

BBQ

to a New You!

by angela romano



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Don't let the lazy days of summer get in the way of reaching your health & fitness goals. Cookouts and holiday celebrations don't have to challenge your waist line. Keep the summer of 2009 healthy and happy!

Choose meats that are lean and have less saturated fat. The World Health Organization, along with the United States Centers for Disease Control and Food and Drug Administration, urges people to limit their intake of saturated fat, as it has been shown to correlate with cardiovascular disease. Choose grilling meats such as lean steaks, sirloin, bison steaks or grilled chicken breasts, or make burgers with ground turkey breast, ground lamb or ground bison. Load up your burgers with fresh lettuce, tomato and other vegetables. No need to skip the bun: supply whole wheat or whole grain buns. But watch those condiments: high fructose corn syrup in ketchup and barbecue sauce can add unwanted calories. Grilled vegetables such as asparagus, squash, onions, peppers, tomatoes and even pineapple make a great addition to the menu.

What is a good old fashion summer cookout without potato salad and pasta salad? Don't let your guests down! Instead of using mayonnaise full of fat and calories, opt for low fat sour cream or yogurt. Use healthy oils such as extra virgin olive oil, grape seed oil or almond oil in your salads. Fresh vegetable and fruit salads

make great appetizers! Substitute fresh vegetables with a low fat dip for the bag of chips or even fruit chunks with low fat yogurt dip.

For desserts, replace those traditional cookies, cakes, brownie and ice cream sundaes (that can leave you feeling sluggish) with fruit and fresh whip cream. Angel food cake is also lower in calories and in fat and is great served with fresh berries.

With a healthier menu planned, start thinking fun! Keep your cookouts active. Divide the group up into teams and get moving! Games such as frisbee, softball, badminton, kickball and even horseshoes will get kids and adults involved. Offer small prizes to the winning team! The crowd will be having so much fun that they won't even realize that they're burning calories!

Guests are sure to love your new improved healthier BBQ! It is hard to believe that 2009 is half over! Stop putting your health on the back burner and start making it a priority today! Make 2009 the year of YOU! ●

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Grilled Chicken Salad with a Fresh Strawberry Dressing

Makes 4 servings

1/2 pound thin asparagus, stem ends snapped off, cut into 2-inch pieces (about 2 cups)

1/2 pound sugar snap peas, stemmed (2 cups)

1/2 pound snow peas, stemmed (2 cups)

2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice

1 tablespoon almond oil or canola oil

1/4 teaspoon salt

1/4 teaspoon freshly ground pepper

1/2 cup chopped scallions

12 ounces boneless, skinless chicken breasts, trimmed

2 teaspoons canola oil

1 teaspoon salt-free lemon-pepper seasoning

3/4 cup Fresh Strawberry Dressing (*recipe follows*)

1/4 cup sliced almonds, toasted

4 whole strawberries for garnish

1. Put a large pot of water on to boil for cooking vegetables. Prepare a grill or preheat broiler.
2. Blanch asparagus, sugar snaps and snow peas in boiling water for 2 minutes. Drain, rinse with cold water to refresh, and then blot dry with paper towels.

Whisk lemon juice, almond oil (or canola), salt and pepper in a medium bowl. Add the vegetables and scallions; toss to coat.

3. Rub chicken with canola oil and sprinkle with lemon-pepper seasoning. Oil the grill rack. Grill the chicken and cook until lightly browned and no longer pink in the center, about 6 minutes per



side. (Alternatively, broil the chicken on an oiled broiler pan 4 to 6 inches from the heat source until cooked through, about 6 minutes per side.) Let rest for 5 minutes.

4. Cut the chicken crosswise into 1/4 inch-thick slices. Divide the vegetable mixture among 4 plates. Arrange the chicken over the vegetables. Spoon about 3 tablespoons Fresh Strawberry Dressing over each salad. Sprinkle with almonds and garnish each serving with a strawberry. Serve immediately.



Fresh Strawberry Dressing

1 cup strawberries, rinsed, hulled and sliced

1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar

3/4 teaspoon freshly ground pepper

1/2 teaspoon sugar

1/4 teaspoon salt

2 tablespoons almond oil or canola oil

Place strawberries, vinegar, pepper, sugar and salt in a blender or food processor; process until pureed, stopping once or twice to scrape down the sides. Add oil and process until smooth.