

DEPARTURES

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Grand Tour to Go

I searched for the perfect picnic basket—insulated and attractive—for years. I found plenty of pretty wicker carriers and Igloo coolers, but it seemed that never the two would meet. At last year's Maison & Objets fair in Paris, the Thermocool model here answered my picnic basket prayers. I stock it with all the ingredients necessary for a chic, portable cocktail party, full of treats from around the world. First, baguettes from Amy's Bread in New York spread with butter and Dijon mustard made by the Fallot family of Beaune, France; second, Rougié pâté with Maille cornichons assembled on handpainted plates from Hungary. We finish with a sweet late-harvest wine from Napa Valley called Dolce, served in cylindrical Swedish glasses.

I also pack books of poetry—Rimbaud and Pushkin to take me to places I love (France and Russia), Burns and Rilke to journey where I have never been (Scotland and Germany). I tested this assemblage of worldly goods on a circle of formidable New York women one afternoon last spring, when I invited them to a picnic on the great lawn in the shadow of the Statue of Liberty. It's an outing I highly recommend, with one caveat: Due to security concerns, leave the wine at home. Ours was, sadly, confiscated.

