

200 Appetizers

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Small in size, big on flavor!

An appetizer by any other name be it hor d'oeuvres, canape, tidbit, or morsel, is still the yummiest way to tease your taste buds prior to the main course event. However, with *200 Appetizers*, and an offering of recipes such as Shrimp Topped Avocado Mousse, Apricot Pistachio Phyllo Purses, Savory Rugalach, Mad Greek Dip, or Mongolian Meatballs, you may want to skip dinner and let the finger food fill you up.

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Helpful Hints for a Successful Appetizer Party

1. As a general rule, serve 6 appetizers per person if they are served before a full dinner, and 12 per person for an appetizer-only party.
2. When planning your menu, consider how your guests will eat each appetizer. Will they need plates and utensils? Can the appetizers be eaten standing up? Generally, finger foods and dips are more casual and informal.
3. Set up appetizer stations at different locations around the room so that everyone gets a chance to mingle and meet everyone.
4. Have something for everyone; serve a variety of appetizers including vegetarian, gluten free, and low calorie choices.
5. Plan your dishes to make sure you are not stuck in the kitchen missing the party. Make sure some of the appetizers can be made ahead of time and some can be served cold.
6. For appetizers that need to be assembled at the last minute, chop, slice, and measure out as many of the ingredients as possible ahead of time.
7. Use colorful and interesting garnishes on the serving trays that compliment the food like banana leaves or bundles of fresh herbs.
8. Serve cold appetizers such as shrimp on ice rings that have been frozen several days in advance.
9. Variety is the key when planning appetizers. Serve appetizers prepared in different ways such as, one fried item or only one or two in puff pastry. And, keep presentation in mind, too. Serve some colorful appetizers and some plain. Serve some crunchy bites and some creamy.
10. Keep food safety in mind. Keep cold food cold and warm food warm. Set out appetizers in batches so that nothing sits out longer than two hours.

Mushroom Goat Cheese Puffs

Makes 12

16 ounces wild mushrooms (maitake, shiitake, or cremini)
2 tablespoons olive oil
Salt and pepper, to taste
7 sprigs fresh thyme, divided
2 tablespoons cold unsalted butter
1 teaspoon minced garlic
1 tablespoon minced shallot
2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
1 sheet frozen puff pastry, thawed
4 ounces chevre-style creamy goat cheese, at room temperature

Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

Brush dirt off mushrooms and remove gills with a spoon. Do not wash or get them wet. Slice, place in a large bowl, drizzle with olive oil, and season with salt and pepper, toss. Place in a large oven safe frying pan with 4 sprigs of thyme. Roast for 5–6 minutes. Remove from oven and discard thyme. Add butter and saute on stove over medium heat. When butter melts, add garlic and shallots, saute for 1–2 minutes. Add vinegar and saute for an additional 1–2 minutes. Remove from heat and immediately pour into a large bowl to stop the cooking.

Roll out pastry to make a little bigger. Cut into twelve 3 x 3-inch squares. Pierce pastry with a fork.

In a small bowl, beat goat cheese to soften. Place 1 teaspoon into the center of each pastry square and cover with a spoonful of mushrooms. Fold corners of pastry together to form a triangle and pinch to seal. Bake for 12–15 minutes, or until golden brown.

Smoked Almond Apple Rings

Makes 12

3 small Fuji apples
1 tablespoon lemon juice
4 ounces cream cheese, softened
¼ cup crumbled feta, blue, or Gorgonzola cheese
1 tablespoon honey
½ cup diced smoked almonds

Core apples and slice each one into 4 rings. Place in a small bowl, cover with water, and add lemon juice.

In a small bowl, mix together the cheeses and honey. Pat apple slices dry and spread with cheese mixture.

Spread nuts on a small plate and press cheese sides of apple into nuts. Serve immediately.

Smoked Salmon Bites

Makes 16

8 large thin slices whole grain bread
4 tablespoons olive oil
2 cloves garlic
8 ounces cream cheese
1 tablespoon lemon juice
2 tablespoons minced fresh dill, divided
1 teaspoon kosher salt
¼ teaspoon pepper
8 ounces thinly sliced smoked salmon
Zest of 1 lemon

Preheat oven to 450 degrees.

Cut bread into 2½-inch circles. Drizzle with oil. Bake for 4–5 minutes per side. Rub toasts with garlic.

In a small bowl, beat cream cheese and lemon juice until fluffy. Mix in half of dill, all salt and pepper. Spoon a dollop on each toast. Cut salmon into 1½ x 3-inch strips. Roll up, forming a short rose shape. Stick one rose onto each dollop of cream cheese. Garnish with remaining dill and lemon zest.

Savory Empanadas

Makes 18

1¼ cups flour
½ cup butter, softened
8 ounces cream cheese, softened
1 teaspoon salt, divided
1 medium yellow onion, diced
1 tablespoon canola oil
⅓ pound lean ground beef
3 tablespoons tomato paste
½ teaspoon cumin
½ teaspoon oregano
1 egg, mixed with 1 tablespoon water

In a food processor, pulse the flour, butter, cream cheese, and ½ teaspoon salt until a loose ball forms. Remove dough and cover with plastic wrap. Refrigerate for at least 2 hours, up to 24 hours.

Preheat oven to 425 degrees.

In a large frying pan over medium-high heat, cook onion in oil until slightly softened, about 1 minute. Add beef, breaking into small bits and cook until browned, about 3 minutes. Stir in tomato paste, ½ teaspoon salt, and spices. Remove from heat and let cool.

Roll dough out on a lightly floured surface to ¼-inch thickness. Cut into 3-inch rounds. Place ½ tablespoon meat mixture in center of each circle. Brush edges with egg wash. Fold dough circles in half, forming half moons. Crimp edges with a fork. Place on a lightly oiled baking sheet and brush with egg wash. Bake for 22–25 minutes, until golden brown. Serve warm.

Guacamole Tortilla Cones

Makes 36

¾ cup refried beans
½ cup grated cheddar cheese
12 medium flour tortillas (8–10 inches diameter)
Canola oil spray
1 ripe avocado
1 (4-ounce) can diced green chiles
1 tablespoon lime juice
2 tablespoons salsa

Preheat oven to 425 degrees.

Place beans in a small bowl and heat in microwave for about 90 seconds, until bubbly around edges. Stir cheese into beans.

Cut three small circles (about 3 inches diameter) from each tortilla with a cookie cutter. Place tortillas on a plate and heat in microwave for about 60 seconds, until soft and pliable.

Spread 1 teaspoon bean mixture on one side of each tortilla circle. Roll up, forming a small cone. Spray with oil and place on a baking sheet. Bake for 8–10 minutes until browned. Remove from oven and let cool to room temperature.

In a small bowl, mash avocado with green chiles, lime juice, and salsa. Spoon a little guacamole mixture into the tortilla cones. Serve immediately.