

Think outside the hamper

Spring is here and we'll soon be able to meet up to six people outdoors for a picnic. But forget flasks of tea and limp sandwiches — this year we deserve alfresco feasts



Max Halley

It's been a long time, but socialising is back on the menu. Well, socialising outside, anyway, with your household and one other person. Luckily, a new book is arriving at just the right time to start planning some alfresco eating. **Max Halley** — whose gourmet sandwiches we have featured before in *The Dish* — is celebrating the great British picnic and his new dishes are just as creative, delicious and OTT.

Max's Picnic Book, co-authored with Ben Benton, features menus for all kinds of outdoor fun, such as a breakfast picnic complete with cocktail, a surrealist feast with a meat trifle and "In the mood for a midnight feast snackstravaganza".

Halley's food is eccentric but rooted in proper culinary skill. There are also lots of tips to get

the most out of picnics — how to remove the cork from a wine bottle with only a shoe; making flavour-bomb mayo and the essential kit to have on hand.

So whether it's impromptu toasties and burgers in the garden or a carefully planned outing with drinks and a three-course meal, now's your chance to think big for a fresh-air feast.

Lisa Markwell

1

Full English breakfast shooter's sandwich

Be warned: this sandwich is a waiting game, but the reward

is well worth it.

SERVES

4 people

INGREDIENTS

12 rashers of smoked streaky bacon
 8 pork sausages
 8 hash browns
 Rapeseed oil, for frying
 400g mushrooms, finely sliced
 1 clove of garlic, grated
 1 tsp salt
 Juice of ½ lemon
 6 free-range eggs
 1 medium round crusty loaf
 2 large beefheart tomatoes, sliced into rounds
 Relish or ketchup, to serve (optional)

01 Heat the oven to 200C (220C non-fan) and line a couple of baking trays with foil. Place the bacon, sausages and hash browns on the trays, then cook for 10 min.

02 Check the bacon and turn it if necessary. Return the trays to the oven and keep cooking until the bacon is brown and starting to crisp, about 5 min more, then remove and set aside



on a plate. Turn the sausages and hash browns and keep cooking for a further 10 min until golden brown.

03 Heat a frying pan until smoking hot, then pour in the oil. Add the mushrooms, settling them into a single layer and leaving them for a minute to get some colour. Toss them and then push into a single layer again and leave for another minute. Repeat until they are browning nicely. Add the garlic and salt, then toss. As soon as you can smell garlic, remove the pan from the heat and add the lemon juice. Leave to one side to cool.

04 Boil the eggs for 7 min, then plunge into cold water. Peel and cut into thick slices.

05 Cut the top off your loaf, about 2.5cm below the crust, reserving it as a lid. Using a small knife, or your fists, remove most of the bread inside.

06 Now build up the layers in your hollowed-out loaf: go your own way, but mushrooms are a good place to start, perhaps followed by bacon, then hash browns, sausages, tomatoes and eggs. Push the layers down and put the lid on.

07 Tear off a couple of large sheets of baking parchment and a couple of even larger sheets of foil. Lay the parchment inside the foil and then wrap the shooter tightly. Put it into a container, put a weight on top and leave in the fridge overnight.

08 Next day, unwrap your shooter, take a serrated knife and cut yourself a wedge.



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2

Michelada

The michelada — the Mexican bloody Mary. What a beverage! My dear Mexican friend Magali Bellego got me into these many years ago and I have never looked back. She makes it with so much Tabasco, Lea & Perrins and Maggi sauce that it's brown, not red, but you don't have to make it like that. I would recommend making this in a jug (everything bar the beer), whether you are on your own or with company, as one michelada is never enough.

MAKES
 4 micheladas

INGREDIENTS
 2 *tbsp* Tajin seasoning (or salt, lemon zest and chilli flakes, ground together)
 4 limes, cut in half
 500ml Mott's Clamato, if you can find it (or tomato juice or gazpacho)
 1 *tbsp* Tabasco sauce
 1 *tbsp* Maggi sauce
 2 *tbsp* Worcestershire sauce
 4 x 330ml bottles or cans of lager (Pacífico or Modelo would be perfect but feel free to use whatever you like)

01 Start with the glasses, which ideally you should wet under the tap and put in the freezer for 15 min (pint glasses would

be perfect).

02 Sprinkle the Tajin seasoning (or a homemade equivalent) on a saucer or small plate. Run a lime wedge around the rim of your glass, then dip it into the seasoning, making sure you get good coverage all the way round.

03 Take a large jug and add the Clamato, Tabasco, Maggi, Worcestershire sauce and any leftover seasoning from the saucer. Squeeze in the juice from all four limes, then give everything a good stir. Fill each glass with ice, add a straw and pour over the Clamato mix to about half full.

04 Crack open a beer and pour it in. Stir it. Sip it. You should have lip-puckering from the lime, a slight wince from the chilli and a deep sigh of refreshment from the beer. As you drink, keep adding more beer.

3

Breakfast martini

Do yourself a favour and buy the best ingredients you can. Also, keep your gin and triple sec in the freezer, and freeze a couple of martini glasses too. That frosted glass is a rare treat and essential for a perfect martini — at breakfast or any other time.

MAKES
 2 martinis

INGREDIENTS

Ice
 2 *tbsp* fine-cut marmalade
 100ml gin
 2 *tbsp* triple sec or Cointreau
 2 *tbsp* lemon juice
 1 slice of bread, toasted

01 Put a few lumps of ice in a martini glass and fill it with water to chill. Put the marmalade in a cocktail shaker with the gin and triple sec and stir until the marmalade has dissolved. Fill the shaker with ice, add the lemon juice and stir well, making sure the spoon goes right to the bottom of the shaker.

02 Stir 50 times — count them. The shaker will become so frosty and cold that you will hardly be able to hold it.

03 Sling the iced water from the glass and pour in the sparkly liquid through a sieve.

04 On the side of your martini, have a sliver of cold, heavily buttered toast with marmalade on it. Why should the toast be cold? Because as my mum says: "Butter should be *on* toast, not *in* toast."

4

Chicken Kiev parmo

God bless the good people of Middlesbrough — we hope they won't mind the shake-up of using Kievs and swapping the béchamel for tomato passata. We promise it's banging.

SERVES

2 people

INGREDIENTS

2 ready-made chicken Kievs
4 tbsp tomato passata
1 ball of mozzarella, cut into rounds
2 relatively robust white burger buns
(sesame or poppy seeds optional)

01 Heat the oven to 160C (180C non-fan) and line a baking tray

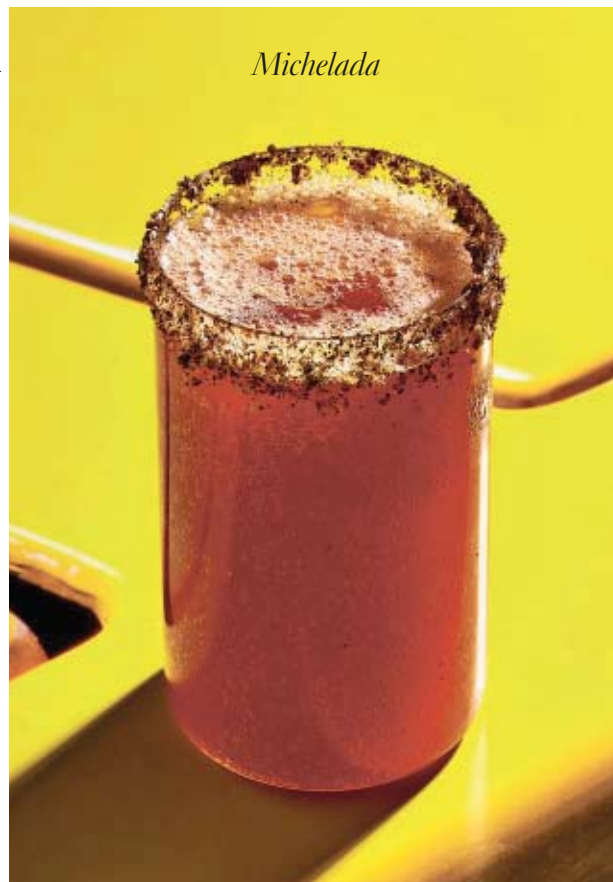
with baking parchment. Place the chicken Kievs on the tray and cook for 20 min (or as per the instructions on the pack).

02 When ready, remove from the oven and turn on your grill to its highest setting.

03 Top the chicken Kievs with the tomato passata, then the mozzarella, covering as much of the Kiev as possible. Grill for 2-3 min until the mozzarella is blistering and browned.

04 Transfer your parmo Kievs to a board or plate and leave to cool slightly while you cut your buns in half and toast the cut sides under the grill.

05 Lift your parmo Kievs onto the bases of the buns, pop the lids on top and give them a squish. I like to cut mine in half and let some of the goodness come out onto the plate for dunking. Or you could, being careful not to burn yourself, take a huge mouthful and let the garlicky, buttery filling run down your chin.







5

Three toasted croissants to beat all toasted croissants

Each of these recipes is for one, but it shouldn't take Carol Vorderman to multiply the amounts for however many croissants you need to make.

ʻNduja or chorizo, taleggio and honey

INGREDIENTS

1 croissant (a day old is fine)
 4 thick slices taleggio
 30g ʻnduja or chorizo
 2 tsp honey

01 Cut open your croissant with a serrated knife. Spread the ʻnduja (or lay the chorizo) on the bottom half and put the taleggio on top.

02 Close the lid and either pop the croissant into a toasting machine or put a heavy-based frying pan over a low-medium heat. You want to toast the croissant slowly with a weight on top so that the inside melts before the outside burns. When the bottom is looking lovely and tempting, turn the croissant over and repeat.

03 Remove from the pan and allow to cool for a few minutes before drizzling with honey.

Ham, cheddar, mustard and leftover béchamel

INGREDIENTS

1 croissant (a day old is fine)
 1 tbsp leftover or shop-bought béchamel
 2 slices thick-cut ham
 50g mature cheddar, grated
 Dijon mustard, to taste

01 Spread each croissant half with a layer of béchamel, then put a slice of ham on the bottom, smear it with mustard, cheese on top of that, the other slice of ham on top of that and put the lid on.

02 Cook as previous recipe.

Mascarpone, almond butter and lemon curd

INGREDIENTS

1 croissant (a day old is fine)
 2 tbsp mascarpone
 1 tbsp almond butter
 1 tbsp lemon curd
 25g flaked almonds, toasted in a dry frying pan

01 Spread each half of the croissant with a layer of mascarpone, followed by dollops of almond butter and lemon curd. Scatter over the toasted almonds, then close the lid.

02 Cook as previous recipes ■



Max's Picnic Book by Max Halley and Ben Benton is published on Thursday (Hardie Grant £16.99)



PHOTOGRAPHS BY LOUISE HADGER