

distractions

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PICNICS: A tasty venture into the great outdoors

*A Book of Verses beneath the Bough
A Jug of Wine, A Loaf of Bread and Thou
Beside me singing in the Wilderness
Oh, Wilderness were Paradise enow!*
Edward Fitzgerald

For some, picnics bring back images of the "Ozzie and Harriet" suburban weekend where all the kids piled in the back of the station wagon with imitation woodgrain siding, then drove to a nearby park where everyone ate cold chicken and potato salad around an old wooden picnic table with chipping green paint.

The type of picnic Fitzgerald had in mind when he wrote his oft-quoted verse in slightly different. It involves two people, a nice, quiet outdoor spot and a basket of specially chosen goodies to set the mood for discussing the Universal Truths, Deep Thoughts and Why Autumn Leaves Sound like Potato Chips.

The first necessity is the spot. Conventional picnickers will probably flock to local parks, but

interesting alternatives exist. Almost any area of forest or grass will do, although picnicking on a golf course is dangerous. Those with a flair for the romantic can paddle the Millrace for an hour in a canoe rented from The Waterworks Canoe Co. for \$2.80. In general, privacy is desirable, so the choice of location is an important one.

Picking the perfect partner will probably be relatively easy, so the next topic for consideration is entertainment. Students facing finals may find that studying is the only way to justify eating outside, but, as usual, more interesting alternatives can be found. The canoe types will probably want to take along a guitar, ukelele, harmonica or kazoo to serenade their partners. For those less musically inclined, a cassette recorder with appropriate music (probably not Led Zeppelin) or a portable radio will do. Or there's always Fitzgerald's favorites, a book of verse to be read in the shade of spreading chestnut tree (whoops, wrong poem).

The main consideration is What to Pack. While the suburban cold chicken and potato salad is fine,

picnics provide a chance to get really creative in the culinary department.

If you can swing it, a pre-made fondue could be stored in a Thermos heated over a can of Sterno. There are also a number of cold soups that can be packed for a gourmet lunch. Cold sandwiches are sufficient for the studying student, but a loaf of French bread and a hunk of cheese are even easier, and much more European. Add a few chocolates or an imported candy bar, and you can pretend you're in Switzerland.

Another important decision is that of beverage selection. Harried students will probably either avoid alcohol entirely or emerge themselves in it, depending on just how harried they are. Soft drinks, beer, wine or harder stuff are all viable alternatives, and should be selected with the overall mood in mind.

In all these departments, individual tastes are the most important consideration, and creativity counts. The main thing is to get outside and enjoy yourself. After all, nice springtime weather usually lasts only two or three weeks in Oregon.



Conan the Horrible
Page 4B