



ISSUE # 5

From the Kitchen of Marybeth Gregg

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Special Cooking Tips and Recipes For the Summer Season

This issue is packed with ideas for summer foods and entertaining. I have also included a list of food safety tips, which are especially important in warm weather.

Summer is a time when everyone loves to eat but doesn't like to spend lots of time cooking. This article is devoted to some great tips for you to use during the hot summer months. Look below for an easy summertime recipe.

This is my most favorite time of year for fresh and delicious fruits and vegetables. Every day there is a new selection of the best seasonal produce. If you are lucky enough to live in an area that has farm markets, be sure to take that extra few minutes and shop where the produce is the best. And no matter if you live in a city like New York or in the suburbs, farmer's markets and produce stands seem to be everywhere.

In prior issues, I've talked about giving your self permission to take some short cuts. Summer is a great time of year to take it a little easy and to take advantage of your local deli or specialty store to fill in parts of your menu. Buy specialty salads, appetizers or even entrees, so that you don't have to be cooking an entire meal. Plan your theme and seek out the best store where you can find high quality food.

Marybeth Gregg

Your Friends Can Help...

If friends offer, do take them up on their offer to bring something. It really helps when others bring appetizers and desserts- so that you can concentrate on the main meal.

Table Settings and Garnishes

You can have lots of fun with table settings and garnishes in the summer. Especially if you are having a large crowd, give yourself permission to use paper plates and napkins.

Some tips:

1. Be sure that the paper products are of a higher quality- no one likes flimsy, soggy plates.
2. Take advantage of the great colors that are available, especially in party stores. Mix and match colors and patterns to give your table some interest. For example, last weekend I used turquoise and pale yellow for a color theme. I alternated colors- turquoise plate with yellow napkin for some interest. umbrella, interspacing votives in between the flowers.
3. Use bright colors and candles. Use fresh flowers from your yard. At our party, I was lucky to find pale yellow hydrangeas with a light blue tinge to them. I added some yellow tea roses and used an earthenware pitcher as the centerpiece. On the round umbrella tables, I plucked some of my blooming white rhododendron flowers and placed them in small white Pyrex cups around the center of the table. Alternate small votive candles.
4. Summer is a great time for fresh garnishes since there is an abundance of flowers, fruits and greens. Just go to your local farmers stand, look out your back yard (use only non-toxic leaves or flowers) or go to any local market for ideas.
5. Use bunches of fresh herbs for garnish. Rosemary, sage, and basil are all fragrant and beautiful. Tie them with a narrow ribbon or straw. If you are lucky to have planted Nasturtium in your yard, or perhaps you can still find some of plants at your local landscaping spot, these beautiful, bright yellow and orange flowers are very eye-catching on your serving platters. Use roses of any color, purple chive flowers, or other colorful flowers for a special touch.
6. String white holiday lights around your deck, or under your table umbrellas. Also look for colorful lanterns that you can find everywhere to add color and a festive feeling to your gathering, be it big or small.

Keeping It Cool, Keeping Food Safe

Especially in the summer, take extra care in food preparation, storage and serving. Keep yourself and your family safe from harmful bacteria. These are a few important tips to ensure that the food you serve and eat is safe:

1. Wash Hands, Utensils, and Food Preparation Surfaces

- Food safety begins with hand-washing even in outdoor settings. And it can be as simple as using a water jug, some soap, and paper towels.
- Consider using moist disposable towelettes for cleaning your hands. Use paper towels and ant-bacterial cleaner for counters.
- Keep all utensils and platters clean when preparing food. Separate cutting boards – do not use a cutting surface for salads or vegetables that has been used for raw fish or meat.

2. Preparing Fruits and Vegetables

- Rinse fresh fruits and vegetables, including those with skins and rinds that are not eaten, under running tap water before packing them. Packaged fruits and vegetables labeled "ready-to-eat," "washed," or "triple washed" need not be washed, but I always like to rinse them anyway, and pick through the lettuce that is wilted.
- Rub firm-skin fruits and vegetables under running tap water or scrub with a clean vegetable brush while rinsing with running tap water.

3. Safe Grilling Tips

- Marinate foods in the refrigerator, not on the counter or outdoors. If some of the marinade is to be used as a sauce on the cooked food, reserve a portion separately before adding the raw meat, poultry, or seafood. Don't **reuse marinade**.
- Don't use the same platter and utensils that previously held raw meat or seafood to serve cooked meats and seafood.
- If you partially cook food in the microwave, oven, or stove to reduce grilling time, do so immediately before the food goes on the hot grill.
- When it's time to cook the food, cook it thoroughly. Use a food thermometer to be sure the food has reached an adequate internal temperature before serving.
 - Beef, veal, and lamb steaks and roasts--145° F for medium rare, 160° F for medium, and 170° F for well done.
 - Ground pork and ground beef--160° F.
 - Ground poultry--165° F.
 - Poultry breasts--170° F.
 - Whole poultry (take measurement in the thigh)--180° F.
 - Fin fish--145° F or until the flesh is opaque and separates easily with a fork.
 - Shrimp, lobster, and crabs--the meat should be pearly and opaque.
 - Clams, oysters, and mussels--until the shells are open.
- Grilled food can be kept hot until served by moving it to the side of the grill rack, just away from the coals where it can overcook

4. Serving Food Safely

- Keep cold foods cold and hot foods hot.
- Do not use a plate that previously held raw meat, poultry, or seafood for anything else unless the plate has first been washed in hot, soapy water.
- Hot food should be kept hot, at or above 140 °F. Wrap well and place in an insulated container.
- Foods like chicken salad and desserts in individual serving dishes can also be placed directly on ice, or in a shallow container set in a deep pan filled with ice. Drain off water as ice melts and replace ice frequently.
- Don't let perishable food sit out longer than 2 hours.
- Food should not sit out for more than 1 hour in temperatures above 90°F. To get more information on food safety, go to www.fightbac.org, the Partnership for Food Safety Education.

Bonus Recipe and Cooking Tips Included

EASY GRILLED SHRIMP WITH PROSCIUTTO AND ROSEMARY

This delicious shrimp dish can be used as an appetizer or as a main course. You will get rave reviews on this recipe. Garnish with lemon wedges, some lemon zest and serve on long branches of rosemary.

Preheat grill or use grill pan on the stove.
24 Wooden skewers – presoaked in water

Marinade

24 extra large shrimp, peeled, cleaned, tails on
1/4 cup lemon juice
1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil
1/4 cup fresh rosemary, minced coarsely plus 1/4 cup for grilling
1 cup roasted tomatoes or roasted red peppers seeded, & chopped coarsely
Lots of fresh ground pepper

2 large garlic cloves, minced
Marinate shrimp in all ingredients except reserved rosemary. Marinate up to 2 hours, and turn shrimp 1/2 way through.
3-4 slices of paper-thin Prosciutto, trimmed and cut in half lengthwise in thirds.

Wrap 1 piece of Prosciutto and a sprinkle of reserved rosemary on each shrimp. Thread onto skewers. Grill until shrimp is cooked through, about 2-3 minutes depending on size.

Serve warm on top of long rosemary branches.

Do Ahead Tips:

Can be done up until 2 days in advance cool, wrap tightly and refrigerate.

Do not cook completely if you are reheating the shrimp. Reheat in a 350° oven for 10 minutes or so until hot. Add some lemon juice so they don't dry out while reheating.

Preparation Tips:

Cut the Prosciutto into long strips. I usually get about two or three to a slice, and I cut off the fat if there is too much of it.

Make sure you get the bits of tomato or roasted peppers inside the shrimp wrap.

I also use grill pans if I don't have the outdoor grill on. Invest in one of these — are inexpensive and can be used all year round.

Yield - about 2 dozen

Potato and Grilled Corn Salad With Chipotle Dressing

This recipe is from my upcoming cookbook and if you would like a complementary recipe for a new and mouth-watering Potato Salad with a Latin Twist, send me a quick email at and I will send it to you. Each time I make this recipe, it disappears quickly because it has a wonderful blend of flavors from the grilled corn to the smooth dressing. You will love it.

Have fun cooking and enjoy the season's best.
Marybeth Gregg

?????What is Cook-with-Confidence??????

As seen in a recent New York Times "Dining In" section on trends, the latest in cooking classes is learning at home. I have been teaching these programs for over two years and my students love the convenience and programs which are like a class and party at the same time!

This is a cooking school that comes to you. Wouldn't you like to learn to cook interesting and delicious new foods that you can cook in advance? And learn great techniques and shortcuts to great meals? Private or group cooking lessons are offered in your home. Learn basic techniques to intermediate skills with ease and have fun while learning. These are hands-on classes - you get to try out your new skills and will be delighted at how well you do in a short amount of time. You get to learn by doing - new cuisines, new methods, new tastes.

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GO TO MY WEBSITE FOR MORE RECIPES AND TIPS
Website- www.cook-with-confidence.com

Marybeth Gregg has been cooking, entertaining and giving cooking advice for almost 20 years. She is well-known for her wonderful cuisine and great parties. She started her successful cooking school two years ago. She has attended cooking schools in Chicago, Philadelphia and in the New York metropolitan area. She lives in central New Jersey and has been featured in the Asbury

Park Press and the Coast Star newspapers and was one of only ten culinary experts to be invited to the Spring Lake Kitchen Tour this fall.

Marybeth is currently working on publishing a cookbook and a series of video tapes and DVD's of cooking lessons.

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