

Bariatric



NORTH MISSISSIPPI
MEDICAL CENTER

BARIATRIC CENTER

bytes

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Grilling & Picnic Tips for Satisfying Side Dishes

Side dishes are what make family outings special, but can you make them satisfying and still healthful? Here are some excellent ways to kick-start healthy eating by making a few adjustments to side dishes, such as the typical macaroni salad, pasta salad, coleslaw, corn on the cob, and baked beans. Before planning your menu, consider these healthful tips for some great-tasting and healthful alternatives.

1. Complement your meal with color

The most common barbecue side dishes are usually the same color, white or yellowish, such as coleslaw, potato salad, macaroni salad, corn, etc. When you choose side dishes, consider adding some color. Not only will it make your spread look more festive, but it will make it healthier as well.

Make a salad with fresh vegetables and fruits of different colors, such as spinach, cucumbers, carrots, red peppers, beets, broccoli, oranges and berries. Roasting vegetables, such as sweet potatoes, beets, and asparagus, in the broiler with a little bit of oil, salt and pepper is another great option. Finally, try adding different vegetables to your usual sides to give them added crunch and flavor. For example, you can add shredded carrot, jicama and red pepper to your coleslaw.

2. Use fresh, local ingredients for the best flavors

When choosing fruits and vegetables, consult your local farmer or farmers' market. The best tasting fruits and vegetables are usually the ones in season and picked fresh that day. Of course, where you live impacts what is available.

3. Hold the mayo

Many popular picnic side dishes are made with mayonnaise, such as potato salad, macaroni salad and coleslaw. However, you can use many alternative ways to prepare these dishes to cut the fat and calories, but not the flavor.

Try these suggestions:

- Use less mayonnaise or substitute low-fat mayonnaise
- Substitute low-fat sour cream or yogurt for mayonnaise, and add a slightly sweet ingredient, such as raisins or fruit

NMMC is designated as an Accredited Center by the Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery Accreditation and Quality Improvement Program. The designation helps ensure patients that the health care facility and surgeon meet stringent criteria and provide high quality care. Because of the designation, more health plans now cover weight loss surgery at NMMC.



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Grilling & Picnic Tips (continued)

- Prepare a vinegar-based dressing that is tart and flavorful, without the added calories
 - Try using whole-wheat pasta in your pasta salad
 - Replace half of the pasta in your pasta salad with crunchy vegetables
 - Make a new side salad, such as a Caribbean sweet potato salad, tomato, cucumber and red onion salad with mint, or arugula, fennel, and orange salad and use less olive oil to reduce the calories (recipes courtesy of AllRecipes.com)

4. Fill up with fiber

Choosing healthier side dishes, such as baked beans (with moderate amounts of bacon and sugar), lower-fat salads, and roasted vegetables, will not only cut calories, but also will keep you fuller longer. Beans, fruits and vegetables are all rich in nutrients and fiber that help promote satiety and prevent crashes in blood sugar after eating.

5. Use the grill

As long as you are grilling, you might as well use the grill to make some great side dishes. Grilling vegetables is a great alternative to roasting them!

Try these ideas:

- Grill corn in the husk for some fantastic flavors without having to add much extra fat.
- Try making a grilled eggplant salad with some fresh tomatoes, olives, garlic, basil and low-fat feta.
- Place freshly grilled vegetables on a bed of spinach or arugula for a satisfying salad.

Take Advantage of Nature's Bounty: Fresh Fruits & Vegetables

If you are wanting to kick-start healthier eating, take advantage of fresh, seasonal produce whether it is from your own garden, your local farmer's market or roadside stand or even your local grocery store. Nothing is better than fresh produce picked right at the peak of its flavor.

Eating fruits and vegetables has many health benefits, and these foods are naturally low in calories, sodium, fat and cholesterol and high in vitamins, minerals and fiber. They can be helpful in maintaining a healthy weight.

Once you have your fruits and vegetables, enjoy them! You can serve vegetables raw, grilled, steamed or roasted. Toss them into whole grain pasta or salad varieties. Fruit can be simply served raw or you can mix it up by grilling them or adding to mixes for muffins or pancakes.

Fruit can also be useful as a moisture component for your meats – just squeeze some lemon or lime over your grilled protein option. Fruits and vegetables can be utilized for salsas to accompany your favorite protein dish. They can also be used for infusing flavor into your water.

Recipes To Try

Creating a Salad

Various choices for salad greens: spinach, romaine, arugula, spring mix, chard, etc.

Various toppings for salad: chickpeas (garbanzo beans), bean sprouts, fruits (apples, pears, mango, grapes, strawberries, etc.), soynuts, edamame (soy bean), low or fat free feta cheese, wheat germ, strips of vegetables (peppers, zucchini, carrots, broccoli, etc.).

Protein Content of:

Chickpeas: 1/4 cup = 3 grams protein
Wheat germ: 2 Tbsp. = 4 grams protein
Edamame: 1/4 cup = 4 grams protein
Soy nuts, chopped (toasted edamame):
1/4 cup = 10 grams protein
Bean sprouts: 1 cup = 3 grams protein

Vinaigrette Dressing

Ingredients:

1/3 cup reduced fat red wine vinaigrette
1 Tbsp. chopped fresh parsley
1/2 tsp. caraway seed
1 clove garlic, finely chopped

In tightly covered container, shake all vinaigrette ingredients until well blended.

Strawberry Dressing

Ingredients:

3 Tbsp. apple juice
2 Tbsp. strawberry spreadable fruit (no sugar added)
2 Tbsp. balsamic vinegar

In small bowl, mix all dressing ingredients until blended.