



Memorial Day weekend is almost upon us—the kick off to summer, a time for grilling, picnics and outdoor eating (although with the warm May many of us got started early this year!) It’s always exciting to think about the variety of color and flavors that go with this season. Produce with color is filled with nutrition and antioxidants so savor and enjoy, knowing that you are doing good things for your health. (I often say a little extra spent for healthy food may save you on health care costs in the long run!)

Looking for something delicious and different to grill? For just a few weeks each year in May-June you can purchase **Wild Copper River Salmon**. Although a bit pricey, it’s packed with nutrition as its rich in heart healthy omega-3 fatty acids (also good for our brains!) It has a deep red color, better texture than farm-raised salmon since it swims freely and a wonderful mild nutty flavor. You can just rub a little olive oil on it and put some garlic, basil and oregano (or whatever you enjoy) on it and it’s ready for the grill. The guideline for cooking fish is 10 minutes for each inch of thickness but watch it carefully so you don’t overcook and end up with dry fish.

Other lean grill items might be other fish such as halibut, tuna or swordfish, pork tenderloin or lean pork chops, skinless chicken or turkey, lean beef cuts such as flank steak or sirloin, lean hamburgers (use 93% or 95% lean ground beef) or turkey bratwurst (all the same spices without as much fat). Perhaps a chicken or beef kabob with colorful veggies threaded on the skewer? How about a “meaty” Portobello mushroom that you pre-marinade and grill?

<http://www.bbqgrillingbasics.com/marinades.htm> Or try some veggies such as asparagus, zucchini or sweet potatoes on the grill—just drizzle with a bit of olive oil, add some spices and you won’t believe the amazing flavor!

Baked beans are a summer picnic food staple! Make your own in a crock pot <http://southernfood.about.com/od/crockpotbeans/r/bl15c2.htm> or buy your favorite brand in the store. They will add plant-based protein and fiber to you meal (13 grams per cup!) They also contain antioxidants that reduce risks for chronic disease and slow aging. Add beans of all colors to your summer salads or puree them into spreads such as hummus (one of my most requested recipes—attached above!)

Salads often go along with a picnic and summer eating. Toss potato and pasta salads with red, green and yellow peppers. Throw in some cherry or grape tomatoes and/or zucchini or yellow squash for extra nutrition and fiber—the more color the better for your health! Consider a vinaigrette (oil-based) dressing rather than a mayonnaise-based one. For chicken, turkey or tuna salad, add in some fruit such as grapes, apple, strawberry, mango or dried cranberries along with the onion and celery you might typically use. Use a light mayonnaise or plain yogurt to limit fat intake. Fruit such as mango or apricots is also tasty in a salad of mixed greens.

Often when we aren't grilling or attending picnics we want to spend as much time outdoors as we can in our yard or gardens or being active outdoors. In Iowa we know it's important to enjoy the fair weather and outdoors because of our long, cold winters. So attached are some **quick and healthy recipes** to free you quickly from the kitchen so you can be active outdoors! Frisbee, hiking, biking, swimming—take advantage of the mild weather and move your body! Just remember to stay hydrated and to use sunscreen!

Enjoy your LONG holiday weekend!

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