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EAT YOUR (GRILLED) VEGETABLES

Just three ingredients and a single step will make your seasonal produce red-wine friendly.

One of grilling's benefits is preparing a meal without heating up the house. And, once outside with a lighted grill, many of us turn primal: We char the thickest cuts of meat we can put our paws on—counterintuitive to the instinct to eat lighter foods in warmer weather.

Some years back, we rented a house in Tuscany with 10 friends and arranged for a local chef to prepare dinner. After a long drive from Rome, we arrived at our villa as the sun set, only to learn that our cook had quit earlier in the day.

Fortunately, we had spotted an open produce stand en route, so in addition to luggage, our two large Fiat vans held the bounty of the Italian countryside: yellow peppers, zucchini, eggplant and onions. No meat or poultry was available—unfortunate because of Tuscany's renown for its meat and game.

When life gives you vegetables, light the grill. And, so we did, making a feast of grilled vegetables. We also picked up cheese, olives, and olive oil, and whipped up an olive dip. Fresh mozzarella and aged Parmesan cheese were all the protein we needed for an impromptu dinner under the stars.

Taking inspiration from our adventure, now we frequently have all-vegetable cookouts. You can round them out by serving your grilled veggies with couscous or quinoa seasoned with vegetable broth and sliced shallots. *—Mike DeSimone & Jeff Jenssen*

WINE PICKS:
Although vegetables are often white wine territory, ingredients such as red peppers or olives allow you to serve a red. A light Sangiovese, like Avignonesi's 2014 Rosso di Montepulciano, features complementary tart-cherry flavors and soft tannins.

A natural pairing would be a Tuscan Vermentino, though for something a little different we turn to Sardinia, where the grape produces expressive white wines such as Pala 2014 Stellato Nature (Vermentino di Sardegna).

CON POULOS

QUICK OLIVE DIP

In a food processor, combine 1 cup pitted black oil-cured olives, ¼ pound cubed Parmesan cheese and ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil. Process until smooth. Don't care for olives? Substitute ¾ cup drained roasted red peppers. Serves eight.