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Exploring World Flavours In The Comfort Of Your Own Backyard

By News Canada

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by: News Canada

(NC)—Summer is almost here, which means backyard entertaining and patio parties with family and friends. As cross-cultural cuisine continues to gain in popularity, guests will be craving foods with more intense, diverse flavours this season.

The standard fare associated with the much anticipated barbecue season can be easily enhanced by adding Caribbean, Mexican or Asian influences to your summer meals. There are many ways to perk up the flavour of simple favourites such as adding unique spices to a light pasta salad, incorporating mouth-watering marinades to meats and vegetables or utilizing fruits, nuts and dips.

Asian Adventurer. Asian cuisine incorporates a diverse set of flavours, ranging from mild to very hot, and from sweet to savoury. Asian sauces often include sweet, spicy and sour flavours such as: lemongrass, plum paste, sesame oil, chilies and ginger. Asian cooking generally uses small bites of lean cuts of meat, flavourful marinades, quick cooking over high heat and dipping sauce accompaniments.

Caribbean Crusader. Caribbean cooking is the essence of fusion style as the islands were first settled by the Spanish, then the Dutch, French, British and Danish - the combination of these flavours developed the nature of the cuisine. Caribbean flavours tend to combine ingredients such as curry, allspice, lime, thyme, ginger, chilies and tropical fruits. A unique blend of spices and fruit components such as papaya, mango and guava can bring the vibrancy of an island sunset into any kitchen.

Mouth-watering Mexican. Descended from the food of the Mayans, authentic Mexican takes advantage of the varied food sources in Mexico with small meals often served wrapped in a fresh tortilla. Mexican and Central American cuisine incorporates beans, corn, tomatoes, jicama, chocolate, avocado, papaya, vanilla and chili peppers.

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Experimenting with presentation, spices and seasonings, and flavourful rubs and marinades can bring a world of flavours to your own backyard:

Create bite–size appetizers. Satays, small wooden skewers threaded with bite–size chunks of meat, are a popular street snack food in Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand and make wonderful starters.

Use marinades to infuse flavour. Marinades are fantastic for tenderizing, enhancing flavour and preserving food. New Knorr® Spicy Caribbean Marinade with Papaya Juice or Knorr® Sesame Ginger Marinade with Mandarin Orange Juice spice up meats, vegetables and tofu for a glorious taste experience.

Incorporate spices to traditional offerings. The chili pepper has become the single most widely used spice in the world, except for salt. Chili peppers vary in strength and flavour. Give your barbecue sauce or salsa a little zip by adding chili peppers into the mixture.

Experiment with fruit. Try pairing new and unusual fresh fruits from your supermarket produce aisle such as mango, avocado, star fruit, pineapple, coconut, guava and papaya with your meals. They are full of vitamins and flavour and can be used in entrées or desserts.

Jazz up a family favourite. Dry soup mixes have many uses and have become a widely used ingredient in hundreds of recipes. To attain a delicious, savoury flavour in traditional hamburger recipes, sprinkle a package of Knorr® Onion Soup Mix into the meat mixture.

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Backyard Landscaping - An Important Area To Landscape

By Andrew Green

For homeowners around the world, a big part of owning a home is landscaping the yard. Front yard landscaping or backyard landscaping, the work must be done. While the front yard is important because it's more visible to neighbors and others who drive by, the backyard is no less important. The backyard is where families and friends gather for barbeques and birthday parties and where some families place their swimming pools. Most backyards are landscaped with careful thought and preparation. Special consideration is put into the positioning of every blade of grass, each decorative stone and all of the species of flowers that beautify a backyard.

Flowers, stones and grass are just some of the ways to landscape a backyard. Large shade trees, waterfalls and herbal gardens are some other ways. The theme of your landscape will depend on your hobbies, interests and goals for your backyard. Backyard landscaping can be a lot of fun, especially when you make it personal. Landscape your yard to reflect your personality and your homes personality. If you and your family like to entertain, add a bar to your back patio. Clean up the barbeque grill and don't forget the citronella candles to keep the bugs away. Maybe you'll want to build a croquet course, mini golf course, or put in a sand lot for some sand volleyball. Whatever your preference, make backyard landscaping fun for the whole family.

Keep your family in mind too, when it comes time to maintain the backyard landscaping. Large yards will require a lot more maintenance and grooming. Taking care of the yard can be a nice family activity. You can mow the lawn, pull the weeds and get the kids involved in watering the plants. If you have a fruit tree in your backyard, you'll probably be spending some time picking up the fallen apples or cherries. And of course, you'll also need to reserve time to tend to your herbal garden. It can be surprisingly rewarding to grow your own herbs and use them in special recipes that you cook when you're entertaining friends and neighbors.

If you are the type who would rather keep your backyard to yourself, then maybe you don't need to worry about the huge, green lawn. Perhaps you'd rather have a quaint yard with basic backyard landscaping. You can put in some grass, strategically place some shade trees and plant some of your favorite flowers. You may want to include some bigger bushes, if space allows as they will add some gorgeous green to your colorful backyard. This type of backyard may require the same maintenance as a large backyard, but not nearly the time commitment. No matter what your personality says about your backyard landscaping, one thing's for sure—homeowners everywhere will tell you to create your backyard just the way you want to.

Landscapes and Landscaping

helping you to make the most

of your garden space.

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