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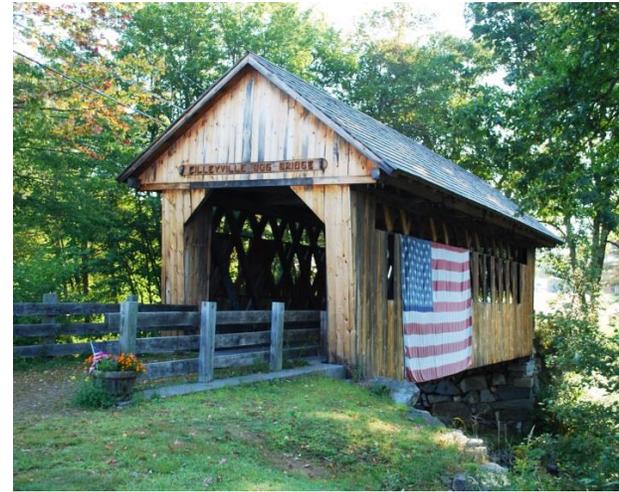
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**Memorial Day will soon be here.** In New Hampshire where winter comes early and stays late, the fourth Monday in May, Memorial Day, marks the beginning of summer. Or at least something close to it. The kids will take a holiday from school and most businesses will close. Of course the retailers will stay open and run those can't-be-beat, lower-than-low sales extravaganzas. Highways and by-ways will be bumper-to-bumper as Americans flock to the beach or mall.



Of course it wasn't always this way. Memorial Day has a solemn side with roots that go back to the Civil War. Originally known as Decoration Day, it was a day to honor the soldiers who died in the war. Families and friends decorated soldiers' graves with flowers and flags. After the First World War, observances expanded to honor all who had died in war.

Over the next week or so, relatives, veterans groups and even some school children will replace tired flags and plant flowers in cemeteries across the country. My Nana Nye was always busy on Memorial Day. Loaded down with gardening tools and geraniums, she made a pilgrimage to Brockton to spruce up the graves of her parents and in-laws as well as a bunch of aunts, uncles and cousins.

**Memorial Day is a good time to reflect** on the important people who helped make you what and who you are. Perhaps it's the grandmother who inspired you to cook or the grandfather who could fix anything from broken dollhouse furniture to a wheezing motor. Then again, maybe it's that funny maiden aunt who smoked like a chimney and drank Manhattans. Or a wonderful friend, neighbor or teacher who somehow touched your life. More likely, many people, family and friends alike, have played a part in making you ... you.

**But how to honor them this long Memorial Day Weekend?**

**Like my grandmother, you can visit their gravesites,** rake away the dead leaves and plant fresh flowers. Bring the kids or grandkids with you and introduce them to these special people. As you weed and plant, share some of your favorite tales of days gone by. Storytelling is a wonderful way to preserve the past for future generations.

**Alternatively, celebrate a loved one's life by indulging in his or her favorite sport** or hobby. Whether you play eighteen holes or spend an afternoon at Fenway, dedicate the game to a friend or relative who touched your heart. And if your favorite auntie was a shop-'til-you-drop kind of gal, well, those lower-than-low sales extravaganzas are calling.

**Then again, maybe you will honor that special loved one by sharing** one or more of the skills he or she taught you. Make them proud by volunteering to help a friend or stranger in need. Maybe you'll cook a meal for a harried, single mother, read to a shut-in or change the oil in your neighbor's car.

**And finally celebrate with friends and family.** Memorial Day kicks off the summer grilling season. Whip up a batch of old fashioned lemonade or Manhattans and raise your glasses in a multitude of toasts and memories. Track down (or update!) your favorite old family recipes to serve with the burgers and dogs. An evening around the picnic table is the perfect opportunity to share stories of past cookouts and summer fun.

## New Potato Salad Dijon

*This recipe is a liberal adaptation of my mother's potato salad. Throw a few burgers or a steak on the grill, add a green salad and enjoy!*

Serves 10-12

1/2 cup mayonnaise  
1/2 cup sour cream  
1/4 cup dry white wine or 1-2 tablespoons white wine vinegar  
2 tablespoons wholegrain Dijon mustard  
1 clove garlic, minced  
1 teaspoon red pepper sauce  
Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper  
3 pounds new potatoes  
1 cup peeled, seeded and chopped European cucumber  
About 1/4 cup chopped chives

Put the mayonnaise, sour cream, wine, mustard, garlic and pepper sauce in a small bowl, season with salt and pepper and whisk to combine.

Depending on the size, leave the potatoes whole or cut in half or quarters for 1-2 bite pieces.

Put the potatoes in a large pot of cold, salted water, cover and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer until the potatoes are just barely tender.

Drain the potatoes in a large colander, cover and let the potatoes steam for 10-15 minutes. Transfer the potatoes to a large bowl, add the mayonnaise mixture and gently toss to coat. Tossing a few times, cool the potatoes to room temperature.

When the potatoes have cooled, add the cucumbers and chives and gently toss to combine. If not serving immediately, cover and refrigerate. Serve at room temperature.

*Take this recipe up a notch with red, white and blue new potatoes for Memorial Day and again on the Fourth of July!*

