



Chef Deborah Lindsay is culinary instructor at Keiser University Center for Culinary Arts in Melbourne. / Courtesy of Keiser University

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**Toast of the Coast:
Declare freedom from ho-hum food**

Chef Deborah Lindsay, culinary instructor at Keiser University Center for Culinary Arts in Melbourne, wants you to make your Fourth of July cookout extraordinary.

“I would love to see our plates going from meat in the center to meat on the side,” Lindsay said. “I’d like to wave the flag for non-traditional dishes for the Fourth.”

Lindsay doesn’t want you to upset the carnivores in the crowd, but a little less meat of better quality, plus some interesting sides, could make for a very liberating Independence Day meal.

She suggests veggie skewers, or grilled pizza with veggies and even potatoes.

If you do opt for potatoes, don't wrap them in foil and plunk them on the grill.

"You are going to get steamed potatoes," Lindsay said.

Instead of gobs of sour cream or butter, she recommends grilled cherry tomatoes ladled with a tablespoon of vinaigrette.

"You get this hot, juicy side dish that makes a baked potato pop without sour cream or butter," she said. So, how do you grill cherry tomatoes?

The secret, said Lindsay, is in la plancha, a favorite of Spanish chefs. The versatile cast iron griddle can be used on the stovetop and oven, but it glows on the grill, where you can cook anything from the aforementioned tomatoes to mussels. Asparagus, for example, is perfect to toss on la plancha.

For corn on the cob, Lindsay leaves a few husks on and soaks the ears in salt water for half-hour before grilling. Brush on a little vinaigrette.

Keep the burgers, but use smaller patties, perhaps of bison meat, available ground at both BJ's in Brevard.

"It's good lean meat," said Lindsay. "Use a better quality bun, too, and if you like cheese, real cheese, not a cheese food."

For "tube" steaks, Lindsay likes Italian sausage.

Add an out-of-the-ordinary side, such as umeboshi coleslaw or tabouli and edamame salad. Umeboshi vinegar is the pink liquid left over after Japanese apricots, or ume, are pickled. The vinegar is bottled by Eden Corp. and available at supermarkets such as Publix.

Know of a chef or restaurant we should feature? Email Maria Sonnenberg at toastofthecoast@cfl.rr.com.