

It started as a day to honor Civil War soldiers.

Memorial Day is now a day of remembrance for all of the men and women who have died while serving in our country's armed forces. There will be parades and memorial services throughout the state. Bearing flowers and flags, many will visit and spruce up the graves of loved ones.

Memorial Day Weekend is also the unofficial start of summer in places warmer than New Hampshire. After a few notable fits and starts, our summer generally waits until Flag Day or the Fourth of July to get going. However, that doesn't keep the hordes of summer people from coming north for the weekend. They'll battle the black flies, create long lines at the supermarket and sweep out their cottages. I know because for many years I was one of those flatlanders.

Local or seasonal, not everyone has an enthusiasm for sweeping so here are a few alternatives for the weekend:

Run a race. You can find road races and trail runs throughout the weekend. The 5K over in Wilmot is named for our least favorite spring visitors, the notoriously despicable black flies. If running is too much for your knees, don't worry, most fun runs welcome walkers.

Climb a mountain. If you'd rather climb a mountain than run up a hill, New Hampshire is full of choices. Stay close to home and enjoy the view of Pleasant Lake from atop Mount Kearsarge or take on the challenge of any one of New Hampshire's 4,000-footers.

Go on an adventure. Explore something, anything, as long as it is a bit wild, weird or wacky. If you've never tried white water rafting – now is a good time to fix that. Then again, you might be thinking of a road trip. I suggest a pilgrimage to the world's largest ball of twine or pistachio. Rafting is close at hand but you will have plan ahead for a big adventure. Four different twine balls claim to be the largest and they are in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Kansas and Missouri. Perhaps you'd like to see all four. The giant pistachio has no rivals and is in New Mexico. However, correct me if I'm wrong but New Mexico sounds like a perfect winter road trip!

Visit a museum. Keeping with the theme of wild, weird or wacky, I might suggest the International Cryptozoology Museum in Portland, Maine. Cryptozoology is the study of hidden animals like Big Foot and mermaids. Once you see the Yeti hair samples and a replica of P.T. Barnum's FeeJee Mermaid, you can go get a lobster or head over to L.L. Beans. Alternatively, you might want to skip Maine and head to Massachusetts for the Museum of Bad Art. There are three locations to choose from and each fills its walls with "Art too bad to be ignored."

Shop 'til you drop at a sidewalk sale. Like most long weekends, there will be a ton of sales out there. In addition, New Hampshire has more than its fair share of outlet malls making it a shopping paradise. The what-to-buy-when experts are recommending mattresses, refrigerators and kayaks for the Memorial Day Weekend. Since I am in the market for a new refrigerator, I might have to succumb.

Decisions, decisions, decisions – drive thousands of miles to see a giant ball of twine, spend a day looking at refrigerators or ...

Have a wonderful weekend and bon appétit!




Lemony Green Rice

Warm or at room temperature, a great side dish for a summery potluck – Lemony Green Rice goes well with grilled chicken, seafood and veggies. Enjoy!

Serves 6-8

1 1/2 cups rice, preferably basmati
Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper
1 tablespoon olive oil
1-2 tablespoons butter
1-2 bunch scallions, thinly sliced, white and green parts separated (1/2-3/4 cup each)
2 cloves garlic, minced
Zest and juice of 1 lemon
1/2 cup chopped fresh parsley
1/2 cup chopped fresh cilantro
1/2 cup chopped fresh mint

Put 5-6 cups of salted water in a large pot and bring to boil. Stir in the rice, cover, reduce the heat and let the rice cook at a low boil until just tender, about 15 minutes.

While the rice bubbles, lightly coat a skillet with olive oil, add 1 tablespoon butter and heat on medium. Add the white parts of the scallions, season with salt and pepper and cook, stirring, until it begins to soften, about 3 minutes. Add the garlic and continue cooking until the garlic is fragrant, about 2 minutes more. Remove from the heat and reserve.

Drain the rice, return it to the pot, add the scallions and garlic, lemon zest and juice and a little more butter if you like, stir to combine and cover. Let the rice sit off the heat for about 10 minutes.

Add the herbs and scallion greens and toss to combine. Serve warm or at room temperature.

