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## FIVE THINGS: About picnics

**BY ALEX CRUDEN/FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER**

Ready to pack a meal and head outdoors for the Fourth of July?

### 'LESS IS MORE'

So says Steve Goldberg, owner and operator of the Stage Deli, which has been serving metro Detroiters for four decades.

"I like to picnic with a backpack," says Goldberg, rather than haul a ton of food around. Tailgate parties are fun, but they're not picnics.

So Goldberg takes easy-to-carry and easy-to-eat items such as grapes, strawberries, smoked meats, breads, raw vegetables, hard cheeses, and salads of pasta or rice (no mayo to spoil) – "little varieties of lots of things." That way you can eat a little, play, nap, eat a little more ... and feel great.

### GOLDBERG'S TIPS

Freeze non-carbonated drinks ahead of time. Not only will they arrive cold, they serve as ice packs for other items. Chill other cold foods thoroughly before packing. And carry them inside the car, not in a hot trunk.

Towels can be used as pillows as well as for drying and, at the end, cleanup.

Bring a little cutting board and knife; very useful on uneven ground.

Chocolate candy tends to melt, but brownies and cookies carry the chocolate flavor well.

### **LIVIN' IS EASY**

"It's important to be comfortable," Goldberg says. A light tarp under the picnic blanket will keep you dry.

Insect repellent can help. If you don't like its smell, though, Goldberg suggests sprinkling cloves around your picnic area. That keeps ants away (and doesn't harm them).

A first-aid kit can smooth rough situations.

### **THINK GREEN**

Goldberg enjoys "calm, cool meadows" in places such as Kensington and Stony Creek metroparks. You also might find him in Belle Isle, Delhi Park and Nichols Arboretum. If you spot him, you'll see he takes only pictures and leaves only footprints. Yes, pack up your trash -- another good reason for not taking a lot in the first place.

### **A LITTLE HISTORY**

One origin of picnics was in medieval hunting feasts. Picnics were especially popular later in France after the Revolution overthrew the monarchy and royal parks became public.

In this country, picnics flourished in the 19th Century and have been favorite occasions since.

The Stage Deli's history began in Oak Park, where Goldberg was helping his father as early as age 7. The Stage is now open seven days a week on Orchard Lake in West Bloomfield, plus locations in Troy (Somerset) and Novi (Twelve Oaks).