ENTERTAINING

TIPS, RECIPES, & MORE TO HELP YOU CREATE A WONDERFUL PARTY

SUMMER 2015

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Eid ul Fitr is such a special time of year, full of celebration and happiness after a period of fasting the blessed month of Ramadan. We all want to enjoy the special moments with our families and friends the best way we can with the blessings we have. At My Halal Kitchen we've put together what we hope is a helpful and useful guide of recipes, tips and product suggestions to make your gathering stress-free, beautiful and of course, memorable. We hope you enjoy it and share it with others, too.

Wishing you a very heartfelt Eid
Mubarak from all of us at My Halal
Kitchen!

SINCERELY,

Office Maffei

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SUMMER MUST-HAVES



ENTERTAINING

It's not easy trying to decide what to make for a gathering, large or small, but it certainly doesn't have to be stressful! Preparation is key, and simplicity in every regard wins over overwhelming and elaborate any day. Here's a few tips to get you there:

- Determine where your guests will be served and where they'll be seated. As simple as it sounds, mapping out the flow of traffic ahead of time will help you foresee any issues that may make your guests uncomfortable or harder for you to manage.
- Create an ultra-simple menu. As much fun as it is to cook and/or serve a multitude of dishes for your guests, when the table is abundant but simple, it's much more attractive and clean-looking, thus appealing to everyone. It's also much easier for you to envision and execute on Eid day.
- Place trash bins in multiple locations. The most dreaded effect of parties is usually the clean-up. Most guests are happy to use bins when they're in a convenient spot, so be sure to provide them!
- Have fun at your own party! People come to see YOU
 and it stresses guests out when they feel as though you
 aren't enjoying the party as much as they are. If you
 really need it, ask some of your guests for a quick hand,
 which they'll most likely be glad to do if it means more
 time with you!

pantry ASSESSMENT

MOST VALUABLE PLAYERS IN YOUR
KITCHEN

HONEY

use it to naturally sweeten drinks and desserts in a pinch.

TABLE CREAM

add it to fresh fruits and cakes for a quick topping.

KETCHUP, MUSTARD & MAYO

this trio of condiments is a must for summertime picnics and meals, but also some of the kids' favorites on lots of things they like to eat.

DRIED FRUITS, NUTS, CHICKPEAS

not only are they great for snacking, but they can also be added to things like ice cream, making desserts look elegant but not fussy.

HARISSA & OTHER SPICY SPREADS OR SAUCES

guests will love to have the option to add something with a kick onto chips, bread and even some of the main dishes served.

AGREAT TABLES AG

"THE PRESENTATION OF THE FOOD IS AS IMPORTANT AS THE FOOD ITSELF."



Eid is right around the corner and since it's summer, what better way is there to enjoy with your loved ones than to have a nice meal outside? Here are some tips to help you set the perfect table:

1. Find the right spot. Try to find a scenic spot that will give you a great view of nature, whether it be from the deck in your backyard or nice picnic table at the park. 2. Put some non-breakables on the table. Accidents do happen, especially outside. When something breaks on concrete, it's a bit more dramatic- and dangerous since it's harder to clean up so try adding something like reusable plastic serving glasses.





3. *Get great lights.* Most people decorate with indoor lights during Eid; some also decorate the exterior of the house. Outdoor string lights where you dine can make it all that much more charming. 4. *Bring out your best serving ware.* No need to be fancy. Choose only what you love to surround yourself with when dining.

MENUS BY CUISINE

From appetizers to desserts, we've got everything you need to plan the perfect meal!

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American

APPETIZER

SPINACH PHYLLO HORS D'OUEVRES
WITH CILANTRO-MINT DIPPING SAUCE

MAIN DISH

BBQ CHICKEN

SIDE

CORN, CHILI AND MANGO CUPS

DRINK

STRAWBERRY LEMONADE

DESSERT

CHOCOLATE VELVET CAKE

SNACK

CRUNCHY PARTY MIX
BY SAFFRON ROAD



WITH CILANTRO-MINT DIPPING SAUCE

INGREDIENTS

One package of frozen phyllo dough (same kind used to prepare baklava)

1 bag of frozen spinach (one pound)

1 pound feta cheese block or crumbled

2 eggs

approximately ½ cup each of olive oil and cold milk, mixed together in a cup large rectangular glass baking dish 2 tablespoons black seeds or sesame seeds

DIRECTIONS

Defrost the phyllo dough in the refrigerator about 24 hours before you plan to make this dish. When the dough is completely defrosted and cold, open it up to its full length and lay it horizontally.

With kitchen shears or scissors, cut the dough in half vertically. Reserve half in the fridge to keep cold and keep the other half out to prepare on your counter.

Using a pastry brush, brush the bottom of your pyrex dish with a mixture of ½ cup olive oil and ½ cup milk (this should be in a cup next to you as you work). Lay a sheet of phyllo dough on top of it, then continue to paint each sheet one by one until you have finished this half of the dough.

Mix the feta cheese, eggs and frozen spinach in a bowl until well mixed. Pour on top of the phyllo dough you have painted in the pyrex dish. Pat the mixture down so it lies flat.

Bring out the cold dough from your fridge and continue to pain each layer individually until you are finished. Brush the very last layer generously and then add either sesame seeds or black seeds, but not both.

Bake in a 350° F oven for approximately 50 minutes, or until the top is nicely browned.

Allow to cool before cutting.



BAKED OR GRILLED

INGREDIENTS

1/8 cup olive oil
1 and 1/4 teaspoon salt
2 teaspoons ground black pepper
1 cup honey
1/8 cup dark vinegar (i.e. date vinegar or apple cider vinegar)
6 pieces of chicken drumsticks (about 3 pounds)
6 lime wedges (optional)

DIRECTIONS

In a medium size bowl, add the olive oil, then pour in the salt and pepper. Add the honey and give it a whisk. Add the vinegar and give it another few whisks until the mixture is completely combined and thickened.

Preheat an oven to 350° F.

Line a baking sheet with parchment paper and place the chicken a few inches apart. Brush each piece with the sauce, then turn over and brush again. Place in the oven and bake for 10 minutes.

Brush each piece with BBQ sauce 1-2 times.
Continue baking. Repeat this process (brushing each side) every 10 minutes for 40-50 minutes, or until the chicken is golden in color and caramelizing.

Serve immediately. Offer lime wedges alongside, if desired.

NOTES

*You'll also need a pastry brush and wire whisk for this recipe. Parchment paper is recommended for use on a baking sheet to make clean up a whole lot easier.

**This recipe easily doubles and triples, so if more chicken is being served, simply adjust ingredient amounts accordingly.

***Use a meat thermometer to check the internal temperature of the chicken, away from the bone. It should read at least 165° F.



The flavors of summer really come out in this salad, blending sweet corn with a kick of chili powder and the fruitiness of mango for a dish that goes well with just about any summertime dish, especially the grilled ones. Just be sure to get non-GMO corn (i.e. organic).

INGREDIENTS

1 pound sweet corn (fresh or frozen) 1 mango, diced 1/2 teaspoon chili powder 1/4 cup mayonnaise Salt, to taste Freshly ground black pepper, to taste 4 tablespoons freshly chopped cilantro drizzle olive oil

DIRECTIONS

If using fresh corn, boil in salted water for about 20 minutes. Drain and remove corn from stalk when cool. If using frozen corn, cook according to package directions.

In a medium bowl, mix together the corn and mango. Add the chili powder, mayonnaise, salt, and pepper. Drizzle the olive oil and mix gently.

Just before serving, add the freshly chopped cilantro. Serve in small cups when entertaining a large crowd.



INGREDIENTS

1 cup frozen strawberries

1 cup fresh lemon juice (from about five large lemons)

2 cups water
2 tablespoons raw cane sugar
Fresh mint, for garnish

DIRECTIONS

To a large blender, place the ice and frozen strawberries first (this makes it easier for the blades to chop).

Add the remaining ingredients and blend on high for about one minute or until the mixture is thoroughly combined and the strawberries are fully chopped and smooth.

Pour into a large pitcher or individual glasses, garnishing with sprigs of fresh mint.

Keep cold if serving at a later time.



WITH VANILLA FROSTING

INGREDIENTS

FOR CAKE

1 tablespoon cocoa powder
1 cup buttermilk
1 and 3/4 cup brown sugar or cane
sugar
5 oz. Mexican dark chocolate (spiced
with cinnamon), or 5 ounces milk
chocolate plus 3 tablespoons ground
cinnamon
3 large egg yolks
1 stick unsalted butter (1 cup),
softened
1 and 3/4 cup unbleached allpurpose flour or cake flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
3 large egg whites

FOR CORN SYRUP

2 cups sugar
3/4 cup water
1/4 teaspoon cream of tartar
1 pinch salt

Yield: 2 cups

FOR FROSTING

2 large egg whites
1 1/2 cups sugar
1/4 teaspoon cream of tartar
1 1/2 teaspoon light corn syrup
1 teapoon vanilla extract (without alcohol)

DIRECTIONS

FOR CAKE

- Preheat the oven to 350° F.
- Using softened butter, wipe an entire 9-inch springform pan with the butter, then dust it lightly with cocoa powder. Set aside.
- In a medium saucepan over very low heat, combine 1/2 cup of the buttermilk, 3/4 cup of the brown sugar, and the Mexican chocolate. Cook and stir until the chocolate is melted and the mixture is smooth. Set aside to cool.
- Add one of the egg yolks to the chocolate mixture and cook and stir until it thickens, about 2 minutes.
- In a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat the butter and remaining 1 cup brown sugar until light and fluffy, about 4 minutes.
- In a small bowl, whisk together the remaining 2 egg yolks and remaining 1/2 cup buttermilk.
- To the stand mixer add the flour, alternating with the buttermilk mixture, beating at low speed. Mix until just combined. Stir in the cooled chocolate mixture.
- Dissolve the baking soda in 1 tablespoon of warm water and fold gently into the mixture.
- In a separate bowl, whip the egg whites to soft peaks. If you are doing this by hand, it will take a very long time. Try to use an electric mixer instead, making sure the egg whites actually turn to soft, white peaks.
- Fold the whites into the chocolate batter. Pour into the prepared pan and bake for 50 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Allow to cool for a few minutes.
- Gently run a butterknife around the sides of the pan. Cool on a wire rack for 20 minutes. Remove the sides of the pan and cool completely.

FOR CORN SYRUP

- Add all of the ingredients to a medium-size saucepan over medium-high heat.
 Bring to a boil.
- Reduce to a simmer and cover for 3-4 minutes.
- Remove lid and stir with a wooden spoon to combine. Allow to cool.
- To store, add mixture to a glass jar with a tight-fitting lid. Label and date it. It should keep for approximately 2 months.

FOR FROSTING

- In a large metal bowl set over a saucepan filled with 2 inches of simmering water, combine the egg whites, sugar, 5 tablespoons water, the cream of tartar and corn syrup.
- Whip for 7 minutes with a hand-held electric mixer, scraping the sides often with a rubber spatula. The frosting is almost done when it has a nice spreading consistency. Stir in the vanilla at this point.
- When the cake has cooled completely, frost it all around with the warm frosting. Do not refrigerate the frosting or it will be too hard to spread.
- After frosted, allow the cake to cool for 30 minutes before serving.



BY SAFFRON ROAD

SERVES 8-10

INGREDIENTS

2 cups multigrain pretzels
1/2 cup roasted cashew pieces (unsalted)
1 cup extra-large peanuts (salted)
1/2 cup pepitas (pumpkin seeds)
1/2 cup Saffron Road's Wasabi Crunchy Chickpeas
1/2 cup Saffron Road's Falafel Crunchy Chickpeas
1/2 cup Saffron Road's Bombay Spice Crunchy Chickpeas

DIRECTIONS

Use a large bowl to mix all the ingredients together then separate into individual bowl, if desired. If not, add a spoon or something for everyone to use to scoop out the goods.

Latin

APPETIZER

FIVE LAYER BEAN DIP

MAIN DISH

LIME CHICKEN TACOS

WITH TOMATILLO SALSA

SIDES

PUERTO RICAN RICE AND BEANS
CARIBBEAN SHRIMP SALAD

DRINK

LIMEADE

DESSERT

BLUEBERRY PALETAS

(FROZEN FRUIT BARS)

SNACK

TROPICAL SNACK MIX

Black Bean Dip

SERVES 6

This five-layer bean dip is more of an American favorite than anything traditionally Mexican, though enjoyed on both sides of the cultural border. It's also incredibly versatile because you can use any kind of cheese your family likes, whole beans or smashed beans, salsa or simply cut tomatoes, guacamole or smashed avocados. Whatever you have on hand, this is a quick, easy and healthy snack that requires no cookingeven the kids can make it for themselves without ever touching the stove!

INGREDIENTS

2 cans (15-ounces each) black beans
1 cup sour cream, or ½ cup sour cream + ½ cup
whole milk yogurt
1 cup chopped tomatoes (seeds and juices
removed), or ready-made salsa
1 tablespoon jalapeno peppers or ¼ cup canned
fire roasted green chiles (about 4 ounces), diced
½ cup scallions, roughly chopped
1 cup guacamole or about 2-3 firm avocados, diced
1 ½ cup shredded cheddar cheese
Fresh cilantro, roughly chopped
4 lime wedges or 1/4 cup fresh lime juice

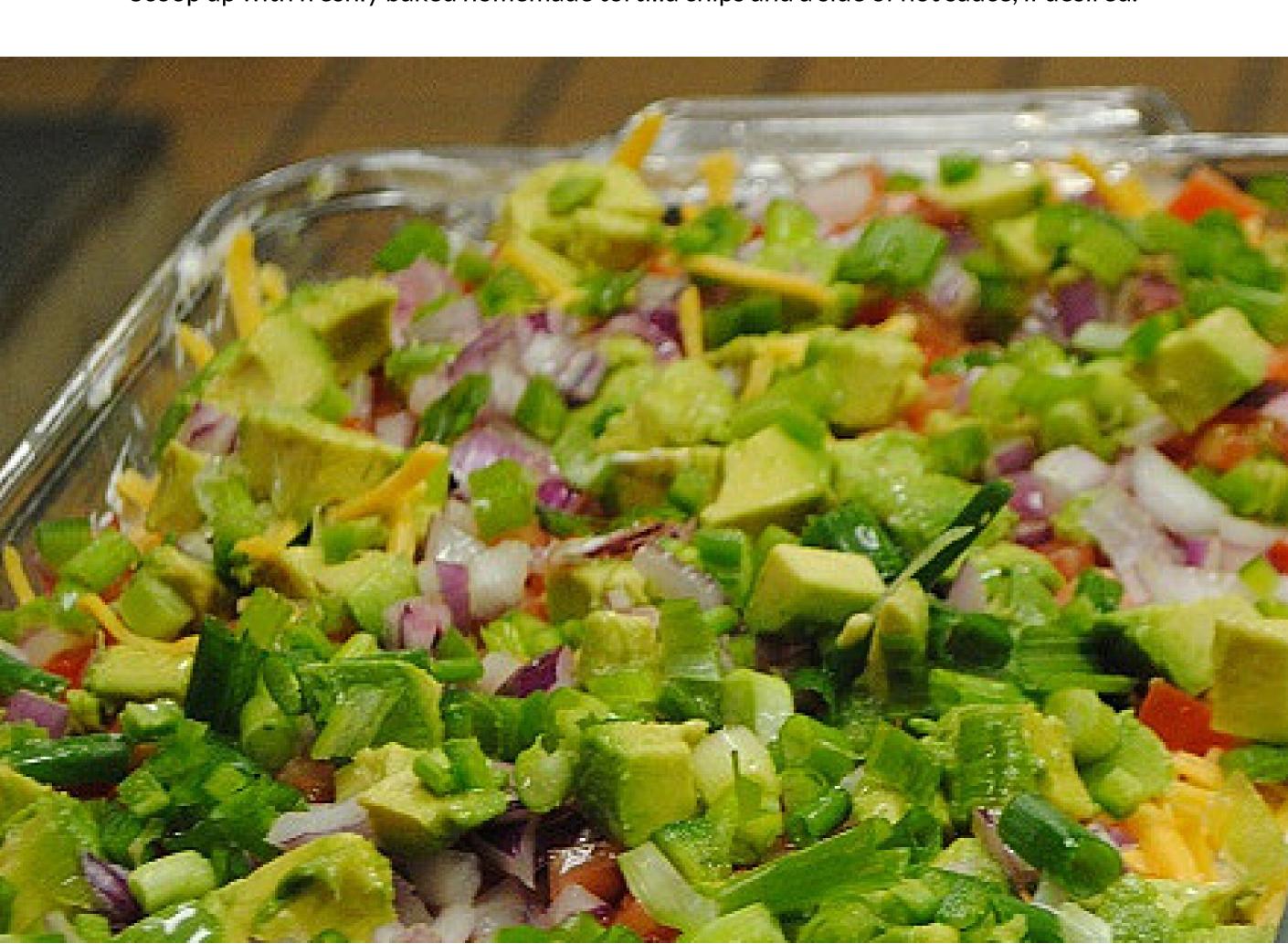
DIRECTIONS

Drain the beans of all liquids using a colander or sieve. Pour the drained beans into the bottom of a square cake pan and spread the beans evenly across the bottom.

Next, layer the sour cream or the yogurt-sour cream mixture on top of the beans. Do the same with the chopped tomatoes or salsa. Add the jalapenos and/or green chiles on top of the salsa then add the scallions.

Top with an even layer of guacamole or diced avocados then add a layer of cheddar cheese on top. Place lime wedges on the side for those who would like to squeeze on top of the dip before eating, or squeeze fresh lime juice over the entire top layer of the dip just before serving.

Scoop up with freshly baked homemade tortilla chips and a side of hot sauce, if desired.





FOR THE LIME CHICKEN TACOS

INGREDIENTS

1 pound boneless skinless chicken tenders
Juice of two limes
One tablespoon fresh cilantro
2 cloves fresh garlic, freshly pressed and chopped
1/2 teaspoon sea salt
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
Extra virgin olive oil to cover (about 1/2 cup) plus 2
tablespoons for cooking

tomatillo salsa or salsa verde.

FOR THE TOMATILLO SAUCE

Serve on fresh tortillas with traditional Mexican

toppings like queso fresco, chopped radishes,

fresh cilantro, chopped lettuce, and of course,

Yield: 2 cups

Prep: 15 mins

Cook: 20 mins

Ready In: 35 mins

DIRECTIONS

Place chicken in a pie plate, square baking dish or anything that isn't too shallow. Pour the lime juice over the chicken, add the cilantro and sprinkle the chopped garlic, salt and pepper on top. Pour the oil over it all and flip the chicken a few times to ensure that it's nicely covered in the oil and other ingredients.

Cover and refrigerate so that it can marinate for about 35 minutes.

Remove the chicken from the refrigerator and let it stand for about five minutes before cooking, just to take the chill out of the meat (it actually helps prevent the cold meat from tearing when it is thrown onto a hot pan or grill). Use a fork to remove the chicken from the pan and shake off any excess juice/oil.

Use fresh oil to heat gently in a saute pan. Once warmed, add the chicken tenders and cook on one side for about 6-10 minutes on high heat, or until nicely browned.

Once one side has browned, flip the pieces over.

Cook again until the other side is browned, too.

In this way, they'll seem almost grilled. Once both sides are browned, lower the heat and cover the pan with a lid to keep in the moisture.

Once the chicken is done, remove from heat and pull apart with two forks if you like shredded chicken tacos or simply serve whole or cut up pieces of the tenders.

INGREDIENTS

3 cups water
2 cloves garlic
1 whole jalapeño pepper
1 pound green tomatoes or tomatillos
1 and 1/2 teaspoon sea salt
1/2 cup cilantro fresh
1/3 cup white onion (optional) finely chopped

DIRECTIONS

In a deep saucepan, bring the water to a boil.

Add the garlic, jalapeño pepper, and tomatoes.

Cook on medium-low heat for about 20

minutes.

Drain ingredients gently in a colander, careful not to loosen up the tomatoes and seeds. Place a plate underneath the colander, if necessary, to catch any large chunks of tomato. Let cool for about 10 minutes.

Remove the skin from the garlic and the stem and seeds from the jalapeño pepper.

To a food processor, add the cooked ingredients, plus the salt and cilantro. Combine for about 10-15 seconds or until the mixture is smooth.

Pour mixture into serving bowl and add finely chopped onion, if desired. Serve at room temperature and refrigerate any leftovers.

LATIN



SERVED WITH BLACK BEANS

SERVES 8

INGREDIENTS

1 tablespoon olive oil

1 medium yellow onion, finely diced

1 can (15.5 oz) black beans or 2

cups fresh beans, soaked overnight

and cooked until done, liquids

reserved.

1 teaspoon ground, dried epazote
(Mexican herb similar to cilantro).
Substitute fresh cilantro if you
don't have the epazote.
sea salt and ground black pepper, to
taste
1 tablespoon sofrito

DIRECTIONS

In a medium sauté pan, heat olive oil. Add onions and cook until translucent, about 3-4 minutes.

Add cooked beans and their liquid to the pan. Add epazote, salt and pepper. Stir in the sofrito. Bring to high heat, then reduce quickly to a simmer, preferably for 1-2 hours. Simmer or keep warm until ready to serve.

Serve over a bed of plain white rice or any dish you prefer.

LATIN



PREP TIME: 30 MINS
TOTAL TIME: 30 MINS

SERVES: 6-8

INGREDIENTS

2 pounds cooked shrimp, tail on

1/2 cup chopped multi-color peppers, diced
3 cloves garlic, minced
1 jalapeño, minced (optional)
2 tablespoons white onion, diced
2 spring onions, diced
1 cup chopped cilantro, leaves and stems
1 avocado, diced
juice of 2 1/2 limes
1/2 cup olive oil
zest of one lime
1 teaspoon sea salt, or to taste
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
tortilla chips

DIRECTIONS

Properly defrost the shrimp and remove the tails. Place in the refrigerator until ready to add to the salad or do this just after all the ingredients are chopped.

Chop all of the fresh produce and cilantro and set aside.

Make the dressing by squeezing the lime juice in a small bowl. Drizzle in the olive oil and whisk vigorously. Add the

lime zest, salt and black pepper.

Chop the avocado and bring the shrimp out of the refrigerator if being chilled.

To a large serving bowl, add all of the chopped vegetables. Place the shrimp on top, then the chopped cilantro. Add the dressing then mix the salad gently.

Add the avocado and gently incorporate it into the salad.

Serve on small plates or serving bowls with a side of fresh tortilla chips.

LATIN



Limeade

A perfect yet simple way to enjoy summer citrus in a glass.

SERVES 4

LATIN

INGREDIENTS

2 limes, sliced
2-3 fresh mint sprigs
15 limes, halved
2 cups ice
2 tablespoons cane sugar

DIRECTIONS

Prepare a serving pitcher or glass bottle by adding sliced limes and fresh mint sprigs. To a blender, juice each of the 15 limes. Add the ice and the sugar. Blend on high for about 1-2 minutes or until all of the ice has been crushed and the mixture begins to thicken. Remove the iced mixture from the blender and pour into a serving pitcher or bottle. Let the mixture stand for several minutes at room temperature (or outside) before serving to allow it to 'melt' just a bit, making it easier to pour into glasses.



Blueberry Paletas

Frozen Fruit Bars

SERVES 4

LATIN

INGREDIENTS

1/2 lb. frozen
blueberries
a few frozen
strawberries
1/8 cup whipping cream
1/2 tablespoon lemon
juice

DIRECTIONS

To a blender, add a little water and the frozen berries. Strain the mixture through a seed if you'd like to remove any small seeds (optional). Into a bowl, add the pureed berry mixture, sugar, heavy cream and lemon juice. Whisk well. Pour the mixture into popsicle molds, but do not insert the sticks/handles. Freeze for one hour. Add the sticks/handles to the popsicle molds and continue to freeze for about 4-8 hours, or even overnight.

*Depending on the type of cream used, it may take a while for the paletas to freeze thoroughly.



Tropical Snack Mix

INGREDIENTS

1 bag Saffron Road Bombay Spice Crunch
Chickpeas
1/2 cup dried mango
1/2 cup dried green mango (optional)
1/2 cup dried pineapple
1/2 cup dried banana
1/2 cup coconut flakes
1/2 cup salted peanuts

DIRECTIONS

In one large bowl, mix all ingredients. Start with the dried fruit and top with the Bombay Spice Chickpeas then gently fold in to the rest of the ingredients. Mix and serve in one large bowl or individual bowls for easy snacking. Store in a sealed bag or glass container for up to two weeks.

Mediterranean

APPETIZER

BAKED PITA CHIPS WITH YOGURT DIP

MAIN DISH

BEEF KABOBS

WITH GRILLED VEGETABLES

SIDE

GREEK SALAD

DRINK

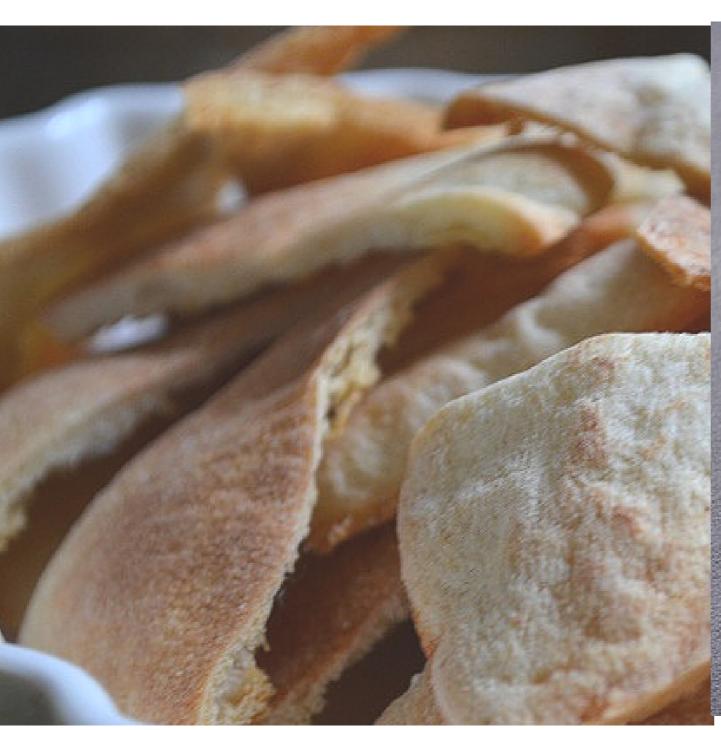
CUCUMBER SPRITZER

DESSERT

FIGS WITH CREME FRAICHE AND HONEY

Baked Pita Chips WITH YOGURT DIP

SERVES 10-12





FOR THE PITA CHIPS

INGREDIENTS

2 whole loaves fresh pita bread (at room temperature)

DIRECTIONS

Preheat the oven to 375° F.
Using scissors, cut each loaf into eight triangles.

Then cut each piece again at the bottom edge to get two pieces from each triangle. Place each piece onto an ungreased baking sheet and bake for 10-12 minutes, or until each piece is nicely browned on one side and crispy.

Remove from heat and let cool before handling.

Serve alongside your favorite dips.

MEDITERRANEAN

FOR THE YOGURT DIP

INGREDIENTS

1 cucumber 1/4 cup fresh dill 1-2 cloves garlic

Freshly ground black pepper
2 cups whole milk yogurt or Greek-style
yogurt

Sea salt

DIRECTIONS

Peel the cucumber and remove the seeds by scooping them out with a spoon. Dry the cucumber well before dicing into medium cubes.

Chop the leaves of the dill and discard the stems.

Mince or press the garlic into very small pieces.

Place the cucumber, dill, garlic and salt and pepper to taste in a bowl large enough to fit about four cups of ingredients.

Pour the yogurt on top of the ingredients and mix well. Serve immediately or store in the fridge for up to one week, covered.



WITH GRILLED VEGETABLES

INGREDIENTS

1 tablespoon cumin, ground
2 tablespoon minced garlic
1 ¼ teaspoon salt
¾ teaspoon black pepper
1 package (1 pound) Crescent stew beef
juice of one lime
¼ cup olive oil
1 tablespoon lemon zest

Fresh leaves of one stem each for the following herbs:
oregano, chopped
mint
marjoram
thyme
rosemary

For skewers:
2 tomatoes
1 whole green pepper
1 whole red pepper
½ large white onion

DIRECTIONS

In a mortar and pestle or small food processor, grind up the minced garlic, salt and pepper.

To a large mixing bowl, add the beef. Add the cumin and lemon zest and fresh herbs. Pour in the lime juice and olive oil. Combine all the ingredients well

To prepare the skewers, cut the tomatoes into wedges. Cut the peppers into large and wide pieces so that they will not fall off the skewer sticks, too. Do the same with the onion.

Make each skewer by piercing one piece of the pepper, inside facing upwards so that it can catch any of the juices from the meat or at least help to hold it up a bit. Add an onion and another pepper, then a piece of meat. Continue doing this until you have about 3 pieces of meat on each skewer. They should be well-balanced and not too heavy so as to break the skewer (if using wood) and so that the ingredients will cook evenly.

Repeat with all of the meat and vegetables until all of the ingredients have been used. To grill outdoors, heat the grill on high. Once the coals are hot, place the skewers on top and cook for about 7-10 minutes on each side, turning only once or twice so as not to break them up.

To roast, heat oven to 350° F. Cook on each side for about 25 minutes, turning just once. Remove from oven and place on top of a bed of cooked rice.

Greek Salad

Looking for an authentic way to toss up a Greek Salad? This is it- and it's quick to prepare, light and full of flavor. Buy seasonal veg and whole milk feta for best results.

INGREDIENTS

3 Persian cucumbers, cut in half and cut again lengthwise
4 Roma tomatoes, quartered
1 large green pepper, sliced thinly
1 medium red onion, sliced round and thin
1 cup mixed Greek olives (green and dark purple)
2 tablespoons capers
3 fresh sprigs oregano
1 teaspoon dried oregano
1 teaspoon salt
4 tablespoons olive oil
1 cup feta (uncut)

DIRECTIONS

Cut the cucumbers in half and cut again lengthwise. Quarter the Roma tomatoes. Cut the green pepper lengthwise, thinly. Peel the onion and cut it in thin rounds. In a large bowl, place all of the vegetables. Add the olives and capers. Add the fresh and dried oregano. Add the salt and drizzle in the olive oil over the top. Mix the salad thoroughly.

Cut the chunk of feta in half lengthwise and place on top of the vegetables and in the corner of the salad.

Serve the salad immediately while all the veggies are fresh.



Cucumber Spritzer

INGREDIENTS

3/4 cup cucumbers, thinly sliced
1/4 cup fresh lemon juice (~ 1 large lemon)
1/4 of a lemon, thinly sliced
4 cups of sparkling water
Ice (optional)

DIRECTIONS

Add the fresh lemon juice to the sparkling water in a serving pitcher. Add in the cucumber and the sliced lemon. Mix together and serve.





INGREDIENTS

1 cup creme fraiche, preferably homemade
2 tsp. lemon zest, preferably homemade
8 fresh figs
2-3 tablespoons honey, such as Grampa's Honey

DIRECTIONS

7igs with Creme 7raiche and Honey SERVES 4

Prepare the creme fraiche and citrus peels if making your own. Wash and dry the figs. Cut into quarters.

On a plate or platter, dollup the creme fraiche alongside the fig quarters. Drizzle the creme fraiche with honey and citrus peels on top.

Serve at room temperature with small forks for dipping.

MEDITERRANEAN

Italian

APPETIZERS

HERB STUFFED MUSHROOMS
SUN-DRIED TOMATO & CHEESE BITES

MAIN DISHES

MOSTACCIOLI

ITALIAN LAMB STEW

SIDE

INSALATA CAPRESE

DRINK

ALCOHOL-FREE SANGRIA

DESSERTS

LEMON TIRAMISU

CUPCAKES WITH VANILLA ORANGE

MASCARPONE FROSTING

Herb-Stuffed Mushrooms

MAKES 2 DOZEN MUSHROOMS

INGREDIENTS

24 oz. Crimini or any large cap mushrooms
1 small yellow onion or 1/2 large yellow onion
1-2 garlic cloves
1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
1 Tb. unsalted butter
1/3 cup bread crumbs, unseasoned
2 tablespoons dried parsley
1/2 teaspoon dried basil
dash black pepper
pinch salt
1 tablespoon grated Parmesan

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 325°. Remove stems from mushrooms. Mince onions, garlic and mushroom stems.

To a large sauté pan, add butter. When it begins to froth, add the olive oil.

Add the minced onions and sauté until translucent. Add garlic and mushroom stems and cook

for 2-3 minutes, stirring often.

Add bread crumbs and stir thoroughly into the mixture.

Add parsley, basil, salt and pepper. Continue to cook until soft.

Remove from heat and add Parmesan. Mix well. Allow to cool 5-10 minutes.

Using a small spoon, fill each mushroom cap with stuffing, but do not overstuff.

On a parchment-lined baking sheet, place each stuffed mushroom about 2 inches apart. (You will need two large baking sheets for this recipe)

Bake for 15 minutes or until stuffing has set.

Serve while warm.

ITALIAN

Sun-Dried Tomato and Cheese Bites

SERVES 20

INGREDIENTS

2 cups spring salad mix
10 pieces whole grain bread, toasted
8-10 roasted garlic cloves
4 ounces cream cheese
½ pound fresh mozzarella
40 whole pieces sun dried tomatoes in olive oil
40 anchovy filets, optional
Freshly chopped cilantro, for garnish
Extra virgin olive oil



DIRECTIONS

Clean, dry and place the spring salad mix all over the serving platter.

Toast the bread and cut into quarters. Rub a bit of roasted garlic on each piece.

Slice the mozzarella into thin pieces. Spread the cream cheese on each piece. Next, add one small slice of mozzarella to each piece.

Shake off any excess oil and place a sun dried tomato on top of each slice of mozzarella. Add anchovy filet, if desired.

Sprinkle with chopped cilantro and finish with a drizzle of oil. Hold each piece down with a toothpick in the center of the tomato.

ITALIAN

Mostaccioli with Ricotta

& Mozzarella

SERVES 6

INGREDIENTS

1 pound penne pasta, preferably organic whole wheat

1 cup fresh ricotta cheese
2-3 tablespoons whole milk
1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese
Salt, to taste
Black pepper, to taste
1/2 cup parsley, finely chopped
4 cups prepared tomato sauce
Grated Parmesan cheese (optional)

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350° F.

Prepare pasta according to package directions. Drain and drizzle with olive oil and set aside until ready to mix with sauce.

In a medium size bowl, mix together the ricotta with milk until the ricotta is completely smooth. Add salt, pepper and chopped parsley. Mix to combine and set aside.

Mix the cooked and drained pasta with the warmed tomato sauce until the pasta is completely combined.

Drizzle the bottom of a baking dish with olive oil. Create a layer of pasta with sauce on top. Dollop several large spoons of the ricotta mixture on top of the pasta. Layer with another round of pasta and sauce that covers the ricotta mixture. Add more spoons of the ricotta mixture on top and continue to do this until there is no more pasta left.

Cover the top with shredded mozzarella and then fresh parsley. Cover with aluminum foil and create several slits to allow air to escape during baking.

Bake for 50 minutes. Remove from oven and allow to rest for about ten minutes before serving.





Italian Lamb Stew

SERVES 4

INGREDIENTS

2 yellow onions
2 green peppers
4 large lamb chunks,
approximately 3 ½ lbs.
freshly ground black pepper
2 cups tomato sauce
½ cup water
1 tablespoon dried basil
3 garlic cloves, crushed
1 dried red chile or ½ teaspoon
red pepper flakes

DIRECTIONS

In a large Dutch oven over medium heat, warm the olive oil. Saute onions and green peppers until soft, about 2-3 minutes. Remove and set aside.

To the Dutch oven over the medium heat, add the lamb and saute to brown, about 4 minutes on each side. Add the black pepper.

Return onions and green peppers to the pot and add the tomato sauce, water, basil and salt. Stir well and raise the heat to high.

Add the garlic cloves and red chile. Allow to boil for about 5 minutes. Reduce heat to a simmer. Cover and cook for 2 hours.

Serve while hot with risotto or a large noodle pasta like pappardelle.

ITALIAN



Ansalata Caprese PREP TIME: 4 MIN

SERVES 4

INGREDIENTS

Fresh tomatoes, sliced Sea salt Fresh mozzarella or bocconcini Fresh basil leaves (as much as you like) Extra virgin olive oil for drizzling

DIRECTIONS

Arrange tomatoes on a plate. Salt generously, or to taste. Top with sliced fresh mozzarella or small bocconcini. Drizzle with olive oil and add fresh basil leaves. Enjoy on toast, with bread or in a sandwich.

ITALIAN



Alcohol-7ree Sangria

PREP TIME: 20 MINS
SERVES 10-12

INGREDIENTS

1 liter club soda or sparkling
water
1/2 pound grapes on stem
1/2 pound strawberries sliced
2 oranges sliced
2 lemons sliced
3 limes sliced
3 peaches sliced
2 cups ice cubes

DIRECTIONS

To a large punch bowl, add the entire bottle of juice Thoroughly clean and cut all of the fruit but the leave the grapes intact on their stems. Add the sliced fruit to the juice and let it sit in the bowl for about 30 minutes, covered. Just before serving, add the club soda or sparkling water to the juice. Add the ice. Drape the grapes over the punch bowl or use a few grapes to decorate individual cups when serving. Ladle juice into cups with bits of fruit for guests to enjoy.

ITALIAN



INGREDIENTS

zest of two lemons

2 cups cold coffee such as a bold roast or espresso

1 cup mascarpone cheese

1/3 cup whole milk

2 tablespoons crème frâiche

3 teaspoons alcohol-free

vanilla

1-2 tablespoons raw cane sugar or powdered sugar

16 lady finger cookies

1 tablespoon yellow sugar pearls (i.e. Wilton brand)

1 tablespoon shaved chocolate

Lemon Tiramisu

PREP TIME: 25 MINS SERVES 6-8

DIRECTIONS

Make coffee and set it aside in a large bowl to cool.

Mix mascarpone, milk, crème frâiche, and zest of one lemon. Add powdered sugar and mix well. It should be the consistency of pourable cream; add more milk, if needed (1/2 teaspoon at a time). Line the bottom of a square glass dish layer with the mascarpone-milk mixture.

Soak each lady finger cookie one by one in the coffee for about 6-10 seconds, or until the cookie has absorbed enough coffee but it's still firm enough to set flat in the glass pan.

Line the pan with one row of soaked cookies. Next, add the mascarpone mixture and smooth over with a spatula. Repeat this one more time, or until all of the cream and cookies have been used.

Be sure the last layer has a spread of mascarone cream on top. Dust the top layer of the dish with the chocolate shavings, the zest of the second lemon and the yellow sugar pearls.

Cover and refrigerate for at least one hour before serving, or overnight, giving it time to set.

Cut and serve chilled either on small plates or in small cups.



INGREDIENTS

1-½ cups 100% stone ground whole wheat pastry flour ½ cup raw cane sugar or evaporated cane juice

1½ teaspoons baking soda

½ teaspoon salt

½ teaspoon ground cinnamon

3 tablespoons orange oil (replace with grape seed or vegetable oil if you don't have orange oil)

¾ cup heavy whipping cream

2 eggs

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 325°.

In a medium bowl, mix all of the dry ingredients.

Add the wet ingredients (oil, eggs and heavy cream) to the dry ingredients and stir with a wooden spoon until there are no more lumps in the mixture.

Pour two large spoons full of the mixture into each cupcake liner placed in a cupcake or muffin tin.

Bake for 10-15 minutes, watching carefully that they do not burn or become too hard. Use a sharp knife or cake tester to see if the cakes are done (the tester should come out clean).

Place on a cooling rack or remove from muffin tins. Let cool before frosting

FOR FROSTING

INGREDIENTS

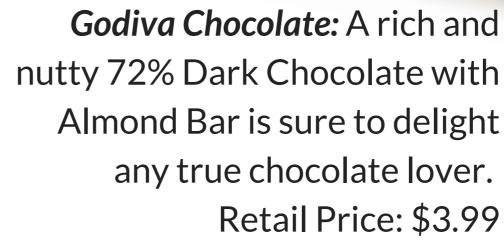
8 ounces mascarpone
frosting
4 cup raw cane sugar or
evaporated can juice
1 teaspoon no-alcohol
vanilla extract
5 teaspoon orange zest
(fresh or dried)
Sugared pearls or
cupcake sprinkles
(optional)

DIRECTIONS

In a small bowl, mix all frosting ingredients well.

Keep at room temperature before frosting. When cupcakes are completely cool, spread on top of each cupcake generously then wrap the cupcakes with cupcake liners, if using those.







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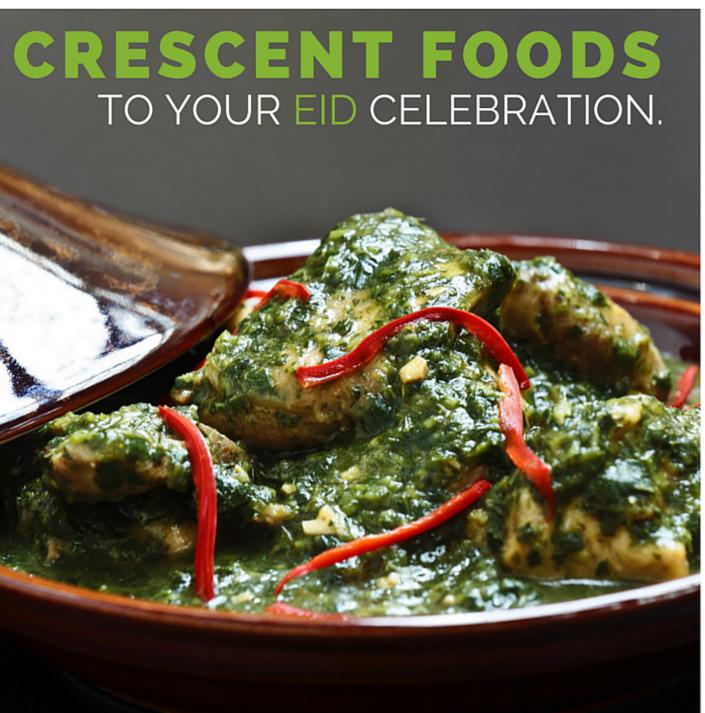
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