

Fill Half Your Plate With Fruits and Vegetables: Labor Day Without Labor

Buffet Recipes for Fruits and Veggies – Great for Picnics



Veggie Tart

This raw veggie delight can function as an appetizer or salad. It is made from a standard plastic party tray of raw vegetables from our grocery store. You know, the one that you buy to feel like you are serving something healthy but no one really eats. If you take about 5 or 10 minutes you can turn that mundane-looking plastic tray full of vegetables into something exquisite that will disappear fast!

Veggie Tart:

1 plastic veggie party platter from the grocery store or about 4 cups assorted raw veggies as shown in the photo

Spinach dip:

- 1/4 cup ranch dressing
- 1 pint lowfat ricotta cheese
- 1/2 cup cooked spinach (frozen thawed or steamed fresh spinach)

Puree all ingredients together in food processor or with hand beaters. Pour spinach dip into tart pan.

Assemble tart: Top the spinach dip with raw vegetables in a circular pattern. Serve immediately or refrigerate until ready to serve.

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Ice Bucket of Tree Fruits



There is no easier way to serve fruit than “a-la-natural.” But of course the trick is getting everyone to eat it. We decided that it would more likely disappear if it was ripe, chilled on ice, and arranged in a colorful manner so the question is choice – it is not about “do you want fruit?” – rather it is about “which fruit(s) would you like?”

We simply rinsed a variety of fresh fruits and then arranged them in an ice bucket with crushed ice. We picked seasonal tree fruits that were ripe and these included: peaches, plums, cherries, and an apple pear - a new item that is a cross between an apple and pear – the yellow fruit – it was on sale in our store so we decided to give it a try.

Easy Low-Labor Individual Plate Presentations and Ideas

Veggie Face Salad:

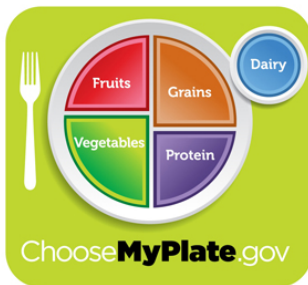


Veggie Face Salad - Kids will love this. Why not let them make their own? You can use any combo of veggies to make a unique face.

From back to front:

- √ Hat: Pineapple cubes,
- √ Hair: Salad leaves, carrot match sticks
- √ Eyes: Grape tomato cut in half,
- √ Nose: broccoli nose,
- √ Smile: baby carrot smile,
- √ Face: microwave-baked potato cut in half and diced in the skin.

The dressing? Italian spritzer and light ranch dressing. If you don't have a spritzer you can spoon light Italian dressing or vinegar and oil. (The spritzer bottles are in the dressing section of the store and we love them because they add shine and flavor without a lot of sodium or fat.)



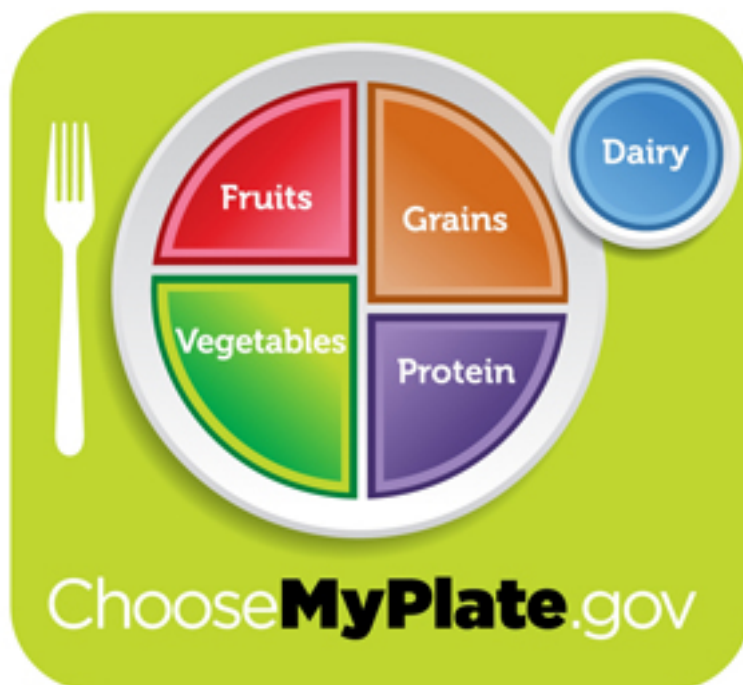
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Summer Salads:



Summer Salads

We tossed ready-to-serve baby romaine leaves (use any favorite ready-to-serve lettuce) with light Italian dressing and thin sliced plum tomatoes. Then we added cubed fruit salad from the grocery store. Prep time: 3 minutes, no cooking or chopping (just slice the tomato and if you are really opposed to kitchen prep then use grape tomatoes or cherry tomatoes).



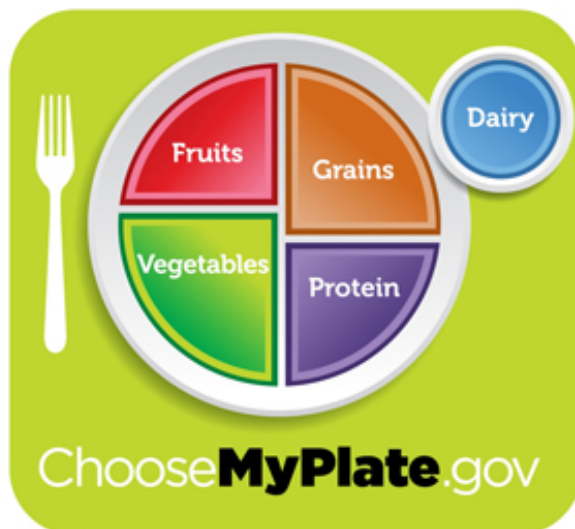
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Grill Plate:



We chose melon on a skewer and cole slaw for a MyPlate theme that goes well with your Labor Day BBQ. The slaw and carrot match sticks were already prepared by our supermarket and we tossed them with a little Light Ranch or Light Caesar dressing. The fruit was already cubed and we just threaded it on a skewer.

Voila! It looks very appetizing because the dressing is light and the slaw is piled high and delicately on the plate. The garnishes: black sesame seeds and rough chopped flat leaf parsley. Another idea for an easy garnish is a shake of paprika.



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Fruit for Dessert

Here is a wonderful fruit dessert that will add more servings of fruit with little added fat or sugar and very little labor:

Fresh Fruit Cobbler



This dessert is a collection of fresh fruit layered in a footed glass bowl that is topped by crunched lemon or vanilla wafers and a little powdered sugar. Here is what it looks like when plated:



Plated Fresh Fruit Cobbler

You don't have to heat the oven or add a lot of sugar and fat. There is little clean up and this looks great with just a few minutes work. We did wedge the peaches and halve the strawberries but the total prep time is 5 minutes. Whipped cream is optional.

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