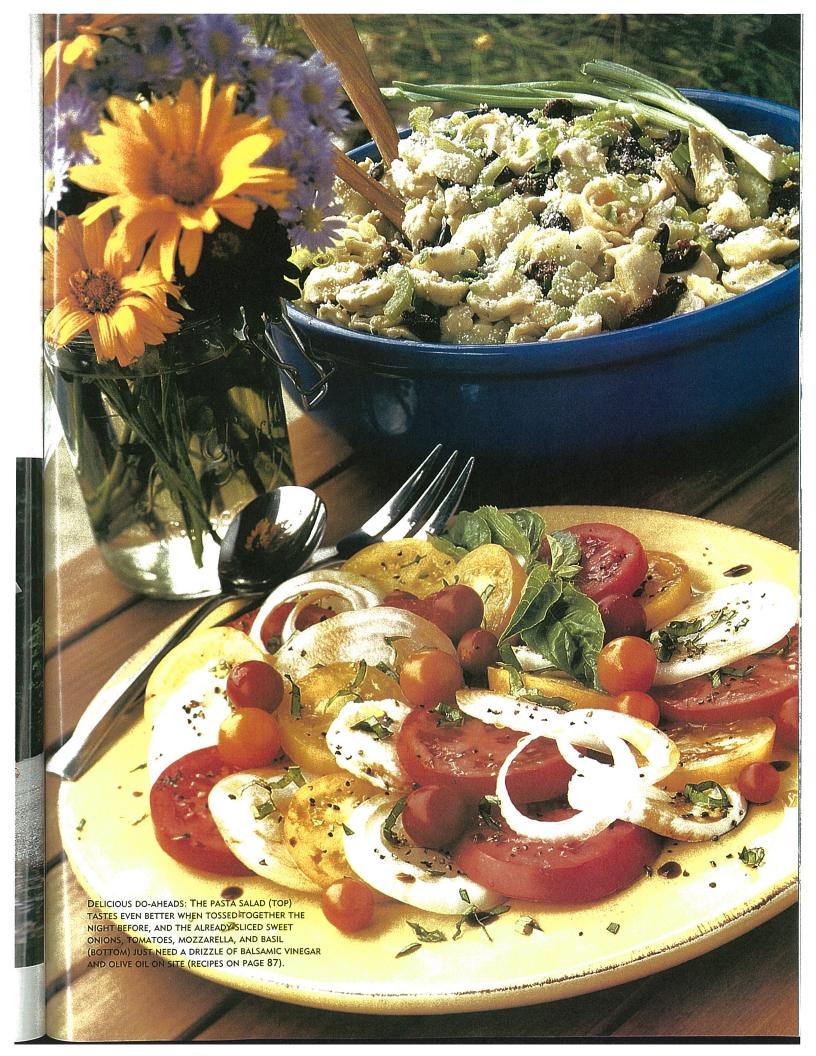
"Ah, the good life," says Alex, raising his lemonade cup as Joy starts filling bright blue plastic plates with food. "I never get tired of being out here," says Marsha. "You can get out into the boonies so fast in this area," says Scott, who was born in the East. "It's like being in the Adirondacks, but with bigger mountains and bigger water."

And so the afternoon rolls on amid a medley of crackling firewood, the occasional drone of a passing bug, and the clink of plastic cups raised in toasts to friendship, floatplanes, and the natural pleasures of the Pacific Northwest. By the time Joy breaks out cookies for dessert, it's clear the day has been a success.

#### The Picnic Site

Once the picnickers have chosen the right spot (flat ground, some shade, some sun, a nice view), they spread a blanket to create a natural dining nook, framing it with big pieces of driftwood found on the beach. Small folding tables hold the food, and when it comes time to eat, people sit on the blanket and on nearby logs and rocks. Joy brings flowers from her garden, arranging and transporting them in empty milk bottles and mason jars. She adds a little water when she gets to the beach.





#### **RASPBERRY LEMONADE**

Raspberry syrup lends extra flavor and beautiful color to the traditional summer drink. If you're taking the lemonade on a picnic, don't add the ice until just before you leave the house.

#### 8 SERVINGS

- 8 lemon slices
- 8 fresh raspberries
- 8 fresh mint sprigs
- 8 wooden skewers
- 15 (about) large lemons
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1 10-ounce package frozen raspberries in syrup, thawed, drained, syrup reserved, berries reserved for another use
- 1 cup water
- 8 cups ice cubes Additional ice cubes

Thread 1 lemon slice, 1 raspberry, and 1 mint sprig on each skewer; set aside.

Using vegetable peeler, remove peel (yellow part only) from 6 lemons, forming long spiral strips. Halve all lemons; squeeze enough lemons to measure 3 cups juice. Mix juice and sugar in large pitcher; stir until sugar dissolves. Stir in lemon strips, raspberry syrup, and 1 cup water. Add 8 cups ice cubes. Let stand 30 minutes, stirring often. Fill 8 glasses with additional ice, pour lemonade over, and garnish with reserved skewers.

### FRESH CRAB WITH CITRUS-GARLIC MAYONNAISE

To ensure freshness, purchase the crab from a fish market with a lot of turnover.

#### 6 TO 8 SERVINGS

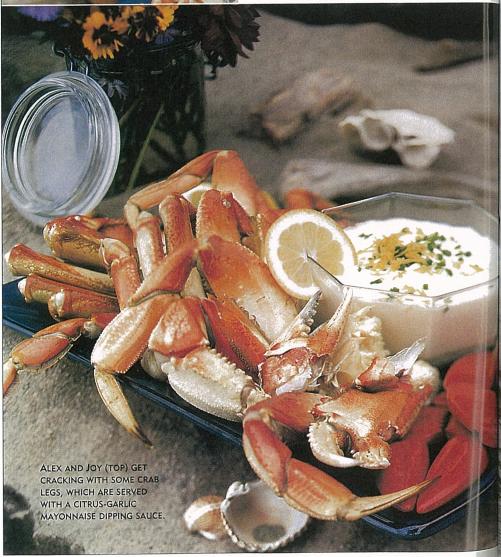
- 11/2 cups mayonnaise
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 2 teaspoons fresh lime juice
- 1 teaspoon grated lemon peel
- 1 large garlic clove, pressed
- 4 cooked Dungeness crabs, cracked, cleaned



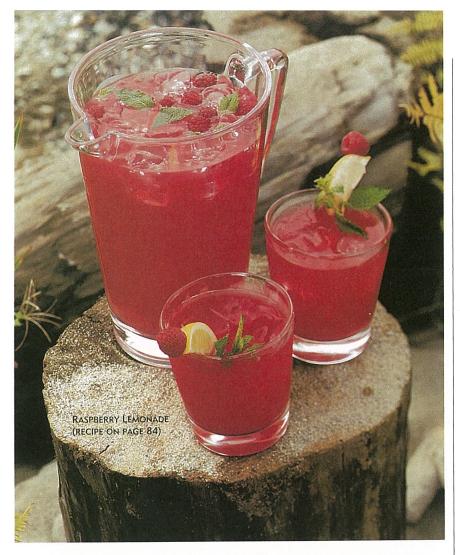
#### The Menu

Joy, who is a caterer, knows a thing or two about fresh ingredients. The oysters for the appetizer are gathered on the beach (opposite), and she picks up the crab and fish at Pike Place Market in Seattle on the day of the picnic.

For the dill bread, Joy uses a recipe from her brother, Andy (he's a chef). Its cool, herby flavor complements all the seafood on the menu. According to Joy, it's the cottage cheese in the dough that makes the bread so moist. She rounds out the menu with two easy salads: one of tortellini, sun-dried tomatoes, and artichokes in an herb vinaigrette, and another of tomatoes, mozzarella, and sweet onions with oil and vinegar. Chocolate chip cookies—with a kick from instant espresso powder—top off the meal.







### The Strategy

"The idea is simple—just get out and have fun and eat with friends," Joy says. That might sound easier said than done, but this party can be a snap if you plan ahead.

Almost everything on the menu can be partially or completely prepared beforehand. The dill bread, the chocolate chip-espresso cookies, and the tortellini salad (purchased pasta makes it a breeze) can all be done the night before; the raspberry lemonade and the tomato salad can be made at the last minute, or even after choosing the spot for the picnic.

On site, Alex sets up the grill by digging a hole in the sand and lining it with rocks, then firewood. He brings a barbecue grate from home and places it over the opening. Once he gets the fire started, he puts the oysters on. "It's the easiest way to do them," he says. "The key is a hot fire so they cook quickly and stay moist."

While the oysters cook, Joy serves the first course—crab with zesty citrus-garlic mayonnaise. The fire is still good and hot

when Joy puts the kebabs on to cook. Then Sandi and Marsha set out the salads and the bread. Afterward, Joy passes around a basket of cookies. That's all there is to it.

#### Making the Feast a Moveable One

"The best thing about this picnic isn't the airplane," Joy says. "It's that you can do the same thing with the family station wagon—at a river, a lake, or a park. It doesn't matter where you are or how you get there, as long as everything's portable."

Transport the lemonade in a thermos, and put the white wine on ice in the cooler. The salads can be prepped and stored in plastic containers, which should also go into the cooler. The fish must be transported directly on ice, and the various sauces and dressings can be packed in small lidded plastic containers. Wrap the loaf of dill bread in foil and seal it in a zipper-lock bag until you're ready to slice into it. And be sure to bring along lots of butter.

Whisk first 8 ingredients in medium bowl. Season with salt and pepper. (*Can be made 1 day ahead. Cover; chill.*) Arrange crab on platter. Serve with mayonnaise.

#### **BARBECUED OYSTERS**

A surprisingly elegant dish for a picnic. Make the sauce ahead, then reheat it at the picnic site in a pan set on the grill.

6 TO 8 SERVINGS

½ cup (1 stick) butter

- 3 tablespoons ketchup
- 3 tablespoons soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 24 fresh oysters, shucked, left on half shell

Melt butter in medium saucepan over medium heat. Stir in next 4 ingredients. Bring to simmer, stirring often. Reduce heat; simmer until sauce thickens, stirring often, about 5 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. (Can be made 1 day ahead. Cover; chill. Rewarm before serving.)

Prepare barbecue (medium-high heat). Place oysters still in their bottom shells on rack. Grill until just heated through, about 3 minutes. Transfer to platter. Serve, passing sauce separately.

#### SALMON AND HALIBUT KEBABS WITH SPICY LEMON MARINADE

8 SERVINGS

- 4 large shallots, minced
- ¼ cup dry white wine
- 1/4 cup fresh lemon juice
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh thyme
- 2 teaspoons hot pepper sauce
- 1½ pounds skinless salmon fillets, cut into 1½-inch cubes
- 1½ pounds skinless halibut fillets, cut into 1½-inch cubes
  - 2 lemons, cut into rounds
  - 1 orange, quartered lengthwise, then sliced crosswise
  - 8 metal skewers

Whisk first 6 ingredients in large bowl to blend. Season with salt and pepper. Add salmon and halibut; toss to coat. (Cover