

5 Ways to Keep Flies Away from Your Patio Picnic

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Eating outdoors is one of the best parts of summer — but once you get beyond the safety of your screened windows and doors, flies can be a real pain. They're mostly annoying (all that buzzing around and landing on your arms!), but they're also kinda gross considering how much time they spend flying from surface to surface (raw hamburgers to fruit salad ...), trailing any bacteria they encounter from place to place.

Here's how to minimize outdoor flies so you can enjoy dining al fresco.



1. Eliminate the breeding grounds.

"Flies breed in decaying fruit and veggies, compost, and manure," says **Dr. Gabrielle Francis, a New York City-based naturopathic doctor**. We're guessing you don't have a lot of poop around your patio (if you do, it's time to teach Fido how to use a shovel!), but the other two could pose a problem.

If you have garbage cans outside, keep them far away from your patio, empty them regularly, and seal them shut if it'll be a few days before sanitation drives down your street. If you have a vegetable garden, pick the ripe ones right away or consider relocating the garden to an area of your yard that's far away from the patio.

2. Set up some fans.

Flies can't, um, fly super well in the wind. If you have a covered patio, think about installing a ceiling fan. Otherwise, just set up some portable outdoor fans. Even those battery powered fans attached to spray bottles could offer some degree of protection.



3. Make an herbal centerpiece. There are a few herbs with essential oils that repel flies (and other insects!), and it happens that they also look pretty in a jar. Fill a vase with a mix of basil, lavender, lemongrass, rosemary, or mint for a bouquet that will keep the flies away and smell great, too.

4. Wear natural bug repellents. The same essential oils that work in herb form will repel flies from your skin, too. Look for natural bug repellents with essential oils like lavender, rosemary, mint, and basil to wear while you're outside.

5. Hide the drinks.

Flies love sugary and yeasty things, so the more wine, beer, and soda you have on the table, the more attractive it will be to them. You don't have to cut out your favorite beverages altogether — just consider drinking out of cups with lids, store the bottles or cans in a sealed cooler in between pours, and wipe up any spills right away.

