

SHOPPING WITH MARC MURPHY

## Picnic Essentials

By TIM McKEOUGH

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SUMMER is winding down, but picnic season isn't over yet.

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Tony Cenicola/The New York Times

The New York chef Marc Murphy with a backpack picnic set; \$49.50 at Chelsea Market Baskets, (888) 727-7887, [chelseamarketbasket.com](http://chelseamarketbasket.com).

Marc Murphy, the chef and restaurateur behind Landmarc and Ditch Plains in Manhattan, is one of many New Yorkers who prefer to have family meals outdoors for as long as possible.

"We always pack up a cooler and go to the park," he said, even after [Labor Day](#). "You get a bunch of friends together, the kids run around, and everyone has dinner."

This year, Mr. Murphy has been especially focused on picnics.

In May, he introduced Landmarc in the Park, a takeout picnic service at his restaurant in the Time Warner Center, near the southwest corner Central Park.

He also recently opened Ditch Plains Drop In, a concession stand on Pier 1 in Brooklyn Bridge Park that offers takeout food during special events; soon, he said, he plans to turn it into an everyday operation, with year-round service.

For picnickers looking to go their own way, Mr. Murphy stressed the importance of having the right equipment. "If you don't have the right picnic basket, you can't fit enough stuff in it," he said. "And if you don't have a good bottle opener, you can't open the wine."

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On a recent sticky Manhattan day — perfect for eating watermelon in the sun — Mr. Murphy went shopping for picnic gear, scooting between stores on his [BMW](#) motorcycle.

His first stop was Chelsea Market Baskets, where he examined picnic sets that included dishes and utensils. One of his favorites was a small backpack stuffed with tableware for four — "very handy," he said, and easy to carry.

Next was Mxplyzyk in the West Village, where Mr. Murphy picked out a set of striped [melamine](#) bowls with snap-on lids by French Bull and the Fyrkat, a compact charcoal grill by Bodum.

Because the grill has clips that hold it together during transport, he said, "You can just carry it with one hand."

At Sur La Table in SoHo, he admired the large selection of knives, especially the colorful Kuhn Rikon paring knives with plastic sheaths. They would be perfect for a picnic, he said — fun, inexpensive and safe.

Nearby, at Pearl River Mart, he headed for the basement, where he found a woven basket tray with a retractable mesh cover that would be "great to keep the flies away," he said. "It's also perfect for stinky cheese."

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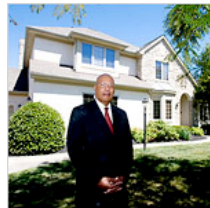
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