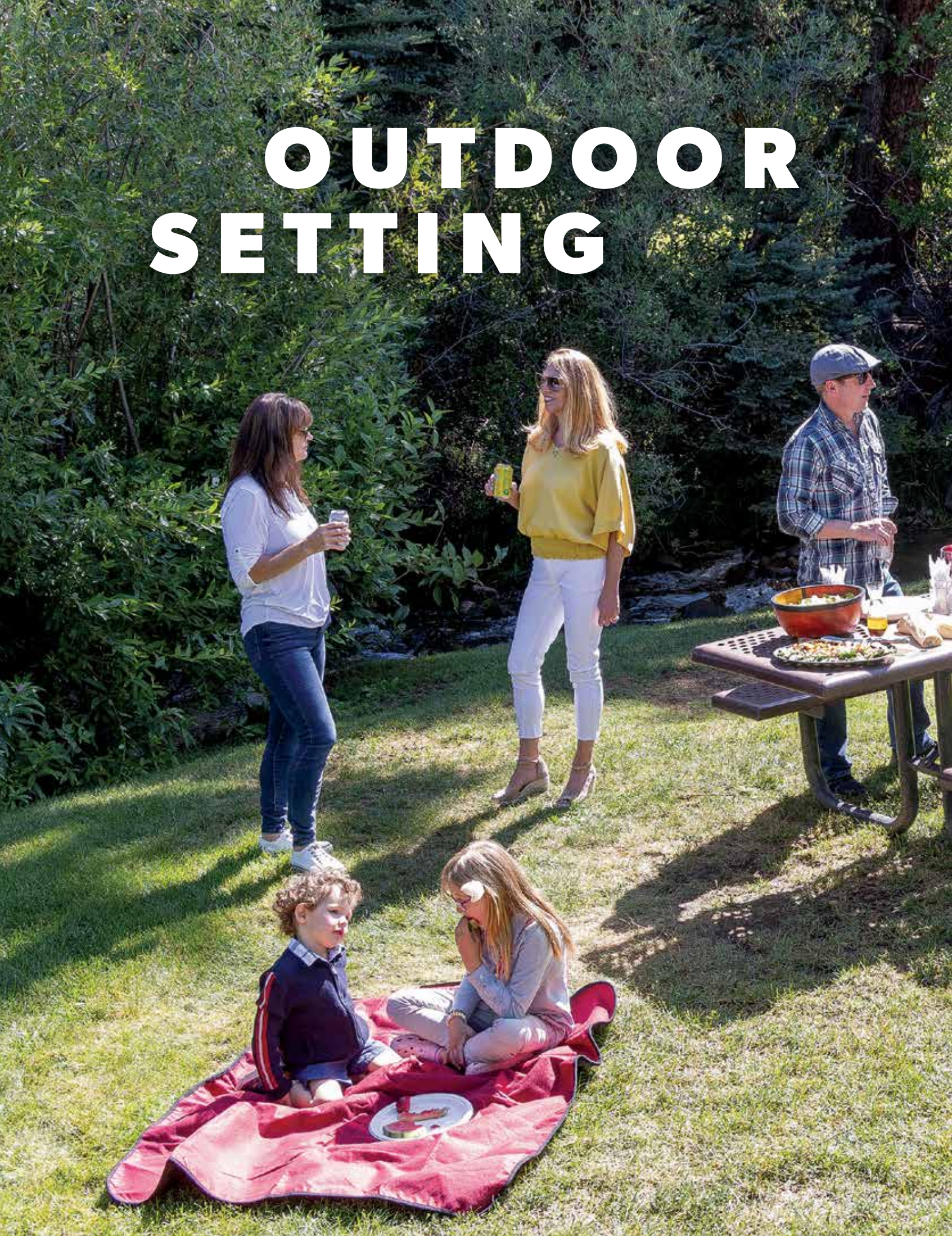


OUTDOOR SETTING





Beaver Creek is a
picnicker's paradise,
with options from
top to bottom

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Beaver Creek is renowned for its outdoor activities and panoramic views, but culinary delights are a big part of the lifestyle. And for those who want to soak in the natural beauty, that means picnicking. Defined as “an outing or occasion that involves taking a packed meal to be eaten outdoors,” having a picnic is a celebration of nature – especially when immersing yourself in the Rocky Mountains while enjoying delicious cuisine and libations.

While some prefer picnicking at a nearby location that features a grill and tables, others choose to make their picnic the culmination of an adventure. Plenty of folks set up a spread on a blanket at the top of trails that require a few miles of hiking or biking, while others might commandeer a picnic table mid-mountain.

Whether you are encased in aspen trees, in a meadow adjacent to a picturesque creek or lake, or spending time in a park, there is something to be said about taking the time to eat

outside and allowing the setting to provide the ambiance.

CHEF'S CHOICE

Similar to Eagle County in general, picnicking can be as fun and festive, fancy or causal as you want it to be. Beaver Creek offers an abundance of picnic areas — along the creek, at the top of chairlifts, and adjacent to trails. But what really makes a picnic special, according to Beaver Creek's Senior Manager of Food and Beverage and Executive Chef David Gutowski, is a spot that

Creekside Park is an easy spot to host an impromptu barbecue.



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provides “solitude, shade and a great view, which Beaver Creek has in abundance.”

A longtime Vail Valley chef and local, Gutowski has been with Beaver Creek since 2018 and in his current role since 2021. Before that, he was the Executive Chef at Grouse Mountain Grill for a decade. This past fall, he hosted an Epicurean Adventure picnic for which he scouted locations under aspen trees. “I really wanted to be in the aspens, so we looked at several spots in Larspur Bowl on Paintbrush, at the top of Bachelor Gulch off of Cabin Fever, and on Cresta in Arrowhead,” Gutowski explains.

As for types of drinks and food, he recommends prioritizing simplicity and ease of transportation which means batching cocktails ahead of time and choosing food that’s convenient to bring along. “Mix some tequila, simple syrup, pureed watermelon, mint and prosecco in a thermos and you’ve got the perfect summer cocktail that trumps some IPA that no one really wants anyway,” Gutowski says. For the food, “you can’t go wrong with fried chicken” because “you can fry it in a pan, throw it in a paper bag, and go.” He also suggests making sandwiches — for example with crusty bread, serrano ham, Manchego, piquillo peppers, and a drizzle of olive oil. Gutowski adds, “Before you head out, pick up some nectarines, slice them, throw a ball of burrata on them, and then add a drizzle of balsamic.”

GRAB-AND-GO

For those who prefer to pick up their picnic items, gourmet grab-and-go places, such as Lauren’s Kitchen in Edwards, offer a variety of options that are ideal for eating outdoors. “Since everything is already made and packaged, people can walk in without a prior order and grab food to go,” says owner Lauren McElroy. She recommends items that are naturally good eaten cold, such as her popular chicken



and tuna salads, various dips, charcuterie and pickled veggies. Ordering “boxed” lunches is an option too — think composed salads, grilled chicken and light desserts, or a kids-centric menu with mini pigs in a blanket and mac and cheese.

Because Beaver Creek has a variety of picnic destination choices — including decks, benches and picnic tables — keep in mind that sometimes grill access is an option. If a grill is present at the location, McElroy says that grilling flank steak, chicken, salmon and veggie kebabs is best. Otherwise, composed salads like pesto orzo, potato salad, or salmon niçoise are delicious selections, as well as antipasto tortellini skewers.

PICNIC LIKE A LOCAL

A 30-year Colorado resident and current full-time Beaver Creek resident, Lisa Pisciotta has several favorite picnic spots including Creekside Park and Beaver Lake. “Creekside Park is my favorite for an easy, casual picnic,” she says. “It is right outside my door, the ambiance is peaceful, the views are stunning, and the soothing sounds of the creek provide a serene backdrop.” Pisciotta adds that the park is also a great place to throw a frisbee or a football, or play croquet with friends and family, and features tables and grills.

It’s easy to arrive at the park with some pre-prepped food, and finish it off on the grill while the creek rolls on by.

PICNIC CHECKLIST

BE PREPARED.

1) KNOW YOUR DESTINATION.

Find out ahead of time if there is a grill, if there are picnic tables to set the spread and eat on, and whether or not trash cans are provided or if packing in and packing out will be necessary.

2) SERVING ITEMS.

Whether you are making your own food or opting for grab-and-go, be sure to have all the silverware, serving pieces, plates, napkins and cups needed for the group.

3) TRAVELING WITH YOUR FOOD.

If you need something to stay cold, bring or ask for ice, and plan to bring a cooler. If you have hot food, be sure you order it hot and serve it right away unless there is a way to keep it warm. Any insulated box will help items stay at temperature.

4) CHECK THE WEATHER.

Colorado weather can change in an instant so plan accordingly. Bring extra layers, a hat and a rain jacket.





Looking out at Rose Bowl and beyond, the picnic tables mid-mountain offer incredible views.

For a more adventurous picnic, Pisciotta recommends hiking to Beaver Lake, which she describes as “a pristine, high-altitude alpine lake surrounded by the breathtaking scenery.” A favorite among locals, Beaver Lake trail takes hikers through a variety of terrain ending at a stunning and secluded destination. “The lake provides an ideal spot for quiet contemplation or a leisurely picnic,” says

Pisciotta. “We typically pack a variety of delicious cheeses, fruits and crackers for this destination.” While the “ideal picnic” depends on individual desires, Pisciotta says that she prefers to combine “simplicity, flavor and convenience, turning a casual outdoor meal into a delightful culinary adventure.” Her favorite food options include

sandwiches filled with succulent meats, crisp vegetables and savory spreads, as well as sides of fresh fruit, crunchy vegetable sticks, hummus, and crispy salads. Pisciotta also enjoys something sweet to conclude the meal, as well as iced tea and wine. “There is nothing better than good food, great company and the beauty of the Colorado outdoors,” she says.