

GRADUATION FARE-WELL

June is a time for graduation celebrations – to congratulate students of all ages on their accomplishments and bid them adieu as they set off on new adventures. As June is also a time for grilling, this menu showcases the barbecue.

Everything can be prepared in advance so that the grilling is all that remains upon return from commencement ceremonies. Each recipe below is intended to serve six to eight – as a buffet or sit down dinner. Happy graduation...and grilling! 

WAX BEAN AND FINGERLING POTATO SALAD

Ingredients:

- 2 pounds wax beans, rinsed with ends removed
- 2 pounds fingerling potatoes
- Extra virgin olive oil
- Juice of one lemon
- Sea salt
- Fresh ground pepper
- Fresh mint

Steam the beans for about three minutes, just enough for them to retain their crispness. Then, run them under cold water to stop the cooking process. Set aside. In a large pot, bring the potatoes to a boil and cook until soft enough to put a fork through, about 25 minutes. Remove and let cool until you can slice them on a bias.

Arrange the wax beans down the center of a large, flat serving dish. Arrange the fingerlings along the perimeter of the wax beans. Drizzle with extra virgin olive oil and lemon juice and season with sea salt and pepper.

Top with chopped mint and other herbs from your garden, such as lemon thyme.

GRILLED SHRIMP WITH SESAME SEED SAUCE

For the Sesame Seed Sauce:

- 1/4 cup toasted sesame seeds
- 1/2 cup rice wine vinegar
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons cilantro, chopped
- 1 tablespoon sesame oil
- 1 cup extra virgin olive oil
- Sea salt
- Fresh ground pepper
- Chili flakes

To prepare the toasted sesame seeds, place them in a nonstick skillet over low heat. Cook for about three minutes, stirring to prevent burning. Combine all ingredients and half of the sesame seeds in large bowl and whisk to emulsify. Season with sea salt, pepper, and chili flakes. Set aside.

For the Shrimp:

- 2 cups extra virgin olive oil
- 1/4 cup soy sauce
- 1/4 cup crystallized ginger, chopped
- 5 cloves garlic, chopped
- 2 pounds large shrimp, shelled and de-veined
- Sea salt
- Fresh ground pepper
- Sesame Seed Sauce
- 1/4 cup toasted sesame seeds

Combine the oil, soy sauce, ginger, and garlic, in a large baking dish. Add the shrimp and toss to coat. Cover and refrigerate for one hour. Preheat the grill to high heat. Remove the shrimp, discarding the marinade. Season with sea salt and pepper. Grill until the shrimp are just cooked through, which will take 2 to 3 minutes per side. Arrange on a serving plate and top with the Sesame Seed Sauce and the other half of the toasted sesame seeds.

GRILLED SKIRT STEAK WITH CHIMICHURRI

For the Chimichurri:

- 2 jalapeños, chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- 1/4 cup red wine vinegar
- 1 cup cilantro, chopped
- 1/2 cup flat-leaf parsley, chopped
- 1/4 cup oregano, chopped
- 1 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 3 tablespoons sesame oil
- Sea salt
- Fresh ground pepper

Combine all ingredients but the oils, salt, and pepper in a large glass bowl. With a fork, whisk in the olive oil and sesame oil. Season with salt and pepper. Set aside.

For the Skirt Steak:

- 2 pounds skirt steak, cut into 12 inch strips
- Sea salt
- Fresh ground pepper

Preheat the grill to high heat. Season the steaks with sea salt and pepper to taste. Grill, turning once, until lightly charred on both sides while medium rare inside. This will take about 5 minutes. Transfer to a carving board and let rest for 5 minutes. Slice the steak against the grain on a diagonal and arrange on a serving plate. Spoon the chimichurri atop the steak.



Susan E. Poppiti is Director of Advancement, Director of the Legal Shadowing Program, and a mathematics teacher at Padua Academy. She is also the “head chef” of the school’s culinary club “The Hungry Pandas.” Susan can be reached at spoppiti@hotmail.com.