

# Janet's Notebook

By Janet Tharpe



## July 4th Side Dishes Pop with Flavor

I'm busy planning my July 4th cookout this week. I love macaroni salad and potato salad at my backyard barbecues, but I wanted to jazz up the sides this year. These refreshing—and flavorful—salads are sure to bring smiles to guests' faces.

Watermelon is such a cooling treat on a hot summer day. And, it's been better when combined with fresh tomatoes, cucumbers and feta cheese like Sheri Mullins does for her Watermelon Summer Salad.

"Our summers here in Texas routinely go over 100 degrees," explains Sheri. "The last thing I wanted was to heat up my kitchen so I came up with this dish." I think you'll love the refreshing taste of this salad.

One bite of Babe Bernard's Blue Cheese 'n Bacon Summer Salad and you'll think you're eating a BLT (just without the bread)!

"For some reason the onion, blue cheese, bacon and dressing goes together just right," shares Babe. Your friends and family will love the flavors of this salad. It'll go great with your burgers and hot dogs.

The mozzarella cheese and herbs in Libby Walp's Asparagus Salad with Fresh Mozzarella dish are a real winning combination. "We made this dish for the Fourth of July and it was a hit," says Libby.

Libby goes on to share, "It is great because you can make it ahead and it gets better as you wait to serve it." Make ahead recipes are a must-have when throwing together a party and I suggest

you add this to your menu.

Susan Bickta's Roasted Beet Salad with Honey Dijon Vinaigrette is one of my new favorite salads. Susan combines red beets, golden beets and cranberries (plus some other real goodies) with spinach and creates one eye-catching salad.

And the vinaigrette... yum! A bit of honey combined with the tanginess of the dijon dressing for one flavor-packed vinaigrette.



*Watermelon Summer Salad*

Deb Justus' Quick Summer Tortellini Salad is great too. It's a bit of an untraditional pasta salad, but oh so good. "A little sweet, a little tart, with a touch of fresh basil for a punch of flavor" is how Deb explains her recipe.

She adds a touch of sugar to her vinaigrette giving it a slight sweetness. Paired with black olives, mushrooms, salami, cheese and fresh tortellini it works nicely. With no mayo, you don't have to worry about keeping it cool which is great when hosting an outdoor party.

Are you making anything special at your barbecue? Share your recipe with us and make sure to snap a pic. I love to see what you're cooking' up. Hope y'all have a safe July 4th!

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