

Picnic Season is Here

Grab these essentials and go!

BY BRIDGET SHIRVELL





Cocktail Corner

Maple Berry Fizz

CONTRIBUTED BY FOUR ROSES BOURBON

Four Roses Bourbon's newest expression, Small Batch Select, is now available in Connecticut! First introduced in 2019 in just five states, Small Batch Select is the brand's first permanent product-line extension in more than a decade.

To create Small Batch Select, master distiller Brent Elliott selected and mingled six of Four Roses' 10 bourbon recipes, each aged a minimum of six years. "Because it's not chill-filtered, Small Batch Select affords an experience that's as close to 'straight-from-the-barrel' as you'll get," says Elliott.

The 104-proof bourbon stars in the Maple Berry Fizz, a sweetly-sour and smooth cocktail created by mixologist Bill Whitlow. Four Roses Bourbon may be from Kentucky, but this cocktail incorporates maple syrup and blueberries, making it perfect for those who tapped their own trees last winter or plan to pick blueberries locally in the coming weeks.

- » 2 oz. Four Roses Small Batch Select
- » 8-10 Blueberries
- » .5 oz. Maple Syrup
- » .5 oz. Lemon Juice
- » 1 Ginger Beer

Method:

Add blueberries to a rocks glass and muddle. Add bourbon, maple syrup, and lemon juice. Add ice. Top with ginger beer. Stir cocktail to distribute. Garnish with a few dried blueberries.

» FIND US sprawled on a gingham blanket with a charcuterie spread and a bottle of vino; picnic season has arrived.

Yes, it sounds a bit Norman Rockwell, but nothing beats a day spent outdoors reconnecting with loved ones over a tasty spread. And yes, it is possible to find a spot for the dog out of reach of the food *and* get the toddler to sit on a checkered tablecloth long enough to take a bite of the goat cheese from 109 Cheese & Wine. The secret to the perfect picnic is all in the planning. So read on, get hungry, pack your basket, and hit the great outdoors.

How to plan a delicious picnic spread

From juicy watermelon to a fresh salad, the key to picnic food is simplicity. Think of foods that you can make ahead, travel well, taste great at room temperature and are easy to eat. Opt for sandwiches like caprese, club, even peanut butter and jelly, and look to bean, pasta or grain salads for lighter fare. And don't forget the sides and the desserts. We're all about the charcuterie spreads, fruit salads, corn cookies, blackberry buckles, and pie, of course. Throw in some strawberry lemonade, canned cocktails or a bottle of rosé to round out the feast.

Want to pick up a no-fuss meal instead of cooking for the picnic? Here's where we'd stop for grab-and-go options:

Pick up some cheese or opt for a platter and a bottle or two of wine from **109 Cheese**

& Wine for an afternoon happy hour with friends.

Hoodoo Brown BBQ has a good BBQ selection as well as a wide selection of picnic snacks.

Opt for classic diner food and, of course, pie from **Dimi-tri's Diner**.

Swing by the Danbury **Whole Foods Market** and pursue their selection of ready-made meals.

Discover the perfect picnic spot

You don't have to go far; those with young kids might even prefer the backyard. But if you want to venture past the driveway, you'll find wide-open spaces, scenic parks and wineries within reach.

DiGrazia Vineyards: Pet and child friendly, this Brookfield winery offers up meat and cheese plates to pair with a tasting.

Florida Refuge: Between the wetlands, ponds and open spaces, this Ridgefield hiking spot offers plenty of picnic backdrops.

Tarrywile Park & Mansion: The former dairy farm and fruit orchard makes for an idyllic picnic spot. Make a day of it and hike on the park's 21 miles of trails before setting up your spread in one of the picnic areas.

Weir Farm Art Center and National Historic Site: Throughout the pandemic, the well-kept grounds have remained accessible and picnicable.