

Top Ten Party Hors d'Oeuvre

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The best party menus have a little bit of everything: bright, fresh vegetables; rich, creamy spreads; crisp pastry bites; and savory nuts. So we chose our favorite hors d'oeuvre recipes with an eye towards mixing and matching. Pick a few, or for a truly festive bash, serve all ten. Cheers!

Crudités with Creamy Roquefort Dip

Yields about 2½ cups dip; serves sixteen.

FOR THE CRUDITÉS:

Kosher salt
1 lb. broccoli
1 lb. small or medium carrots, preferably with green tops
1 bunch celery (about 1¼ pounds)
1 medium head radicchio
1 medium fennel bulb, fronds trimmed
8 radishes, preferably with green tops

FOR THE DIP:

1 medium clove garlic
Kosher salt
½ lb. Roquefort
1½ cups crème fraîche (available in the specialty cheese section of some supermarkets) or sour cream
Freshly ground black pepper
½ cup heavy cream

Prep the vegetables: Combine 4 qt. water and ¼ cup kosher salt in a large pot and bring to a boil over high heat. Meanwhile, trim most of the stem off the broccoli to separate the florets. Using a small knife, trim the stem of each floret so it's 1½ to 2 inches long. Starting at the top of the stem (just beneath the tiny buds), cut through the stem lengthwise and divide the floret in half, preferably without using the knife to cut through the flowery buds. Repeat, dividing each floret into two to four pieces, until the top of each floret is about the size of a quarter. Have ready a bowl of ice water. Boil the florets until they turn bright green, about 1 minute. Drain



the florets in a colander and then plunge them into the ice water to stop the cooking and set the color. Drain again.

Trim the carrot tops, but leave about 1½ inches of the green tops intact. Peel the carrots and cut them lengthwise into halves, quarters, or sixths, depending on the size.

Remove the tough outer celery ribs; reserve for another use. Trim the tops of the ribs and about 1½ inches from the root end. Starting with the large ribs, cut each lengthwise into long, thin sticks about ¼ inch wide. Trim the large leaves from the celery heart and cut each rib in the same manner, preserving as much of the tender leaves as possible.

Discard the outer leaves of the radicchio. Trim the root end and cut the radicchio in half through the core. Cut each half into ¼-inch-thick wedges—the core should hold each wedge intact. Trim any stalks from the top of the fennel bulb and cut it in the same manner as the radicchio, but don't discard the outer layers unless they're discolored.

Trim the tops of the radishes, leaving about 1 inch of the green tops. (If the

leaves are especially nice, leave a few intact for garnish.) Quarter each radish lengthwise. Refrigerate the vegetables in separate sealed containers or zip-top bags.

Make the dip: In mortar or with the flat side of a chef's knife, mash the garlic to a paste with a pinch of salt. Transfer to a medium bowl and add the Roquefort. Roughly mash the cheese with the back of a spoon. Stir in the crème fraîche or sour cream and several grinds of pepper, and then add the cream until the consistency is slightly thinner than sour cream. (It should cling to the vegetables nicely but not be thick and goopy.) Taste and add more salt and pepper if needed. Refrigerate until shortly before serving. (The dip will thicken in the refrigerator but will return to its original consistency as it comes to room temperature.)

To serve: When ready to serve, arrange the vegetables on a large platter or in a shallow basket. Mist the crudités lightly with water to keep them looking fresh. Serve with the dip on the side.

—Tasha DeSerio, Fine Cooking #75



tip: Ask for “dry” sea scallops—they haven’t been treated with a solution to maintain their shelf life, so they brown better, have a nicer texture and flavor, and tend to taste fresher than treated or “wet” scallops.

Bacon-Wrapped Ginger Soy Scallops

Yields 2 dozen hors d'oeuvre.

- ¼ cup soy sauce**
- 1 Tbs. dark brown sugar**
- 1½ tsp. minced fresh ginger**
- 6 very large “dry” sea scallops**
(8 to 10 oz. total)
- One 8-oz. can sliced water chestnuts,**
drained
- 12 slices bacon, cut in half crosswise**

Set a rack in the upper third of the oven. Line the bottom of a broiler pan with foil,

replace the perforated top part of the pan, and put the whole pan on the oven rack. Heat the oven to 450°F.

In a medium bowl, combine the soy sauce, brown sugar, and ginger. If the muscle tabs from the sides of the scallops are still attached, peel them off and discard them. Cut each scallop into quarters. Marinate the scallop pieces in the soy mixture for 15 minutes. Reserve the marinade.

To assemble, stack 2 slices of water chestnut in the center of a piece of the bacon. Put a piece of scallop on top of the water chestnuts. Wrap each end of the

bacon over the scallop and secure with a toothpick. Repeat with the remaining bacon, water chestnuts, and scallops (you may not use all of the water chestnuts).

Remove the broiler pan from the oven and quickly arrange the bacon-wrapped scallops on the hot pan so that an exposed side of each scallop faces up. Drizzle the scallops with the reserved marinade. Bake, turning the scallops over once after 10 minutes, until the bacon is browned around the edges and the scallops are cooked through, about 15 minutes total.

—*Laura Werlin, Fine Cooking #69*

Crostini with Beef & Horseradish Cream

Yields 16 crostini.

The beef can be cooked a few hours ahead and refrigerated. Bring it to room temperature and slice just before serving.

- ½ lb. beef tenderloin (about a 1½-inch steak)**
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- ¼ cup crème fraîche (or sour cream)**
- 2 to 3 tsp. prepared horseradish**
- 16 baguette slices, between ¼ and ½ inch thick (from about ½ baguette)**
- 2 cloves garlic, cut in half**
- 2 to 3 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil**
- Kosher salt**
- 16 pale, inner pieces of frisée (curly endive), washed and dried**

Heat a small, heavy skillet over high heat for 1 minute. Season the beef with ¼ tsp. salt and some pepper. Turn the exhaust

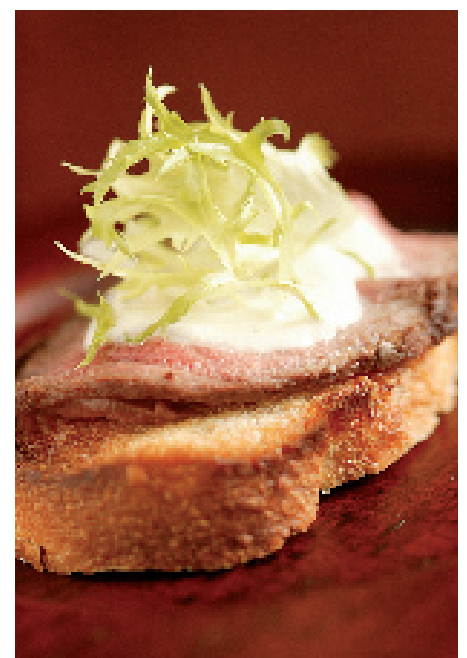
fan to high and sear the beef, flipping after 3 minutes, and then cook, flipping every couple of minutes until it's done to your liking, about 10 minutes total for medium rare. Transfer to a cutting board, let rest for 5 minutes, and then slice the beef thinly.

Mix the crème fraîche and horseradish in a small bowl; season with ¼ tsp. salt and a few grinds of pepper.

Adjust an oven rack to 6 inches from the broiler and turn the broiler on to high. Rub one side of each bread slice with the garlic and set on a baking sheet lined with aluminum foil. Brush the garlic side with the oil and season with salt. Broil until the bread is browned, 1 to 2 minutes. Flip and broil the other side 1 minute more.

To assemble, top the crostini with a slice of beef, a dollop of the crème fraîche, and a small piece of frisée and serve.

—*Tony Rosenfeld, Fine Cooking #61*



Roasted Potato Slices with Romesco Sauce

Yields about 48 hors d'oeuvre.

- 1 medium plum tomato (about ¼ lb.), cored and quartered**
- 16 whole almonds, toasted**
- 1 Tbs. coarsely chopped jarred roasted red pepper**
- 2 small cloves garlic**
- ⅛ tsp. cayenne**
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- 1 Tbs. red-wine vinegar**
- 4 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil**
- ¾ lb. small red potatoes (1 to 2 inches in diameter), rinsed and dried**
- Finely grated zest of 2 medium lemons**
- ¼ cup fresh flat-leaf parsley leaves**

Set a rack in the top third of the oven; heat the oven to 450°F.

Put the tomato, almonds, roasted red pepper, garlic, cayenne, ¼ tsp. salt, and a few grinds of black pepper in a food processor. Process, scraping the bowl as needed, until the mixture is somewhat smooth, about 1 minute. Add the vinegar and 1 Tbs. of the olive oil and process until well incorporated. Taste and add more salt if needed.

Trim the ends off each potato and cut the potatoes crosswise into ⅛- to ¼-inch slices. In a bowl, toss the potatoes with the remaining 3 Tbs. olive oil and 1 tsp. salt to coat well. Lay the slices in a single layer on a baking sheet. Roast the potatoes, turning the slices with a spatula and rotating the baking sheet halfway through roasting, until golden brown, 20 to 30 minutes. Let the potatoes cool slightly.

To serve, arrange the potato slices on a serving platter; blot with a paper towel if they look oily. Top each slice with a generous ¼ tsp. of the romesco sauce (you may not use all the sauce). Garnish each hors d'oeuvre with a tiny pinch of lemon zest and a parsley leaf.

—*Laura Werlin, Fine Cooking #69*



Stuffed Mushrooms with Pancetta, Shallots & Sage

Yields 30 hors d'oeuvre.

These can be prepared a day in advance and refrigerated—just let them come to room temperature before baking. Also, hold off on drizzling them with olive oil until just before baking.

- 35 to 40 cremini mushrooms (about 1½ lb.), about 1½ to 2 inches wide**
- 3 Tbs. unsalted butter; more for the baking dish**
- 1½ oz. pancetta, finely diced (¼ cup)**
- 5 medium shallots, finely diced**
- 2 tsp. chopped fresh sage**
- Pinch crushed red pepper flakes**
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- ⅔ cup coarse fresh breadcrumbs (preferably from a day-old rustic French or Italian loaf)**
- ¼ cup freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano**
- 2 to 3 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil for drizzling**

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 425°F. Trim and discard the very bottom of the mushroom stems. Remove the mushroom stems and finely chop them, along with five of the largest mushroom caps.

Heat a medium sauté pan over medium heat for 1 minute and add 2 Tbs. of the butter. When it has melted, add the pancetta and cook until it starts to render some of its fat, 1 to 2 minutes. Add the shallots, sage, and red pepper flakes; cook gently until the shallots are tender, about 4 minutes (reduce the heat if the shallots begin to brown). Stir in the chopped mushroom stems and ½ tsp. salt. Cook, stirring frequently, until the mixture is tender, about 3 minutes. Add the remaining 1 Tbs. butter. When it has melted, transfer the mushroom mixture to a bowl and stir in the breadcrumbs and Parmigiano. Season to taste with salt and pepper and let cool slightly.

Butter a shallow baking dish large enough to hold the mushrooms in one layer. Arrange the mushrooms in the dish and season the cavities with salt. Stuff each cavity with a rounded teaspoonful of the filling, or more as needed. The filling should form a tall mound. (You may have leftover filling; if you have extra mushrooms, keep stuffing until you run out of filling.) Drizzle the mushrooms with the olive oil and bake until the mushrooms are tender and the breadcrumbs are golden brown, 20 to 25 minutes. Transfer to a platter and serve warm.

—*Tasha DeSerio, Fine Cooking #75*

tip: The romesco sauce can be made up to three days ahead and refrigerated. Before using, bring it to room temperature and stir well.



Chicken Liver Pâté with Pancetta & Calvados

Serves six to eight.

This quick and luscious pâté can easily be made in a smaller quantity with just the livers found inside of one chicken. Rabbit or duck liver works equally well, and another brandy or a good balsamic vinegar can substitute for the Calvados.

- ½ lb. fresh chicken livers**
- 2 tsp. olive oil**
- Kosher salt**
- 3 oz. pancetta, cut into ¼-inch dice**
- 1 shallot, diced**
- ¼ tsp. finely chopped fresh thyme**
- ¼ cup Calvados (apple brandy)**
- 3 oz. (6 Tbs.) unsalted butter, at room temperature**
- Freshly ground pepper to taste**

Rinse the livers and trim off the tough tissue that connects the two lobes; pat dry. In a nonstick sauté pan, heat the

olive oil over medium-high heat and add the chicken livers, seasoning with a small amount of salt. Cook the livers, turning, to medium rare (they'll continue to cook as they cool), lightly browning on all sides, about 4 minutes. Set the livers aside and add the pancetta, shallots, and thyme to the pan. Gently sauté over medium heat until the pancetta is slightly colored and the shallots are softened. Add the Calvados and deglaze the pan, scraping with a wooden spoon and cooking until the Calvados is reduced to about 1 Tbs.; set aside to cool slightly. Put the cooled livers, pancetta-shallot mixture, and butter in a food processor and process until well blended. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Put the spread into a ramekin or small bowl, lightly covering the top with plastic wrap, and refrigerate until set. Grind more pepper over the top before serving with croutons or crackers.

—Lisa Hanauer, *Fine Cooking* #42

Smoked Salmon Rolls

Yields 18 hors d'oeuvre.

- ¼ lb. cream cheese, at room temperature**
- 2 tsp. fresh lemon juice**
- 1 tsp. finely grated lemon zest**
- 2 Tbs. plus 2 tsp. thinly sliced fresh chives**
- Kosher salt**
- ¾ cup shaved fresh fennel**
- ½ lb. thinly sliced smoked salmon (not hot-smoked)**
- 1 Tbs. finely chopped fennel fronds**

In a small bowl, mix the cream cheese, lemon juice, zest, chives, and ⅛ tsp. salt.

To assemble, lay an 8- or 9-inch-long sheet of plastic wrap on the counter. Slightly overlap slices of salmon on the plastic to create a rectangle measuring about 3½x7 inches. The long side of the rectangle should be parallel to the edge of your work surface. Cover with another sheet of plastic and press gently with your hands or a flat spatula to encourage the salmon to stick together. Remove the top sheet of plastic. Using a thin metal offset spatula or a butter knife, spread about 2 Tbs. of the cream cheese mixture on the salmon, leaving a ½-inch border along the long sides. Arrange about a third of the fennel shavings lengthwise on the lower half of the salmon. Sprinkle the fennel lightly with salt. Starting at the long side closest to you and using the plastic wrap as an aid, gently roll up the salmon to enclose the filling. Gently press the roll together at the seams. Transfer the roll to a cutting board. Cut the roll into 6 pieces. Repeat with the remaining salmon, cream cheese mixture, and fennel to make 2 more rolls. You may have extra salmon or fennel.

Arrange the rolls on a platter, cut side up. Garnish with the chopped fennel fronds.

—Laura Werlin, *Fine Cooking* #69

tip: You can mix the cream cheese for the salmon rolls up to a day ahead and refrigerate it. Bring it to room temperature before using. The rolls can be assembled, covered, and refrigerated up to 4 hours ahead. Let stand at room temperature for about 15 minutes before serving.



Caramelized Onion & Thyme Tarts

Yields 4 tarts; serves sixteen as a starter.

You can make the tart dough a few days in advance and the filling up to a day ahead, but try to assemble and bake just before serving.

FOR THE DOUGH:

9 oz. (2 cups) unbleached all-purpose flour

1 Tbs. granulated sugar

1¼ tsp. kosher salt

6 oz. (12 Tbs.) cold unsalted butter, cut into ½-inch pieces

FOR THE TOPPING:

1 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil

1 Tbs. unsalted butter

3 medium yellow onions, very thinly sliced (about 4 cups)

2 tsp. chopped fresh thyme

Kosher salt

1 egg, lightly beaten

Make the dough: Combine the flour, sugar, and salt in a large bowl. Add half of the butter and gently toss with your hands to coat each piece with flour. Using a pastry cutter or two table knives, cut the butter into the flour until it's the texture of coarse meal. Add the remaining butter, gently toss again to coat each piece, and quickly cut again until the larger pieces are about the size of large peas. In two or three additions, sprinkle about ⅓ cup ice water into the bowl, lightly tossing the mixture between your fingers to moisten it evenly. Stop adding water when the dough looks ragged and rough but holds together when you gently squeeze a small clump in your palm. Shape the dough into a brick (be careful not to knead it, just squeeze it gently into a solid mass). Cut the dough in half crosswise. Press each half into a flat rectangle about ½ inch thick and wrap tightly in plastic. Refrigerate the dough for at least 2 hours. (The dough can also be refrigerated for up to two days or frozen for up to one month. Thaw it overnight in the refrigerator before using.)

Make the topping: Heat a 12-inch skillet over medium-high heat for 1 minute and then add the olive oil and butter. Once the butter has melted, add the onions, thyme, and ½ tsp. salt and sauté until the onions are tender and lightly browned, 6 to 8 minutes. Taste the onions and add more salt if necessary—they should be well seasoned. Transfer the onions to a medium bowl and set aside to cool. (This may be done up to a day ahead; keep covered and refrigerate.)

Roll the dough: Remove one rectangle of dough from the fridge. Cut it in



half crosswise. Working with one half at a time, roll it on a lightly floured surface into a ⅛-inch-thick narrow rectangle, about 14 inches long and 5 inches wide. (If the dough is too cold to roll easily, let it warm at room temperature for 10 to 20 minutes or until pliable.) Put the dough on a baking sheet lined with parchment (two narrow rectangles should fit side by side), top with a second sheet of parchment, and refrigerate. Repeat with the remaining dough and refrigerate until you're ready to prepare the tarts. (This may be done up to 4 hours ahead; keep covered. To conserve space, stack all four rectangles on one baking sheet between layers of parchment.)

Assemble the tarts: About 1 hour before serving, position oven racks in the upper and lower thirds of the oven and heat the oven to 375°F. About 40 minutes before serving, divide the onions into four equal portions and spread them in a thin,

even layer on the dough rectangles, leaving a 1-inch border. (You may not need to use all the onions; a thick layer will weigh down the tart slices and they'll flop when your guests pick them up.) Fold the exposed border over the onions—if the dough is too thick in the corners, trim as necessary. Brush the folded edges with the egg. Bake the tarts until the crust is well browned, about 30 minutes, switching the positions of the baking sheets halfway through. Remove the tarts from the oven and let cool briefly on the baking sheet. Cut each tart into eight slices and serve.

—Tasha DeSerio, *Fine Cooking* #75

Sesame Parmigiano Twists

Yields 56 five-inch twists.

- 2/3 cup (about 2 1/2 oz.) finely grated Parmigiano-Reggiano**
- 1/4 cup (1-oz. jar) sesame seeds, lightly toasted**
- 1/4 tsp. cayenne**
- 1/4 tsp. chili powder**
- 1/4 tsp. dried thyme leaves, crumbled**
- 1/2 tsp. kosher salt**
- 2 sheets (about 18 oz.) frozen puff pastry, thawed**
- 1 egg, beaten with a few drops water and a pinch of salt**

Heat the oven to 425°F. In a small bowl, mix together the Parmigiano, sesame seeds, cayenne, chili powder, thyme, and salt. On a lightly floured surface, roll one of the pastry sheets to a 10x14-inch rectangle. Brush evenly with the egg wash and cut in half lengthwise to make two 5x14-inch strips. Distribute half of the cheese filling over one strip and lay the second strip on top, egg wash side down. Press the strips together with the rolling pin to fuse the two sheets. Cut the strip crosswise into 28 strips 1/2 inch wide. Lift a strip, twist it three times, and lay it on an ungreased baking sheet, pressing each end to keep the twists from unwinding during baking. Repeat with the second pastry sheet and the remaining filling.

Bake the twists until they're puffed, light brown, and dry looking throughout, 12 to 14 minutes. Test one by biting it to make sure it isn't doughy in the center.

Let the twists cool on a rack and serve as soon as they're cool, or within a couple of hours if possible.

—Martha Holmberg, *Fine Cooking* #54



Spicy Maple Walnuts

Yields 4 cups.

These nuts continue to toast a bit from the intense heat of the glaze, so don't over-bake them. Leave the ginger slices in the nut mixture for a delicious surprise. Pecans or hazelnuts are also great this way.

- 4 Tbs. unsalted butter**
- 1/3 cup pure maple syrup**
- 6 quarter-size slices fresh ginger, halved**
- 1 Tbs. water**
- 1 tsp. ground ginger**
- 1 tsp. kosher salt**
- 1/4 tsp. Tabasco, or to taste**
- 1 lb. (4 cups) shelled walnuts**

In a conventional oven: Heat the oven to 300°F. Combine all the ingredients except the nuts in a small saucepan and slowly simmer over low heat for 2 to 3 minutes. Put the nuts in a bowl, pour the glaze over them, and stir and toss to coat them with the glaze. Line a jellyroll pan with foil and spread the nuts in a single layer on it. Bake for 30 to 40 minutes, stirring at 15- and then 10-minute intervals. When the nuts look light and almost dry as you toss them, they're done. Don't touch them; the caramelized sugar is extremely hot. Slide the foil onto a rack and let the nuts cool completely.

In a microwave: Put the butter in the largest shallow dish that fits in your microwave. Heat on high for 1 minute to melt the butter. Add the remaining ingredients except the nuts and heat for 3 minutes on high. Stir to combine. Add the nuts, stirring and tossing to coat them with the glaze. Microwave on high for up to 9 minutes, stirring at 2-minute and then 1-minute intervals to redistribute the coating and prevent scorching. When all the liquid has caramelized, they're done. Don't touch them; the caramelized sugar is extremely hot. Carefully slide the nuts onto a foil-lined rack to cool.

For either method: Store in airtight containers or plastic freezer bags.

—Barbara Witt, *Fine Cooking* #48

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