

Mom's Guide to Surviving the Holidays

Appetizer and Cocktail Week

Recipes

Charcuterie Skewers

Gorgonzola and Honey Crostini

Red Wine Caramelized Onion Baked Brie

Dill Ranch Chex Mix

Hummus with Gremlata

Sausage Stuffed Mushrooms

Cranberry Pecan Cheese Ball

Lemon Feta Dip

Honey & Thyme Marinated Cheddar

Apple Cider Bourbon Sangria

Cranberry Apple Sangria

White Russians - Three Ways!

Charcuterie Skewers

Charcuterie skewers are a fun way to change up a charcuterie board, and make it easier to serve. Below are suggestions for your skewers - but have fun with it! Use your favorite cheeses (semi-soft works best), meats, and accompaniments. I had fun choosing my favorites from my grocery stores olive bar!

Semi-soft cheese such as sharp white cheddar, Gouda, mozzarella, Muenster, Havarti, etc.
Salami
Sopressata
Prosciutto
Olives - any kind you like, pitted
Roasted red peppers
Marinated beans
Marinated mushrooms
Plastic skewers



Directions:

Cut the cheese and meat into bite-sized chunks.

Thread the charcuterie on the skewers, alternating between the various ingredients.

Serve!



Gorgonzola & Honey Crostini

French baguette, cut into crostini slices
4 ounces gorgonzola (or blue) cheese
Honey

Directions:

Lightly broil the bread for about 2-3 minutes, until golden brown. Spread blue cheese and drizzle with honey.
Broil crostini for another 2 minutes, or until cheese has melted.
Serve and enjoy!



Red Wine Caramelized Onion Baked Brie

2 tablespoons unsalted butter
1 large yellow onion, sliced
1 tablesoon brown sugar
1/4 cup red cooking wine (or any red wine!)
1/2 teaspoon salt
8 ounce wheel Brie cheese

Directions:

In a medium skillet, melt butter over medium-low heat. Add onion, brown sugar, and cooking wine and stir well to combine.
Cook over medium-low heat for 15-20 minutes, until onions are softened and caramelized. You want them still softened, not crispy - so be sure to keep your heat low.
Preheat oven to 400 degrees F.
Place wheel of brie on a parchment paper (or foil) lined baking sheet. Top with caramelized onions.
Bake in preheated oven for 10-12 minutes - until softened throughout.
Carefully transfer to serving plate.
Serve and enjoy!



Dill Ranch Chex Mix

9 cups Chex cereal (I used 3 cups corn,
3 cups rice and 3 cups wheat)
1 cup pretzel thins
1 cup melba crackers or bagel crackers
1 cup nuts (I used almonds)
8 Tbsp butter
2 Tbsp worcestershire sauce
2 Tbsp ranch seasoning
2 tsp dried dill
extra ranch and dill for dusting



Directions:

Pre-heat oven to 250 degrees.

Stir together all cereal, pretzels, crackers and nuts.

Stir seasonings into melted butter and pour over cereal mixture; stir until evenly coated.

Bake for 1 hour, stirring every 15 minutes.

Dust with additional 1 Tbsp ranch seasoning and 1 tsp dill.

Spread on paper towels to cool and store in an airtight container.

Hummus with Gremolata

1/2 cup finely chopped herbs (I used basil and
parsley)
1 lemon (zest and juice)
1 clove garlic, grated
1-15 oz can of garbanzo (chickpeas) beans,
drained and rinsed
1/3 cup tahini
4 Tablespoons olive oil
3-5 Tablespoons water
salt and pepper
1/3 cup toasted pine nuts
crackers (I recommend Crunchmaster!) and
vegetables for serving



Directions:

Stir together herbs, lemon zest, 1/2 of the grated garlic and 1 Tablespoon olive oil together in small bowl. Set aside.

In a food processor or blender, combine juice from lemon (about 3 Tablespoons), remaining grated garlic, garbanzo beans, tahini, 3 Tablespoons of olive oil, 3 Tablespoons of water and salt and pepper.

Process or blend until smooth. Add 1-2 more Tablespoons of water if you need it to get things moving.

Taste and adjust seasoning if necessary.

Layer hummus on plate or platter, top with gremolata, a drizzle of olive oil if desired, toasted pine nuts, and a sprinkle of high-quality salt.

Sausage Stuffed Mushrooms

24 ounces button mushrooms
1 lb Italian sausage
1/2 white onion diced
2 cloves garlic minced
1 teaspoon Italian seasoning
1/2 teaspoon salt
8 ounces cream cheese
1 cup shredded Parmesan cheese
fresh parsley for topping

Directions:

Heat 2 tablespoons of olive oil over low heat in a small pan. Add minced garlic and heat until garlic starts to sizzle, about 2 minutes. (Careful not to burn the garlic!) Remove from heat and add red pepper flakes to oil. In a processor, pulse together cream cheese and feta cheese. Add the remaining 2 tablespoons olive oil, juice and zest from lemon and garlic oil to processor and pulse again until combined. Spread onto a plate or bowl and top with garnishes if desired.



Cranberry Pecan Cheese Ball

2 tablespoons unsalted butter
1 yellow onion sliced
1 tablespoon brown sugar
1/2 teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons red wine
8 ounces cream cheese at room temperature
1/4 cup sour cream
6 ounces shredded white cheddar
1/4 cup dried cranberries
1/4 cup chopped pecans
1 tablespoon chopped rosemary

Directions:

In a skillet, melt butter over medium-low heat. Add onion, brown sugar, salt, and red wine. Cook over medium-low heat for 20-30 minutes, stirring often, until onions are caramelized. Remove from heat and let cool. In a medium bowl, mix together cream cheese, sour cream, cheddar, and caramelized onions. Form into a ball and wrap in plastic wrap. Refrigerate for at least one hour. Once ready to serve, place cheese ball on a serving plate. Press cranberries and pecans into the cheeseball and sprinkle with rosemary. Serve with crostini, bread, or crackers. Enjoy!



Lemon Feta Dip

4 Tbsp. olive oil, divided
2 cloves garlic, minced
1/2 tsp. red pepper flakes
8 oz cream cheese
8 oz block of feta cheese
1/2 lemon: zested and juiced
garnish: minced chives, red pepper flakes,
olive oil

Directions:

Heat 2 tablespoons of olive oil over low heat in a small pan. Add minced garlic and heat until garlic starts to sizzle, about 2 minutes. (Careful not to burn the garlic!)

Remove from heat and add red pepper flakes to oil. In a processor, pulse together cream cheese and feta cheese.

Add the remaining 2 tablespoons olive oil, juice and zest from lemon and garlic oil to processor and pulse again until combined.

Spread onto a plate or bowl and top with garnishes if desired.



Honey Thyme Marinated Sharp Cheddar

8 oz block of sharp cheddar cheese
1/2 cup olive oil
2 Tbsp honey
2 cloves garlic, smashed
4-6 sprigs of thyme
red pepper flakes
salt

Directions:

Cut up cheddar into little squares. (Small enough to eat in one bite!)

Combine remaining ingredients in small bowl (red pepper flakes amount depends on how much heat you want!) and toss with cheese.

Marinate at room temperature for at least a half hour, or make ahead and marinate overnight in the refrigerator if possible.



Apple Cider Bourbon Sangria

1 bottle white wine like a pinot grigio or sauvignon blanc
2 cups apple cider
1/4 cup bourbon
2 apples chopped
1/2 cup fresh cranberries
cinnamon sticks
1 can Peach Pear La Croix club soda will work too



Directions:

Combine wine, cider, bourbon, apples, cranberries and cinnamon sticks in a pitcher. Let sit for at least 30 minutes prior to serving. Immediately prior to serving, add La Croix and stir to combine. Serve in wine glasses. Enjoy!

Cranberry Apple Sangria

For simple syrup:

1 1/2 cup cranberries
3/4 cup sugar
1 cup water

For sangria:

1 750 ml bottle red wine I used a red blend
2 cups apple cider
1/4 cup cranberry syrup
1/4 cup Triple Sec
1 cup fresh cranberries
1 apple diced
sparkling water like La Croix
fresh rosemary sprigs or cinnamon sticks for garnish



Directions:

To make cranberry simple syrup:

Combine cranberries, sugar, and water in small pot over medium heat. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer until cranberries are softened, about 15 minutes. Strain through a fine mesh strainer into a medium bowl and let syrup cool.

To make sangria:

Combine red wine, apple cider, cranberry syrup, bourbon, cranberries, and apple. You can serve immediately or stop in refrigerator for up to overnight. To serve, pour over ice, filling about 3/4 full and then top with sparkling water. Garnish with rosemary sprig or cinnamon stick.

White Russian's - Three Ways!

Peppermint White Russian:

Crushed candy canes
1 shot Peppermint Schnapps
1 shot vodka
1 shot Kahlua
1 shot heavy cream



White Chocolate Caramel White Russian:

Caramel sauce
1 shot Godiva White Chocolate Liqueur
1 shot caramel flavored vodka
1 shot heavy cream
1 shot Kahlua



Eggnog White Russian:

1/4 cup sugar
1 teaspoon nutmeg
1 shot eggnog
1 shot vodka
1 shot Kahlua



Directions:

Prepare glass:

For peppermint version: Place crushed candy canes in a shallow bowl. Dip cocktail glass in water and then in candy canes.

For white chocolate caramel version: Drizzle caramel along edge of cocktail glass.

For eggnog version: Combine sugar and nutmeg in a shallow bowl. Dip cocktail glass in water and then in nutmeg sugar.

Make White Russians:

Combine all remaining ingredients of specific White Russian you want to make in a cocktail shaker with ice.

Shake for 30 seconds.

Pour into prepared cocktail glass filled with ice.

Serve and enjoy!