

Seasonal Eating
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Sides for a Barbecue
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June is the perfect time of year to grill out and have a barbecue in the back yard or a picnic. It's not too hot yet and with Father's Day and the 4th of July coming up, they are great times to celebrate. We often think of potato salad and coleslaw as sides to grilled meats or burgers but there are many options out there.

With the warm weather and eating outside, we must always take food safety into consideration. Foods should not be left out more than 2 hours or 1 hour if it is 90 degrees or more outside. It is best for cold salads to place a bowl of ice underneath the bowl of salad to keep it cool or use specially designed containers that allow you to freeze part of it to keep things cool.

Another way to beat the heat is to use recipes that are more vinegar based than creamy dressings. An Asian Pasta Salad is a good one to use in the summer because it has a vinegar based dressing and lots of fresh veggies. It's good warm just after you make it or chill it for several



hours to allow the dressing to soak into the vegetables and noodles. This recipe is packed with flavor and color and makes quite a bit so it works well for a potluck or large family gathering.

You can add in any vegetables you want. I used some Asian ingredients like canned baby corn and water chestnuts with fresh snow peas. But if you just have peppers or squash or frozen peas or regular onions or carrots in your refrigerator, use those. The real flavor in this recipe comes from the dressing with lots of fresh ginger root with soy sauce and brown sugar for a sweet and salty mixed with a slight heat from the crushed red pepper. You can adjust the amount of red pepper to your taste. I used thin spaghetti noodles but you can use whatever pasta you have, like bowties, elbows, penne or fettuccini.

So the next time you grill some chicken, try a side with a new twist and add a vinegar based pasta salad.

Visit the Bedford County Extension website for more recipes and information about seasonal eating (bedford.tennessee.edu).

Asian Pasta Salad

8 ounces thin spaghetti noodles
1/4 cup low sodium soy sauce

1/4 cup brown sugar
2 tablespoons rice wine vinegar
2 tablespoons water
1 teaspoon dark sesame oil
2 teaspoons finely grated ginger root
1/8 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
1/4 cup vegetable oil
1 yellow squash, chopped
2 carrots, cut into matchsticks
4 ounces snow peas, cut diagonally into strips
1/2 (14-1/2 ounce) can baby corn, drained and cut into 1/2" pieces
1/2 (8-ounce) can sliced water chestnuts, roughly chopped
2 green onions, sliced
1/2 green bell pepper, chopped
1/2 cup cashew nuts or peanuts

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add spaghetti and cook until al dente. Drain and place in large bowl with squash, carrots, snow peas, corn, water chestnuts, green onions, bell pepper and cashews. In a medium bowl, whisk together soy sauce, sugar, vinegar, water, sesame oil, ginger root and crushed red pepper. Slowly whisk in the vegetable oil. Pour over spaghetti mixture and toss well to coat. Refrigerate until ready to serve.