

# Better Homes and Gardens.

## Easy Summer Meals

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For Midsummer Color

# Independence Days

FROM THE DAY SCHOOL LETS OUT, A CASUAL HOME ON THE JERSEY SHORE LETS ITS FAMILY KICK OFF THEIR FLIP-FLOPS.

BY KRISTINE KENNEDY PHOTOS JEFF McNAMARA PRODUCED BY LAUREN PAYNE STYLING COLLEEN SCULLY



Bicycle is the preferred mode of transportation in the two-block-wide New Jersey shore town where the Millar family escapes every summer. "I pride myself on the number of days our car doesn't move," says Jennifer Millar, whose tandem/baby seat/training wheels bike caravan includes her husband, Lowell, and children Jessica, 10; Nicole, 8; L.J., 6; Chase, 4; and William, 2. On a typical morning the crew takes off for the local bakery then returns to spend the rest of the day at the house, scampering up the wide front porch, through the open first floor, and right out to the beach. When the Millars built the house in 2003, they had just such family-centered days in mind. The home's open first floor and several decks can take in crowds. Jennifer, one of seven siblings, throws frequent get-togethers that may include as many as 20 children under age 10. Furnishings are classics, such as the family room's floral skirted sofa mixed with casual elements—reed armchairs and painted wicker tables—that send a clear message: Relax. "This is our favorite place to be in the world during the summer," says Jennifer. "It's a very homey home."



## Porch Perch

"It's a people-watching place," says Jennifer Millar of her street-side front porch. Furnishings are family friendly—a synthetic wicker settee and outdoor rug mixed with vintage items that will never look worse for the wear. "It's always a good place to rock a child," she says. From their perch, Jennifer and husband Lowell oversee older kids biking, sidewalk chalking, and selling lemonade to the street's swell of bicyclists, rollerbladers, and leisurely strollers.

## Idea to Borrow

Give your porch the look of a cozy indoor room with the addition of a colorful all-weather rug.