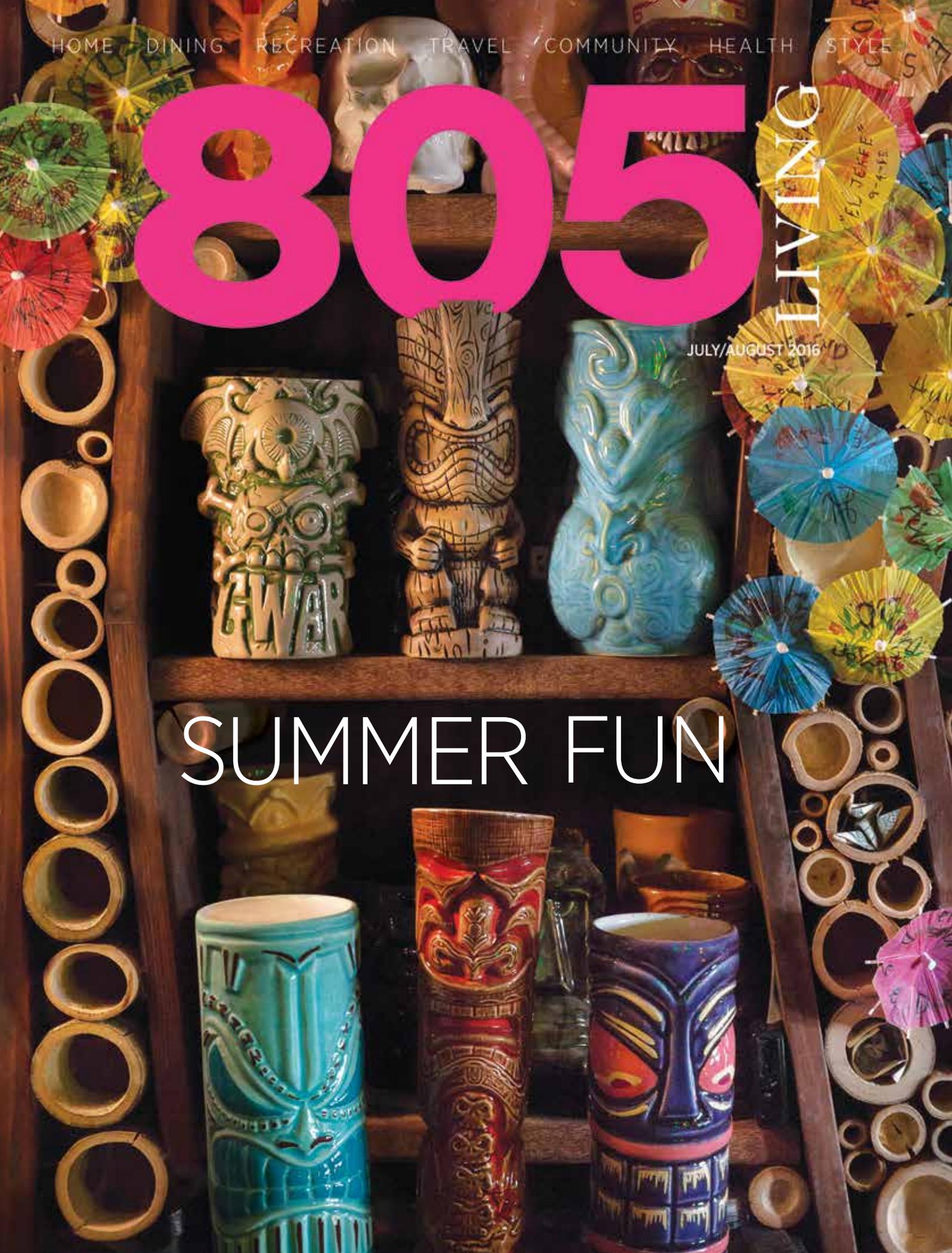


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IRVING

JULY/AUGUST 2016

SUMMER FUN



And the Living Is So Easy

A chef and an event planner host a family-friendly beach barbecue to celebrate the launch of their new San Luis Obispo meat company. Their recipes and tips for packing and decorating are a blueprint for casual seaside entertaining.

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STYLING BY GRACE LORENZEN

FOOD STYLING BY CHEF JENSEN LORENZEN



Grace and Jensen Lorenzen (center) treat friends and family to a barbecue at Montaña de Oro State Park's Spooner's Cove. Opposite, from top: Jensen takes skewered appetizers off the grill; guests Michael McCrary, Josh Haring, and Carla Wingett make their way to the site.



Chef Jensen Lorenzen's Beach Barbecue Menu

Chicken Salad Cups

Yakitori-Style Chicken-Artichoke Skewers

Stone Fruit Salad With
Honey-Cider Vinaigrette

Larder Meat Co. Burgers With Savory
Bacon-Cider Marmalade and Dijonaise

Negranti's Blackberry-Vanilla-Rosemary
Ice Cream Sandwiches

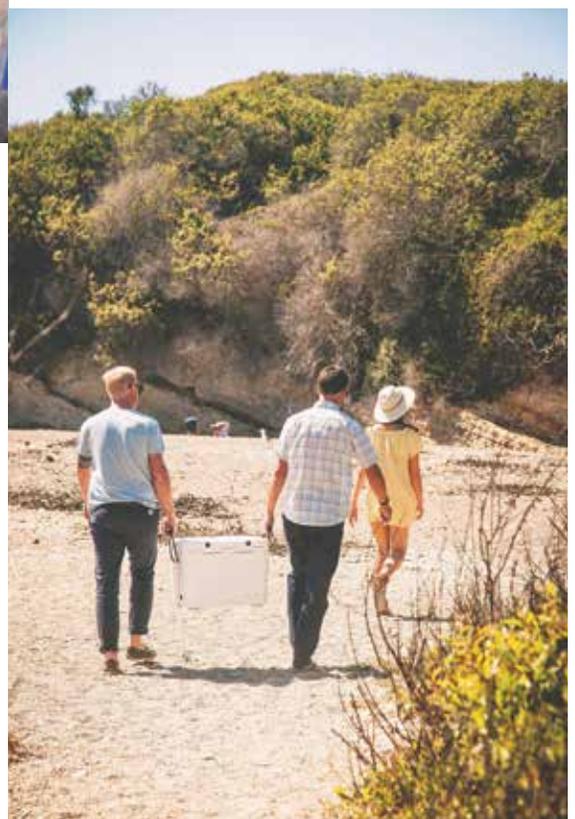
Grace's Grapefruit-and-Fennel
Sparkling Tisane

Scar of the Sea 2015 California Hard Cider

Tin City Cider Co. Dry-Hopped Hard Cider

Two years ago, chef Jensen Lorenzen and his wife, Grace, shuttered The Cass House, their intimate, acclaimed Cayucos inn and restaurant. Some of the hardest goodbyes they made were to the farmers and ranchers who supported their vision with high-quality meats, produce, and grains. "It was devastating," says Jensen. "I'd developed those relationships for 15 years."

This year, the couple rejoined efforts to support conscientious agriculture by developing a new meat CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) in San Luis Obispo, The Larder Meat Co. (lardermeatco.com), which delivers locally raised meats along with recipes, brines, spices, and rubs to monthly California subscribers overnight. To celebrate the new venture, the Lorenzens gathered friends—a cider-maker, a woodworker, a floral designer, and owners of an outdoor adventure goods shop—to a barbecue at Spooner's Cove inside Montaña de Oro State Park near Los Osos, complete with kids, paper boats, and a locally focused feast. Take cues from their experience to host your own seaside celebration.





YAKITORI-STYLE CHICKEN-ARTICHOKE SKEWERS

These make-ahead chicken skewers save time and trouble when grilling at the beach. For quick skewering without the wait, soak a package of wooden or bamboo skewers for one hour and store them in the freezer in a resealable plastic bag, where they'll always be handy for use on the grill. To prepare charcoal just once for this feast at the beach, be ready to grill the burgers when these skewers come off the heat. (For Jensen's no-mess portable beach grill set-up, see *Larder Meat Co. Burgers recipe, page 60.*)

Makes 12 to 15 skewers

- 1 pound boneless, skinless chicken thighs (Jensen uses Rinconada Dairy chicken thighs)
- 8–10 ounces artichoke hearts, drained
- 1 cup teriyaki sauce

At home: Soak wooden or bamboo skewers in warm water for at least an hour prior to grilling. Bring a large pot of heavily salted water to a low simmer, about 185 to 195°F. Place chicken thighs in a heavy-duty resealable plastic bag and lightly pound them with the back of a sauté pan or rolling pin to flatten slightly. Remove one thigh from the bag and place in large pot of simmering water. Cook chicken thigh for 5 minutes, until cooked through and no longer pink. Using tongs, remove chicken from water and place on paper towels to drain. Repeat procedure with remaining chicken.

When chicken is cool enough to handle, cut into small pieces, about the size of the artichoke hearts. Combine chicken with teriyaki sauce in a mixing bowl. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and marinate in the refrigerator at least an hour or until ready to assemble skewers.

Assemble by alternating two pieces chicken and two artichoke hearts on each skewer. Place container in cooler packed with ice for transport to the beach.

At the beach: When ready to cook chicken skewers, prepare a charcoal grill. When coals are white, grill skewers just until grill marks appear and marinade begins to char, turning occasionally, 3 to 4 minutes. Serve.

Family-friendly entertaining (opposite, counterclockwise from top, right): Wingett brings natural-looking florals to make festive arrangements; stone fruit salad and sparkling tisane are cool and refreshing for all; Weston Bonnett takes a big bite of burger; Grace joins Jack, Luke, and Lindsay Haring and Emilia Bonnett under a sun shelter.



STONE FRUIT SALAD WITH HONEY-CIDER VINAIGRETTE

For the basil in this delicate salad, Jensen prefers the complex flavor created by a mixture of Genovese, Thai, and lemon basil.

Serves 4 to 6

VINAIGRETTE

- ¼ cup of cider vinegar
- 2 tablespoons dry, hard apple cider (Jensen uses Tin City Cider Co. dry cider, tincitycider.com)
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 cup neutral-flavored oil, such as avocado, grape-seed, or canola

SALAD

- 1 pound yellow peaches, pitted and sliced
- 1 pound nectarines, pitted and sliced
- 1 pound plums, pitted and sliced
- 8 ounces crumbled feta cheese
- 1 bunch mixed whole basil leaves

At home: Prepare vinaigrette by adding cider vinegar, hard apple cider, honey, salt, mustard, and cayenne to a bowl. Whisk to combine. Slowly add oil, whisking continuously, until vinaigrette emulsifies. Pour vinaigrette into an airtight container for transport.

Place sliced stone fruit, feta cheese, and basil leaves inside separate resealable plastic bags. Arrange container of vinaigrette and plastic bags in cooler packed with ice for transport to the beach.

At the beach: About 10 to 30 minutes before serving, shake vinaigrette in airtight container and pour about ¼ cup into plastic bag of stone fruit. Reseal the bag and gently shake to coat fruit with vinaigrette. When ready to serve, pour marinated stone fruit into a serving bowl, sprinkle feta and whole basil leaves over the top. Serve with remaining vinaigrette on the side.

Home Away From Home

Comfort Zone: Event planner Grace Lorenzen includes smart and stylish touches that elevate even the simplest barbecue and make cleanup quick and easy. For guest plates and serving platters she uses 13-by-9-inch Nordic Ware quarter sheet pans (available at Smart & Final, smartandfinal.com) lined with parchment paper: “They’re stackable, light, versatile, inexpensive, and sturdier than paper or plastic,” she says. Blankets, baskets, and boards from Porch (porchsb.com) and floor pillows from La Tavola (latavolalinen.com), both in Santa Barbara, make a cozy home base for adventurers young and old. To minimize impact on the beach, Grace brings large, durable plastic garbage bags to pack everything out.

Beach Blossoms: Grace’s twin sister, Carla Wingett of Sylvan Floral (sylvanfloral.com) in Santa Barbara, dresses up the barbecue site with some spirited blooms. Here, Wingett offers tips for seaside floral arrangements.

- Choose a container that fits the setting. A woven basket with a plastic bucket set inside it, a thermos, or a tin bucket are all nonbreakable and won’t tip easily.
- Buy flowers and foliage that match the natural beach setting from a farmers’ market or grocery store. Choose varieties that can stand up to the heat. Daisies, protea, and tropical blooms are good options.
- Include an arrangement of herbs, such as rosemary, parsley, or mint to pick from to flavor barbecue dishes and drinks.
- Add ice to the water to help blooms stay perky and last longer.



CHICKEN SALAD CUPS

Using leftover roasted chicken makes assembling this simple starter a snap. Be careful not to over-season this salad as capers and mustard are already salty ingredients.

Serves 4 to 8

- 2 pounds of shredded roasted chicken (Jensen uses Rinconada Dairy chicken; rinconadadairy.com)
- 6 tablespoons mayonnaise
- 2 tablespoon whole-grain Dijon mustard
- 2 small bunches of dill, minced
- 6 teaspoons of capers, drained
- Zest of 2 lemons
- 2-3 heads hearty lettuce (butter leaf lettuce, endive, radicchio), leaves detached, rinsed and stacked between damp paper towels in a large resealable plastic bag

At home: In a large bowl, combine first six ingredients and stir to incorporate. Add salt and pepper to taste. Pour into an airtight container and place in a cooler packed with ice for transport to the beach.

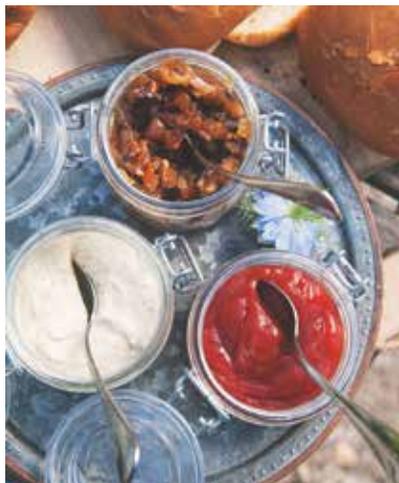
At the beach: When ready to serve, spoon chicken salad into lettuce leaf cups.

SAVORY BACON-CIDER MARMALADE

The sneaky heat of this marmalade comes from ground ghost chili (also known as bhut jolokia), an Indian pepper named by Guinness World Records as one of the hottest known to man, with a Scoville heat scale rating of just over 1 million units—10 times hotter than a habanero. Find ground ghost chili at amazon.com or substitute cayenne pepper. When browning the bacon, Jensen advises against crisping it all the way. "It's nice to have it slightly chewy in the final product," he says.

Makes about 1½ cups

- 8 ounces bacon, diced (Jensen uses Winfield Farm bacon, winfieldfarm.com)
- 2 medium yellow onions, minced
- 1 Granny Smith apple, peeled, cored, and diced
- 2 tablespoons dark brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon molasses
- ¼ teaspoon granulated garlic



- ¼ teaspoon ground ghost chili or cayenne pepper
- ½ teaspoon whole mustard seeds
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- 2 cups dry, hard apple cider (such as locally made Tin City Cider Co. or Scar of the Sea, scaroftheseawines.com)

At home: In a large heavy-bottomed saucepan, sauté bacon on medium-low heat until golden brown, stirring occasionally, about 5 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer bacon to a paper towel-lined plate. Drain all but about 2 tablespoons of rendered bacon fat from pan. Add onions and apple to pan and sauté until both are caramelized, stirring frequently, about 8 to 10 minutes.

Add remaining ingredients to pan and mix well to incorporate. Reduce heat and cook until liquid has evaporated and mixture has the texture of a thick compote or jam, about 15 minutes. Stir bacon into fruit and vegetable mixture, then remove from heat, and cool. Transfer marmalade to an airtight container and store in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks. Transport to the beach in cooler packed with ice. Keep chilled in cooler until ready to serve.

At the beach: Serve marmalade as a condiment for burgers.

DIJONAISE

For the vigorous whisking of this Dijon mustard-mayonnaise, Jensen recommends stabilizing the mixing bowl on a countertop by encircling the base of the bowl with a dampened kitchen towel.

Makes about ½ cup

- 1 large egg yolk*
- Juice from 1 lemon
- 1 clove garlic, grated or minced thoroughly
- 2 teaspoons cold water
- 2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- ½-¾ cup neutral-flavored oil, such as grape-seed or canola oil

At home: In a stainless-steel mixing bowl, whisk together first seven ingredients until well combined. Add oil in a steady stream while vigorously whisking to create an emulsion. Keep whisking until all oil is incorporated and mixture is the texture of mayonnaise. Refrigerate in an airtight container for up to three days. Transport to the beach in cooler packed with ice. Keep Dijonaise chilled until ready to serve.

At the beach: Serve as a condiment for burgers.

**For recipes that call for raw egg, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration advises using eggs that have been treated to destroy salmonella by pasteurization or another approved method.*



LARDER MEAT CO. BURGERS

For beach barbecues Jensen uses a chimney starter and a small Weber charcoal grill stabilized inside a large galvanized tin tub. (Check to make sure your beach site allows open fires.) When it's time to kill the fire and pack up, he allows the coals to burn off and cool, then puts the lid on the grill, closes the vent, and pops the whole tub into the trunk of his car for no-mess transport.

Makes 6 burgers

- 1½ pounds ground beef (Jensen uses The Larder Meat Co. dry-aged beef from Swan Family Angus, swanfamilyangus.com)
- 4½ teaspoons kosher salt or The Larder Meat Co. Burger Salt
- 6 thick slices cheddar cheese, or use American cheese if a gooey cheese is preferred
- 6 brioche buns (available at Whole Foods Markets)
- Condiments and butter or arugula lettuce

At home: Form six patties from the ground beef and chill in a refrigerator for up to 24 hours. In a shallow airtight container, layer patties between sheets of waxed or parchment paper, and place container in a cooler packed with ice.

At the beach: Prepare a charcoal grill. When coals are white (or while coals are still hot, if using the same coals used to grill the chicken-artichoke skewers appetizer), liberally season patties with salt, and place them on the grill. Grill for 5 minutes on each side for medium-rare. Add cheese to patties in the last minute of cooking. Remove patties from heat, place on a platter, and allow to rest.

Meanwhile, toast buns. Buns cook quickly on a hot grill, so watch carefully.

Serve burgers on buns with Bacon and Cider Marmalade, Dijonaise, lettuce, and any other desired condiments.

Jensen's Tips

FOR RESTAURANT-QUALITY BURGERS

- Use dry-aged ground beef, with a beef-to-fat ratio of at least 80/20, which will result in a juicier and more flavorful burger.
- Flatten patties more than you think is necessary to keep them from becoming meatballs. Push a thumbprint into the center of each patty to maintain its shape and help ensure that the burger cooks evenly.
- Do not overmix ground beef and be sure to wait to salt your burgers until just before putting them on the grill. Salting earlier will denature the beef, essentially changing the burger's overall texture. This can make for a dense, almost sausage-like patty as opposed to a spongy and crumbly light-textured patty.



A Larder Meat Co. Burger gets decked out with cheddar cheese, lettuce leaves, and condiments (shown opposite, bottom; clockwise from left): Dijonaise, Savory Bacon-Cider Marmalade, and ketchup. Opposite, top: Mikey Giugni and the grill master cool down with some hard cider.



Ice Cream to Go

For dessert, Grace keeps it easy by ordering blackberry-vanilla-rosemary ice cream sandwiches from Negranti Creamery (negranticreamery.com) in Paso Robles, which produces sheep's milk ice cream. Other shops that take special ice cream sandwich orders include McConnell's Fine Ice Creams (mcconnells.com) in Santa Barbara, Batch (batchslo.com) in San Luis Obispo, and Sprinkles (sprinkles.com) in Westlake Village.

On the way to the barbecue, Grace picks up the dessert sandwiches, packs them in plastic bags, and puts them on a rack in a hyper-insulated cooler loaded with bags of dry ice. The meal closer delights the young and the young at heart.

GRACE'S GRAPEFRUIT-AND-FENNEL SPARKLING TISANE

For this refreshing nonalcoholic sipper, Grace combines fennel-infused simple syrup with grapefruit wedges and club soda. She also brings a large drink dispenser and tumblers to the beach, which makes it easier for guests to serve themselves.

Makes almost 6 cups

- 1 cup water
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 fennel bulb, sliced into thin wedges, fronds reserved in a resealable plastic bag
- 2 unpeeled grapefruits cut into wedges and stored in a resealable plastic bag
- 1 liter club soda
- Ice

At home: In a saucepan over medium-low heat, stir together water and sugar until sugar dissolves. Remove saucepan from heat and add fennel wedges. Steep for 15 minutes. Strain syrup into an airtight container such as a thermos to take to the beach along with a drink dispenser. Transport to beach along with resealable plastic bags of fennel fronds and grapefruit wedges, club soda, and ice in cooler.

At the beach: Pour syrup into drink dispenser. Add club soda, grapefruit wedges, and fennel fronds and stir. Allow guests to fill tumblers with ice and help themselves to tisane. ♦

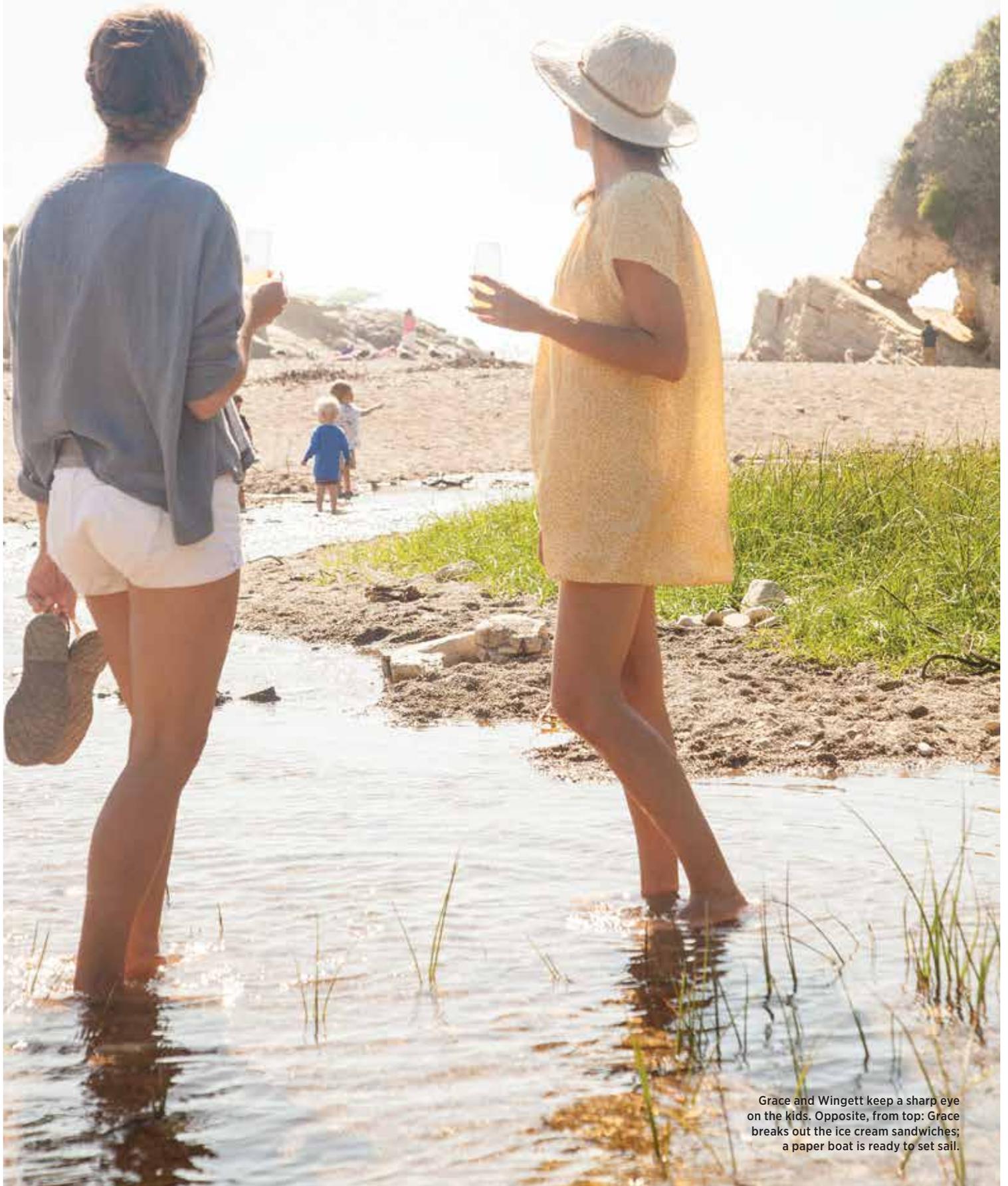
Know Before You Go

Throwing a barbecue like this on just any patch of Central Coast sand isn't as simple as it might sound. Some beaches allow grills (check to clarify whether charcoal, electric, or propane grills are permitted) as well as glass containers and alcohol consumed by adults 21 years and older—but many do not.

"Always check with the on-duty ranger as well as the Web page for a particular state park," says Tyson Butzke, Ventura sector superintendent of California State Parks (parks.ca.gov). "We are very appreciative of people asking questions and seeking safety and resource information."

The best way to reach a state park ranger with questions in advance of your barbecue is to email info@parks.ca.gov, a general line that routes to the appropriate beach and personnel. For county beaches, call that county's parks and recreation department (find phone numbers at parks.ca.gov) or the park gate for detailed information.





Grace and Wingett keep a sharp eye on the kids. Opposite, from top: Grace breaks out the ice cream sandwiches; a paper boat is ready to set sail.