

Food and Beverages

Casual food, preferably sandwiches or other things you can eat without utensils:

- . Avoid food with mayonnaise. Pack everything in lightweight, resealable containers.

Ice pack or bags of ice

- . Food can spoil and harbor bacteria when not stored at the right temperature. Keep everything cold with refreezable ice packs, or fill a couple of resealable bags with ice cubes: They'll chill food as it's transported. Add ice cubes to drinks during the picnic. Empty out whatever remains before you go, for a lighter trip home.

Drinks

- . Bring an assortment of kid-friendly and adult beverages, such as bottled water and juice.

Condiments

- . Some ketchups and mustards come in mini jars that are small enough to throw in your tote. (Keep the jars to refill at home for your next picnic.)

Salt and pepper

- . Allow everyone to season their food to their liking on the spot.

Tableware

Cups and plates

- . Whether you choose eco-friendly paper, plastic, or bamboo, lightweight, stackable dishes make packing easy. Tip: Stalk Market plates (\$4 for 15) are made from renewable sugar cane fiber; buy at greenfeet.com.

Utensils, if needed

- . Opt for reusable utensils.

Serving utensils, if needed

- . If you're serving salads, you may need tongs or serving spoons.

Cutting knife

- . Look for one with a cover for safe transporting. Or wrap the blade in a kitchen towel.

Small cutting board

- . It's always handy to have a firm surface for slicing meat, cheese, and bread.

Corkscrew or bottle opener

- . Or both.

Napkins

- . If you prefer not to use cloth, look for ones made of recycled paper or other materials.

Cleanup

Trash bags

- . Don't leave a mess behind. Dispose of everything you bring to the picnic site.

Moist towelettes

- . When you don't have access to running water, these make it easy to wash up after eating.

Paper towels

- . Keep a roll on hand for mopping up spills and wiping bowls, containers, plates, and utensils before you pack them back up.

Miscellaneous

Blanket

- . It should be large enough to comfortably hold all your picnic-goers and food. A light one that folds small is a bonus.

Tote, backpack, or picnic basket

- . Stow everything in a lightweight, roomy carrier.

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