

# Picnic with Purpose

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## GREEN Picnic Planning Guide



**Maryland State Parks are Trash Free!**

**Help keep our parks clean and wildlife safe.**



Larry Hogan, Governor; Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio, Secretary  
Maryland Park Service, 580 Taylor Ave, E-3 Annapolis, MD 21401  
1-800-830-3974 [dnr.maryland.gov](http://dnr.maryland.gov) 8/2020



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## Plan a GREEN Picnic

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Slow down and savor a picnic with a purpose. In the fast-paced, over connected world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century it can be hard to find time to have a healthy meal, let alone a responsible picnic in the great outdoors. By thinking **GREEN** and following a few simple guidelines you can spend quality time with your family in a Maryland State Park, eating wonderful food, while appreciating and protecting your surrounding environment.

It is very important that you take time before your visit to review the entire planner and share the information with others in your picnic party.

### Planning, Preparing and Enjoying a **GREEN** Picnic

- Step 1: Review Leave No Trace's Seven Outdoor Ethics Principles found on page 3 with all members of your party.
- Step 2: Learn how your party can have a **GREEN** picnic on page 5.
- Step 3: Plan and prepare for your **GREEN** picnic. Use the check list on page 6.
- Step 4: Visit your favorite Maryland State Park and enjoy.

### Trash Free Parks!

All Maryland State Parks are "trash free!" What does this mean to you? It means there are no trash cans to ruin the view, or to attract flies, bees, and other wildlife in our picnic areas. Whenever possible, we encourage visitors to take their trash home with them. Maryland State Parks promotes reduce, reuse and recycle. Please do not burn your trash within your grills.

### Trash Free Bags

When you get to the park look around for the trash-free bags. All parks provide them for our visitors so that you can take your trash home with you and help keep the parks clean and wildlife safe.



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# Leave No Trace Outdoor Ethics Principles

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## Plan Ahead and Prepare

- Know the regulations and special concerns for the area you'll visit.
- Prepare for extreme weather, hazards, and emergencies.
- Schedule your trip to avoid times of high use.
- Visit in small groups when possible. Consider splitting larger groups into smaller groups.
- Repackage food to minimize waste.
- Use a map and compass to eliminate the use of marking paint, rock cairns or flagging.

## Travel and Picnic on Durable Surfaces

- Durable surfaces include established trails and picnic areas, rock, gravel, dry grasses or snow.
- Protect riparian areas by picnicking at least 200 feet from lakes and streams.
- Good picnic sites are found, not made. Altering a site is not necessary.
- In popular areas:
  - Concentrate use on existing trails and picnic sites.
  - Walk single file in the middle of the trail, even when wet or muddy.
  - Keep picnic sites small. Focus activity in areas where vegetation is absent.
- In pristine areas:
  - Disperse use to prevent the creation of picnic sites and trails.
  - Avoid places where impacts are just beginning.

## Dispose of Waste Properly

- Pack it in, pack it out. Inspect your picnic site for trash or spilled foods.
- Pack out all trash, leftover food and litter.
- To wash your dishes, carry water 200 feet away from streams or lakes and use small amounts of biodegradable soap. Scatter strained dishwater.

## Leave What You Find

- Preserve the past: examine, but do not touch cultural or historic structures and artifacts.
- Leave rocks, plants and other natural objects as you find them.
- Avoid introducing or transporting non-native species.

## Minimize Fire Impacts

- Fires can cause lasting impacts to the backcountry.
- Where fires are permitted, use established grills or fire rings. Keep fires small. Only use charcoal in grills.
- If you bring your own grill place all coals in the provided hot coal disposal locations.

## Respect Wildlife

- Observe wildlife from a distance. Do not follow or approach them.
- Never feed animals. Feeding wildlife damages their health, alters natural behaviors, and exposes them to predators and other dangers.
- Protect wildlife and your food by storing rations and trash securely.
- Control pets at all times, or leave them at home.
- Avoid wildlife during sensitive times: mating, nesting, raising young, or winter.

## Be Considerate of Other Visitors

- Respect other visitors and protect the quality of their experience.
- Be courteous. Yield to other users on the trail.
- Take breaks and picnic away from trails and other visitors.
- Let nature's sounds prevail. Avoid loud music, voices and noises.



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# Park Guidelines

## Know Before You Go

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Before you picnic it is a good idea to visit the website of the park for guidelines and alerts so you know before you go: <https://dnr.maryland.gov/Publiclands/Pages/parkmap.aspx>

### Helpful Hints:

Alcoholic beverages, wine and beer are not permitted in picnic areas. Alcoholic beverages, wine and beer are ONLY permitted at shelters and ONLY if an alcohol permit has been purchased at the time the reservation was made.

Picnic areas open at different times but normally close at sunset.

Pets are permitted in most picnic areas but must be leashed and under control at all times.

Maryland State Parks are trash free. There are no trash cans or dumpsters inside the parks. You must take your trash home with you when you leave.

There is usually a day use service charge for picnicking in the parks. Check the park's website for details.

Amplified music may not be permitted in some picnic areas. If it is allowed it should not interfere with other visitors' enjoyment of the park.

If a swimming lake or body of water is nearby an adult should accompany children at all times.

If members of your party are doing different activities in the park, set planned check-in times. That way you will all know everyone is safe.

Always feel free to approach and talk to all park staff. They are here to help you at all times.

For citizens with mobility impairment please visit the link to discover State Parks that offer accessible pavilions and picnic areas:

<https://dnr.maryland.gov/publiclands/Pages/accessibleactivities.aspx?activity=AccessiblePicnicPavilions>



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## How to Plan a GREEN Picnic

**Pack plenty of local, in-season fruits and vegetables** and organic meat for you and your guests. Remember, fresh fruit “wraps” itself – no additional packaging needed! (*Earthshare Green Picnic Guide*)

**Consider re-purposing your canvas grocery tote as a picnic bag** or try searching your closets for backpacks or holiday baskets to tote your food and picnic supplies. (*Earthshare Green Picnic Guide*)

**Try to choose a picnic destination that’s easy to get to by biking, walking or using public transportation.** (*Earthshare Green Picnic Guide*)

**Skip the individually packaged drinks and opt for coolers** filled with your favorite beverages. For food storage and leftovers, pack reusable tins and canisters. (*Earthshare Green Picnic Guide*)

**Choose washable, reusable cloth napkins and tablecloths** - check your closets again for old bandanas and bedsheets that you don’t mind getting dirty. (*Earthshare Green Picnic Guide*)

If reusable isn’t an option for cups, plates and utensils, **choose biodegradable items** or look for products made from recycled materials. Planning to grill? Look for recycled aluminum foil. (*Earthshare Green Picnic Guide*)

**Stick to sunscreen and insect repellents made with fewer chemicals** and avoid spraying your entire picnic area with toxic pest products. For more on picking safe, eco-friendly sunscreens. (*Earthshare Green Picnic Guide*)

**Think green for your picnic activities and entertainment.** Bring your favorite nature and wildlife field guides along with some binoculars and a journal for outdoor exploring. (*Earthshare Green Picnic Guide*)

**Remember to take your waste with you.** Leftover picnic food in trashcans is often tempting to park animals. Bring an extra storage container for food waste and a tote bag for recycling. Also, consider using your melted ice to rinse reusable dishes and utensils. (*Earthshare Green Picnic Guide*)

To find local Maryland Products: [https://mda.maryland.gov/maryland\\_products/Pages/maryland\\_products.aspx](https://mda.maryland.gov/maryland_products/Pages/maryland_products.aspx)

For more details - <http://www.earthshare.org/2010/08/green-picnic-guide.html>

Use your favorite search engine to look of other GREEN picnic ideas.



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# Picnic with Purpose

## GREEN Picnic Check List

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### Picnic Equipment (Reusable Materials)

- Re-purposed picnic basket or bag
- Storage Containers
- Tablecloth
- Napkins
- Tableware
- Plates & Bowles
- Cups

### Food

- Local and seasonal
- Organic
- Visit a Farmers Market
- Prepared to pack it in and pack it out

### Personal Protection

- Sunscreen made with fewer chemicals
- Insect repellents made with fewer chemicals
- First Aid Kit & Medications

### If you are going to use a grill in the picnic area

- Recycled Aluminum Foil
- Eco-Friendly Charcoal

Notes:



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