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# How To Throw a Barbeque Without Throwing Away Your Diet

*By: Teresa H & Kymmie Krieger*

With the chill of winter long gone, the scorching days of summer are literally just around the corner. So, how do you celebrate? Well, what better way is there to honor the sunshine months than to throw a backyard barbeque? As the smell of those delicious, grilled meats simmering nearby fills the air, it's easy to tell yourself this is a healthy option, after all you aren't frying anything. However, don't be fooled, as a huge number of devious, hidden calories may be lurking in your favorite barbeque side dishes. So, keep these tips in mind when you're planning your next backyard bash, so you can enjoy your summer without ditching your diet.

## Skip the Potato Salad

Groan! Let's face it, no matter how you prepare potato salad, it's going to be loaded with unavoidable calories. Traditionally prepared with mayonnaise, mustard, bacon, and eggs, even a few scoops can easily add several hundred calories to your plate. Potatoes themselves are also packed with carbs that are not "figure-friendly." So, opt for a fresh romaine, spring greens, or spinach salad topped with carrots, almonds, and cranberries or a fresh fruit salad instead. Or if you simply cannot fathom a barbeque without potato salad, consider seasoning your dish with chipotle peppers, chicken stock, and your favorite seasonings to avoid the high calorie count of mayonnaise and bacon.

## Keep Your Meats Lean

Though it's a tried-and-true rule of grilling that the fatter the meat, the more flavor it has, it definitely doesn't help in the "sticking-to-your-diet-department." Though some fat will keep your meat from drying out, steer clear of high-fat meats at all costs. Lean chicken breasts and turkey burgers can truly be just as flavorful. Simply marinate the meat for several hours beforehand, and pull it off the grill before it dries out. You'll not only forgo the extra calories but also have a delicious meal with zero guilt.

## Load Up On Veggies

Veggies are not only healthy, but they are an essential part of a figure-friendly diet. Adding them to the grill, alongside your other barbeque favorites, transforms their flavor into a mouth-watering and delicious treat. The smoky flavor of a veggie cabob with steak or chicken is a perfect, diet-friendly pairing for your backyard bash. Vegetables are naturally low calorie and with a huge variety available, you are sure to find at least one that tempts your palate.

## Limit the "Drinking of Your Calories"

With good times flowing and your favorite adult beverage in your hand, it is easy to forget that each one is adding to your meal's calorie count. So, while you don't have to skip a refreshing beverage, opt for light beer, wine, and natural juices (instead of sugary pre-made mixers) to cut calories. Drinking lots of water to quench your thirst in between alcoholic beverages to stay hydrated is also a well-advised strategy.

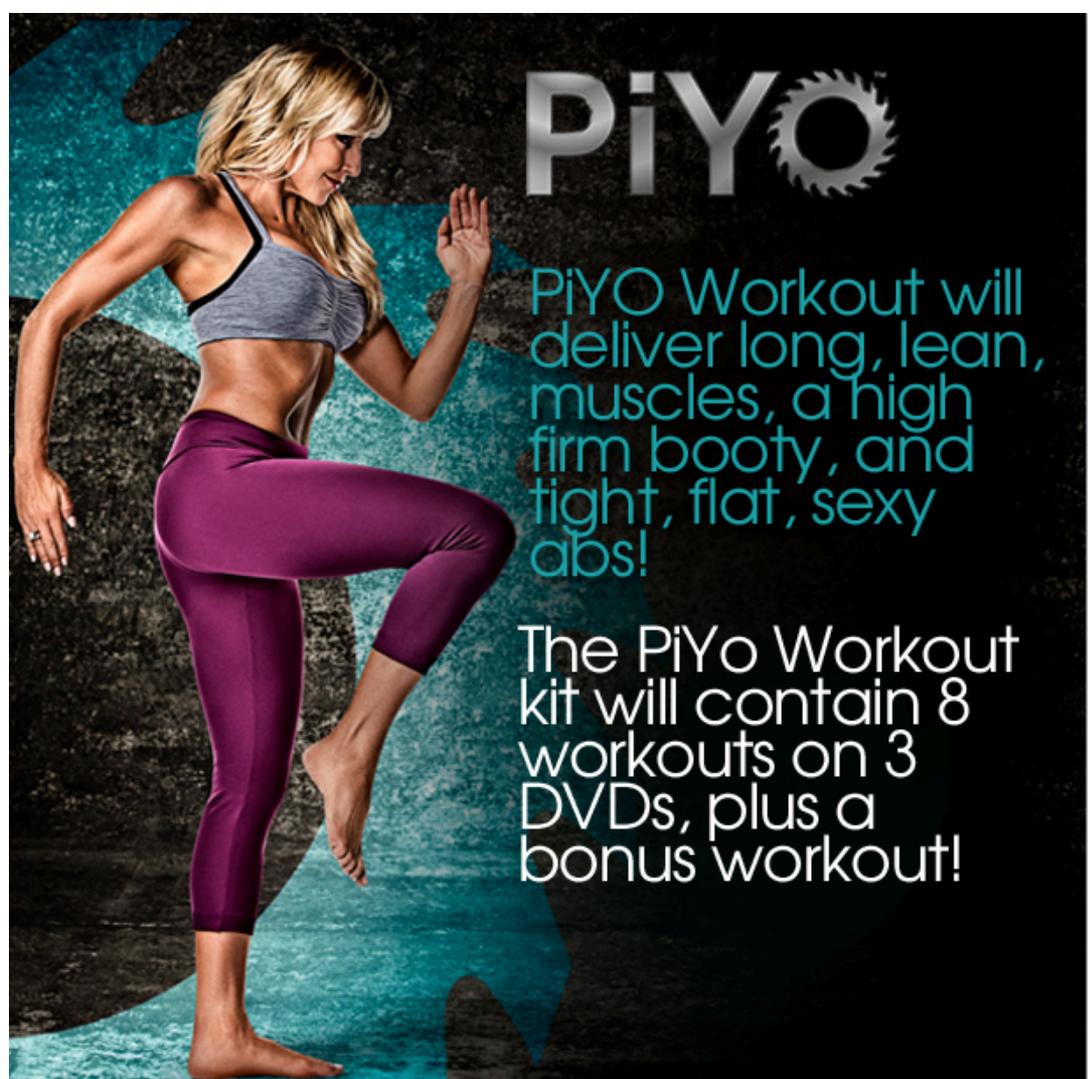
So, now that you know how to tell those hidden calories to take a hike, don't hesitate to throw your first backyard barbeque of the summer. With a little planning, you can have your barbeque, and eat it, too!

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