

Beat the January Blues with a Winter Picnic

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Half of winter's beauty stems from all the holiday festivities and delicious treats that gather around the table. The other (less explored) half: bare trees, animal tracks and icicles that make the outdoors a frosty wonderland. This new year, plan a different kind of get-together by hosting a winter picnic. Here's what you need to beat the January blues.

Warm Layers

The winter weather can be brutally cold, especially if clothing precautions aren't met. "Make sure everyone attending dresses in layers, wears waterproof gear, snow boots, gloves and a hat to trap in body heat," said lifestyle expert Tori Toth. For an extra layer of protection against the chill, bring large faux fur throws to drape over guests, and it gives everyone the perfect excuse to cuddle up.

Heat Source

To avoid the dreaded dine and dash at your winter picnic, provide sources of heat to keep guests nice and toasty. "If the picnic destination is in your backyard, try having heat lamps around the perimeter of the space or light your patio fire pit for everyone to gather round." Not at home? Then bring firewood or a portable grill that not only provide warmth, but can also help prepare a delicious treat.

Light the Sky

Winter days can be dark, dreary and short. Toth recommended lighting up your picnic with a string of lights, candlelight or a few lanterns around the area to set the scene. After all, nothing impacts the ambiance quite like the lighting.

Picnic Glam

It's important to layer fabrics when decorating your picnic area, whether it be at a picnic table or on the ground. Toth suggested using materials like fleece, plaid, knit and faux fur as a tablecloth, napkins or something to sit on. (But be sure to use a water resistant material as your first layer if sitting on the ground.) To add hints of glamour, incorporate some rustic touches like birch, mixed metals and soft warm colors in a floral centerpiece.

Good Eats

Like any get-together, the food takes center stage. Choose hearty recipes that fit the season and ensure comfort while keeping your guests warm. "Use insulated beverage containers to house your favorite soup or hot beverage. The food should be simple, compact dishes that are easy to serve."