



# Journey through Thyme

Jodi Schneider, Columnist

## The picnic has an old and venerable heritage

The picnic is as American as apple pie, a tradition we love and share with many cultures worldwide. The word "picnic" started showing up mid-18th century, drawing its origins from the French pique-nique, a social gathering where people would bring their own food and wine.

But elegant meals outdoors were probably first eaten during the Middle Ages, when hunting became a favored pursuit of the leisure class. These medieval hunting feasts were depicted in artworks of the time, like the ballads of Robin Hood and the famous Bayeux tapestry.

Medieval hunting feasts, Renaissance-era country banquets, and Victorian garden parties lay the foundation for today's more laid-back outings. Picnics, as Americans know them today, date to the middle of the 19th century.

Picnics were once grand affairs. In 1861, the definitive list of the Victorian picnic fare for England's upper class appeared in "Mrs. Beeton's Book of Household Management." You didn't eat outdoors without tables, linens, crystal, chairs, servants — and gourmet fare, of course. It's a far cry from our blankets and coolers, but the idea was ultimately the same.

Mrs. Beeton's Book of Household Management

gave detailed instructions on how to hold a picnic. For 40 people, Mrs. Beeton insisted on, among many other things, cold roast beef, four meat pies, four roast chickens, two roast ducks, four dozen cheesecakes and one large cold plum pudding. To quench the picnickers' thirst, three dozen quart bottles of beer were on the menu, as well as claret, sherry and brandy.

Everyone brought food to share. Tables, lined end to end, were piled high with homemade breads and biscuits, cheeses, cakes, corn relish, pickle relish and watermelon rind pickles.

The ever-present picnic potato salad appears in many personalized versions in old cookbooks. The "Ladies Guild Cookbook," published in 1899 by the South Chicago Methodist Episcopal Church, suggested adding chopped celery and "10-cents worth" of English walnuts.

Watermelon and other foods served several purposes. Dessert might develop into a race to see who could eat the most pie the fastest, and watermelon supplied the ammunition for seed-spitting contests.

Cakes were favorite picnic desserts, and few early cookbooks would be complete without at least one recipe for devil's food cake and one for angel food.

Cheeses were included, too, especially hard cheeses that stand up well in summer, and left whole to keep better.

No picnic would be complete without something to wash down all that delectable food. Beer has been a picnic staple practically since day one. Enjoying a cold one in the sun may seem second-nature, but its origins can be traced back to early 19th century Bavaria, Germany, where brewers would place benches and tables on the grass outside their beer storage cellars.

Of course, picnics have been somewhat simplified since then. Cold fried chicken, potato salad, chilled watermelon and beer on ice are all hallmarks of modern-day picnics.

### Old Fashioned Potato Salad

— The original Hellmann's Potato Salad recipe —

- 2 pounds potatoes peeled and cut into one-inch chunks
- 1 cup Hellman's or Best Foods Real Mayonnaise
- 2 tablespoons vinegar
- 1-1/2 teaspoons granulated sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 cup thinly sliced celery
- 1/2-cup chopped onion
- 2 hard-cooked eggs, chopped

Cover potatoes with water in 4-quart pot; bring to a boil over medium high heat. Reduce heat to low and simmer until potatoes are tender, about 10 minutes. Drain and cool slightly.

Combine mayonnaise, vinegar, salt, sugar and pepper in large bowl. Add potatoes, celery, onion and eggs and toss gently.

Serve at room temperature or cover and refrigerate for at least 4 hours. If desired sprinkle with paprika.

# The Nugget Newspaper Crossword

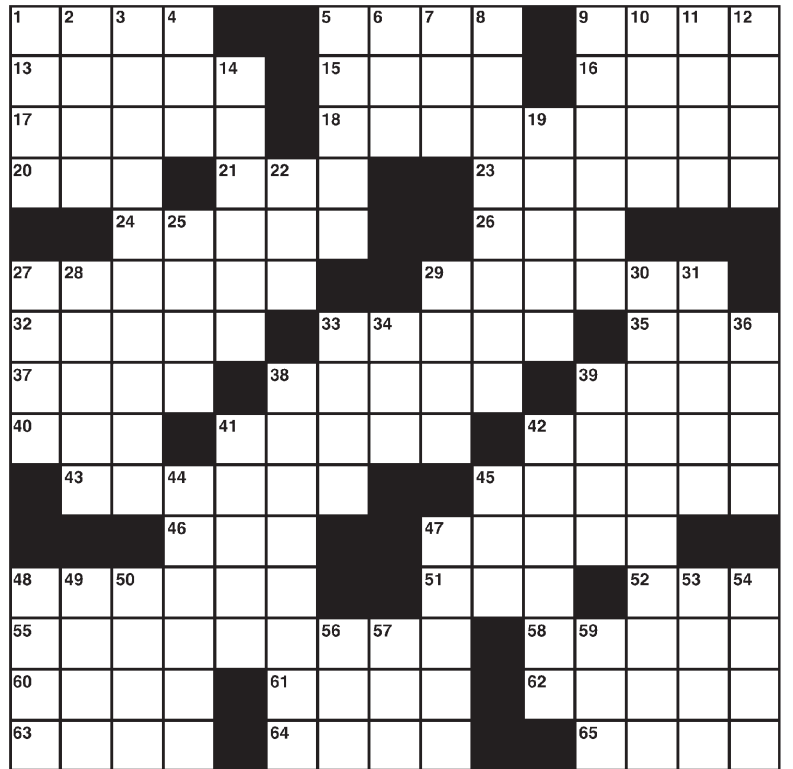
By Jacqueline E. Mathews, Tribune News Service

## ACROSS

- 1 Scrap
- 5 Highlander
- 9 Oaf
- 13 \_\_\_ oneself; worked steadily
- 15 Couple
- 16 Sharpen
- 17 Male relative
- 18 Child's spending money
- 20 Shameful grade
- 21 Groupie
- 23 "Away in a \_\_\_"
- 24 Gets closer to
- 26 Large
- 27 Lay into
- 29 JFK's father
- 32 Line of travel
- 33 \_\_\_ of view; opinion
- 35 Male animal
- 37 It was, to a poet
- 38 Ostrich feather
- 39 Greek cheese
- 40 "Ready, \_\_, go!"
- 41 Wed.'s follower
- 42 Bank vaults
- 43 Winger & Messing
- 45 Least tainted
- 46 Galloped
- 47 TV's "\_\_\_ Pyle"
- 48 Horrified
- 51 Curved edge
- 52 Tiny folklore fellow
- 55 Locomotive's nickname, when trains were new
- 58 Bert's buddy
- 60 Actor Jack \_\_\_
- 61 Boxer Tyson
- 62 Quackers
- 63 Convince
- 64 Twirl
- 65 Encounter

## DOWN

- 1 Potato
- 2 Rectangular piece of glass
- 3 Emphasize
- 4 \_\_\_ Aviv
- 5 Stretches across
- 6 Neighbor of Oreg.
- 7 Apply WD-40 to
- 8 Brass instrument
- 9 Coins
- 10 Yearn
- 11 All at \_\_\_; suddenly
- 12 Forest animal
- 14 Mar; scratch
- 19 Midsection
- 22 Actress Joan Van \_\_\_
- 25 Consumes
- 27 Newspaper section
- 28 Dragged along behind
- 29 Carrey & Belushi
- 30 First choice
- 31 Abhors
- 33 Adder's sign
- 34 TV's "Days of \_\_\_ Lives"
- 36 Ship's pole
- 38 Ghosts
- 39 Cost to ride



Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews

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### — Last Week's Puzzle Solved —



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