

Hogtown HomeGrown

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Tailgating? Go Local, Go Green!

I think tailgating is cool—I'll admit to a lump in my throat on game days when I see all the fans, flags flying and grills smoking. It's a great tradition, passed down through families and friends getting together over the years for food and fun!

All that food, drink, football and fun can exact a high price however—fat, sugar and empty calories purchased at big box stores, charcoal grills spewing pollution in your face and too many bags of garbage full of plastic cups, paper plates and even recyclables. It's time to update tailgating—make it local and green—create some new traditions!

FOOD—Decide what you are going to cook after you see what's fresh! Pick up some local veggies at a farmers market, seafood from a local store, meat from a sustainable farm and bread from a local bakery. When you attend away games, look for their local markets and stores, seek out regional specialties and eat local wherever you tailgate!

DRINK—Instead of serving individual bottles of water or soda, invest in two drink coolers with spigots—one for water and the other for something flavored. Keep a bag handy for those plastic bottles that just seem to appear—recycle them at home!

SERVING—Buy a set of reusable plates, cups and flatware. For additional green points, purchase your set of dishes at one of the many local charity thrift shops, where you can also find recycled tablecloths and cloth napkins—no more paper garbage!

COOKING—Did you know that propane, even though it is a petrochemical, is the greenest way to cook in your tailgate kitchen? A byproduct of natural gas processing, propane breaks down into water and carbon dioxide—without any used coals to throw away.

I've been using my grill so much during the past few weeks that I actually ran out of propane while grilling a meal—be sure to check your levels before your party starts!

We love to throw parties where guests make up their own kabobs from a table full of fresh veggies, tofu and seafood. We always serve several sauces for dipping, making this menu the perfect way to satisfy everyone's tastes during your next party or tailgate event.

Kabobs for a Crowd

INGREDIENTS

6-8 shrimp or tofu squares per person	12-15 veggie pieces per person
1 Tablespoon olive oil per person	Salt and pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

Soak your skewers now, if you are using bamboo! Clean and peel shrimp, press tofu and prep veggies into two-bite pieces. Typical veggies include—peppers, summer squash, zucchini, eggplant, tomatoes, mushrooms, potatoes, but don't forget winter squash, root veggies, sweet potatoes and pineapple! (Par-boil or blanche hard veggies to reduce cooking times) I prefer to cook lightly oiled shrimp on their own skewer—it's easier to control the cooking times, but veggies can be mixed, oiled, seasoned and grilled in any combination.

SAUCES—soy, honey-mustard, barbecue, marinara, spicy peanut, ranch dressing, ketchup, horseradish, salsa, chutney, garlic butter, malt vinegar—did I miss anything?



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What's Fresh Right Now?

- Beans—green
- Cucumbers—mini seedless
traditional
- Eggplant—white/purple Italian
purple oriental
- Grapes—muscadines
scuppernongs
- Herbs—basil
- Lettuce—spring mix
- Melons—cantaloupe
watermelon
- Okra
- Onions—sweet
yellow
- Peas—white-acre (shelled and in pods)
crowder
zipper cream
- Peppers—green/red sweet bell,
jalapeno
habanero
sweet banana
red chile
- Potatoes—sweet
red skin
- Squash—summer
zucchini
butternut
pumpkin
- Tomatoes—beefsteak
green
cherry
grape

Tricks and Tips

Pick up some extra tomatoes the next time you're at a farmers market—look for the really ripe ones. Grape or cherry will cook faster, but with a splash of olive oil, a little patience and a couple of hours you'll have several dozen grilled or oven-roasted tomatoes to use immediately or freeze for later.

Local and Fresh— Sweet Peppers

Found in the same family (capsicum) as the chile pepper, the milder varieties are commonly known as sweet peppers—bell peppers, pimiento (yes, the red pepper in olives), cubanelle, banana and other non-spicy types.

All the different colors—green, yellow, red, orange, purple and even brown— and shapes—long, thin curly, round, pointed and squat—yield a similar mild crunchy flesh, varying in sweetness.

Peppers can be sautéed, roasted, grilled and even steamed. They can be stuffed and eaten whole or sliced for soups, stews, salads and sandwiches.

One of my favorite comfort foods is Italian Sausage Hoagies with Peppers and Onions. Try the vegetarian Italian sausage available in the freezer section—they are quite tasty when covered with hot Peppers and Onions!

Peppers and Onions

INGREDIENTS

- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 2 large sweet peppers, sliced into thin strips
- 1 large sweet onion, sliced into thin 1/2 slices
- 1 clove garlic, smashed and chopped finely
- salt and pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

Heat pan, then add oil, peppers and onions, stirring to coat with oil. Sauté, stirring occasionally, until limp. Add garlic and continue to cook until onions and peppers brown on the edges and garlic is soft. Use hot or store covered in refrigerator for up to one week.

Italian Sausage Hoagies—Serve hot Peppers and Onions, piled on top of sausages, in toasted sub rolls. Top with provolone cheese.

Save the World—One Tailgate Party at a Time!

Grilled White Pizzas

INGREDIENTS

A big batch of your favorite pizza dough (1/3 to 1/2 pound dough per person)

TOPPING

Ricotta cheese	Pesto Ricotta Spread
Artichokes	Black olives
Grilled grape tomatoes	Two Peppers Two Ways
Mushrooms	Onion
Sun-dried tomatoes	Shredded mozzarella
Crumbled feta	Shredded parmesan

DIRECTIONS

Preheat grill to 450-500 degrees. On a lightly floured surface, roll out dough into individual pizza sized pieces. Place dough directly on grill grates—lower cover and let cook for 4 minutes, remove from grill. Flip over and place desired toppings on baked side and return to grill for 4-7 minutes.

Two Peppers Two Ways

INGREDIENTS

4 large sweet peppers, 2 green and 2 red	1/4 cup olive oil
2 Tablespoons fresh oregano OR 1 Tablespoon dried	1/4 cup flat leaf parsley, chopped
Italian Style—1 teaspoon each marjoram and basil, 1 Tablespoon red wine vinegar (parmesan)	
Greek Style—1 teaspoon lemon zest, 1 Tablespoon each lemon juice and sesame seeds (feta)	

DIRECTIONS

Toss cut peppers with olive oil and oregano. Roast, grill or sauté peppers until lightly done, but still a little crisp. Stir in parsley and divide in half.

Mix in individual style flavorings and serve along with suggested cheeses as pizza toppings or omelet fillings. Cover and refrigerate leftovers.

Pesto Ricotta Spread

INGREDIENTS

4 cups basil leaves	1/2 cup pine nuts
3 garlic cloves, halved	1/2 cup parmesan, shredded
1/4 cup each olive oil and water	4 cups ricotta

DIRECTIONS

In a food processor, combine basil, pine nuts, garlic and parmesan. Drizzle in olive oil and water until mixture is smooth. Remove from food processor and stir into ricotta.

Use as is on pizza, omelets or sandwiches. Thin with a little water to use as a veggie topping, dip or salad dressing. Cover and refrigerate leftovers.

ABC Veggie Pizza Toppings

Artichokes
Broccoli
Chard
Daikon
Elephant Garlic
Fennel
Green Onions
Herbs
Italian Eggplant
Jicama
Kohlrabi
Leeks
Mushrooms
New Potatoes
Onions
Peppers
Quarantina Rapa
Rutabaga
Spinach
Tomatoes
Urid Dall
Vigna
Watercress
Xigua
Yard Long Beans
Zucchini

Tricks and Tips

Make a simple spread by mixing together 2 cups of ricotta and one drained jar of julienne cut sun-dried tomatoes with herbs. Save the leftover oil to use in salad dressings.

Hogtown HomeGrown

Local and Seasonal Recipes, Menus and More
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Tricks and Tips

A version of this bread has been the traditional Christmas morning breakfast for our family since I was a child. It is such a family favorite that I always make two and stash one in the freezer. Banana bread is a great no-fuss breakfast, as long as I remember to take it out to thaw the day before!

Honey Lemon Banana Bread

INGREDIENTS

1/2 cup unsalted butter (1 stick)	3/4 cup honey
3-4 ripe bananas, mashed	2 eggs
1 lemon, zested and juiced	2 1/2 cups whole wheat flour
2 teaspoons baking soda	1/2 teaspoon salt
1 Tablespoon hot water	1 cup walnuts, chopped

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350 degrees (reduce temperature 25 degrees for glass pan.) Prepare loaf pan with butter or oil.

Melt butter in large saucepan. When melted, turn off heat, add honey, stir and let cool 3 minutes. Mix in bananas, beating until thoroughly combined. Stir in eggs and lemon zest.

Combine flour, soda and salt. Add to wet ingredients and stir well. Mix lemon juice and hot water then stir into batter to make it smooth and light. Lightly stir in walnuts and push into prepared pan. Smooth the top and place in preheated oven.

Bake 50-70 minutes—loaf will be firm to the touch and brown, with some small cracks. A toothpick will test clean. Let cool for 5 minutes, then remove from pan. Allow to cool completely, wrap in foil, seal in resealable bag and allow to mellow overnight. (I'm not sure why, but it tastes better the next day.)

Store leftovers at room temperature for 3 days or refrigerated for a week. Freezes well.

Variation: Replace lemon zest and juice with orange and walnuts with chopped dates. Slice thinly and serve as sandwiches with cream cheese or yogurt cheese mixed with a little honey.