

PRIME REAL ESTATE

Where to spread your picnic blanket

By TERRY BYRNE

Now that the monsoons are over (we hope) and summer is finally here, the urge to merge with nature is irresistible. But all that tramping through flowers and grass builds up an appetite. Where — and what — is a nature lover to eat?

Three area caterers have great suggestions for picnic spots and picnic menus.

"So many of our events through Catered Affair are formal and happen at night," says Alex Marconi, general manager of that company and Picnic People New England. "It's great to offer something much more relaxed and fun."

The caterers agree on some Boston standbys for picnics: the Charles River Esplanade, Larz Anderson Park in Brookline ("the best view of Boston," says Emma Roberts of Capers Catering and Flip Flops Clambakes), the lawn in front of the



STAFF PHOTO BY PATRICK WHITTEMORE

FINAL ACT: A rustic berry tart would be a delicious ending to a picnic supper on the lawn at the Publick Theatre in Brighton.

Location, location, location

PUBLIC PARKS:

- East Boston Memorial Park, East Boston
 - Back Bay Fens, Fenway/Kenmore area
 - McConnell Park, Dorchester
 - Olmsted Park, Jamaica Plain
 - Franklin Park, Roxbury
 - Moakley Park, South Boston
- For more information on Boston Public Parks, go to www.cityofboston.gov/parks/

- Charles River Esplanade, Back Bay
- www.mass.gov/dcr/parks/metro_boston/charlesR.htm

- Larz Anderson Park, Brookline
- www.town.brookline.ma.us/recreation/LarzAnderson.html

PRIVATELY OWNED SITES:

- Commandant's House, Charlestown
- 617-263-6490

- www.commandantshouse.com
- Codman House, Lincoln
- 617-259-8843; www.historicnewengland.org
- Pierce House, Lincoln
- 978-259-9757; www.piercehouse.com
- Endicott Estate, Dedham
- 781-326-0012; www.endicottestate.com
- Lyman Estate, Waltham
- 781-891-4882, Ext. 244; www.historicnewengland.org
- Gore Place, Waltham
- 781-894-2798; www.goreplace.org
- Franklin Park Zoo, Roxbury
- 617-989-2028; www.zoonewengland.com
- Stone Zoo, Stoneham
- 781-438-5100; www.zoonewengland.com
- Publick Theatre, Brighton
- www.publicktheatre.com

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Caterers give taste of picnic spot faves

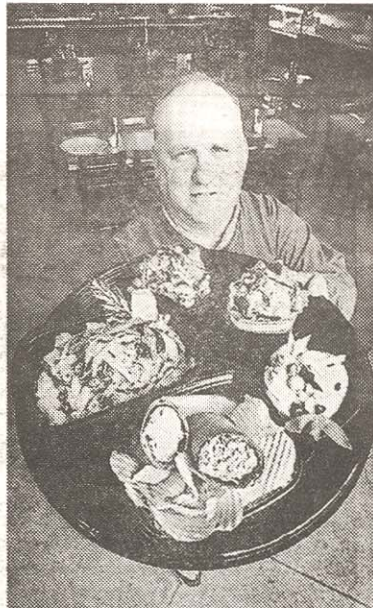
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Commandant's House at Charlestown Navy Yard ("there's the harbor view and the Constitution is right there," says Marconi). But they also suggested more creative spots:

Get out of the city with a picnic at the Codman Carriage House or the Pierce House in Lincoln, or the Endicott Estate in Dedham. If those spots aren't being used for a private function, you're welcome to picnic on their lawns. Call ahead, or "keep your eye out for tents," says Roberts.

Marconi's favorite is the new Joe Moakley Park in South Boston, which he says is well-maintained and has ball fields where picnickers can work off fried chicken and potato salad. Don't forget to bring a kite, a Frisbee or a lawn game like bocce or croquet.

Now, what about the menu? Picnics can be as simple as a basket of fried chicken and potato salad, favorites of Jim Coleman, executive



STAFF PHOTO BY PATRICK WHITEMORE

IN HIS BASKET: Jim Coleman, Blue Water Catering executive chef, shows some of his fare, including a cucumber ribbon wrap Caesar salad, berry tart, turkey wrap, spring pasta with grilled chicken and grilled fruit pasta salad.

'I love to bring things like homemade pickles, Asian noodles, anything with fruit, tomato sandwiches with salt and pepper on white bread.'

**EMMA ROBERTS,
FLIP FLOPS CLAMBAKES**

15 people, but if you're just going with a few friends, say, to a performance at the Publick Theatre (which encourages picnickers at its outdoor theater on the banks of the Charles), hit a supermarket for some goodies. Just be creative.

"I love to bring things like homemade pickles, Asian noodles, anything with fruit, tomato sandwiches with salt and pepper on white bread," said Roberts of Flip Flops Clambakes. "But don't forget the whoopie pies; and I know this sounds bad, but I really like Bugles."

Lugging stuff can be a drag, especially because you need ice to keep food and drinks cool. Roberts has a creative solution: Make a rum punch, freeze individual servings in plastic cups, and use them as the ice in your cooler. When they thaw, voila! Cocktails.

Remember, though, no alcohol allowed in city parks.

For more information and site suggestions, go to flipflopsclambakes.com, picnicpeoplene.com and mississippi.com