

## “Vous venez pour l’apéro?”

“Will you come visit for *l’apéro*?” This evening ritual, much like happy hour, is a favored part of French life.

*French Appetizers* is a fabulous collection of recipes that are perfect to serve when you host happy hour, gatherings for friends, or a casual evening meal.

- Basic dips and condiments
- Small bites
- Savory cakes and tarts
- Breads, sandwiches, and toasts
- Verrines
- Sweet bites
- Drinks

These seventy-five fresh, modern, and versatile French-inspired finger foods and small servings are perfect for your *l’apéro*.



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FRENCH APPETIZERS



ASSELIN

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# FRENCH APPETIZERS

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## BRIOCHE CROQUE MADAME BITES

Makes 12 bites

A croque madame is quite simply a croque monsieur with an added fried egg on top. In this recipe, I had fun minifying the dish into cute bites topped with fried quail eggs. Assembling the sandwiches with chic ingredients such as *Jambon de Bayonne* (Bayonne ham) and brioche bread makes this appetizer worthy of special occasions. To create the fanciest bites, you'll need to cut off the crusts and trim the eggs into perfect rounds, but don't throw anything away: the trimmings make a delicious snack.

4 ounces (about 1 cup) grated Gruyère, Swiss, or Emmenthal cheese (or a combination), divided

½ cup heavy cream

Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

6 thin slices brioche bread

Butter, room temperature, for spreading and frying

2 tablespoons Dijon mustard, divided

6 thin slices Bayonne ham (French dry-cured ham) or prosciutto

12 quail eggs

Salt, to taste

Lightly grease a baking sheet. Set a rack in the upper third of the oven and preheat to 425°F.

Measure approximately  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the cheese and place into a small bowl; set the remaining cheese aside. Add the cream to the bowl with a generous grinding of pepper. Stir to combine and set aside.

Spread both sides of the brioche slices with butter. Set a large skillet over medium



*continued*

## PISTACHIO FALAFEL

Makes about 40 (1-inch) falafel

When I go to Paris, I make a point of eating at least once on rue des Rosiers, a street in the 4th arrondissement that is lined with Middle Eastern joints that sell thousands of fried chickpea bites every day. My falafel are baked, and I like to use a mini cookie scoop to shape them in a flash. You can bake and freeze falafel; simply reheat in a 325°F oven for 8–10 minutes before serving. Serve the falafel with Any-Bean Hummus (page 18) or Beet, Goat Cheese, and Orange Dip (page 25).

1 (15.5-ounce) can chickpeas, rinsed, drained, and patted dry

½ cup shelled, toasted pistachios

½ cup almond flour

¼ cup fresh mint leaves

¼ cup fresh flat-leaf parsley leaves

1 shallot, minced

1 teaspoon finely grated lemon zest

2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice (about ½ lemon)

3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

1 tablespoon all-purpose flour

1 teaspoon baking soda

1 teaspoon kosher salt

½ teaspoon cardamom powder

Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Preheat oven to 400°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

In a food processor, add all the ingredients. Pulse, frequently scraping down the sides of the bowl, until you reach a coarse but uniform texture. Remove the bowl from the processor and pull out the blade. Using a mini cookie scoop or your hands, roll the falafel mixture into balls and set onto the baking sheet. Bake for 15–18 minutes, until the falafel are lightly golden and firm to the touch. Let cool for 10 minutes before serving; this will allow the falafel to firm up and reach their ideal texture.



## TAPENADE AND PARMESAN MADELEINES

Makes 24 regular madeleines or 40 mini madeleines

When I first started developing recipes for this book, I basically wanted to create a savory version of every French snack cake. Some of my experiments didn't go so well (I'm looking at you, savory financiers.), but madeleines were a raving success. You can make them ahead of time, even freeze them, and gently reheat before serving to return them to their freshly baked state.

**¾ cup all-purpose flour**

**¼ cup finely grated Parmesan cheese**

**2 teaspoons baking powder**

**½ teaspoon kosher salt**

**¼ teaspoon baking soda**

**Freshly ground black pepper, to taste**

**3 eggs**

**1 tablespoon granulated sugar**

**¼ cup extra virgin olive oil**

**3 tablespoons Tapenade of your choice  
(page 3)**

**Sea salt flakes, for sprinkling**

In a bowl, whisk together the flour, cheese, baking powder, salt, baking soda, and pepper; set aside.

In a large mixing bowl, beat the eggs and sugar together for 3 minutes, or until the eggs are pale and fluffy. Whisk in the olive oil and Tapenade. Using a spatula, add the reserved dry ingredients ⅓ at a time, folding between each addition until just incorporated. Cover the mixing bowl with plastic wrap and refrigerate the batter for 30 minutes to 1 hour, or up to overnight.

*continued*



# CHAMOMILE LEMON TARTLETS

Makes 18 tartlets or 1 (9-inch) tart

Citrus fruits are my go-to ingredient when I want to bake a dessert. I like that citrus-based desserts tend to be less sweet, which makes them great palate cleansers. These tartlets are no exception. Inspired by the classic French lemon tart—which isn't topped with fluffy meringue—they have a mellower citrus flavor thanks to the chamomile-infused cream. Making individual tartlets creates a showstopping dessert, but if you're short on time, you can also bake the crust and filling in a single tart pan.

## Chamomile Lemon Cream

- 1 cup heavy cream
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- 2 tablespoons dried chamomile flowers, crushed, or 2 best-quality chamomile tea bags, contents reserved and bags discarded
- 1½ tablespoons finely grated lemon zest (about 1½ lemons)
- 3 eggs
- ½ cup strained freshly squeezed lemon juice (about 2 lemons)

**Chamomile Lemon Cream** In a medium saucepan, whisk together the cream and sugar. Place over medium heat and stir to melt the sugar completely. Bring just to a

## Crusts

- 1 batch Shortcrust Pastry (sweet, page 5)

## To serve

- Powdered sugar
- Dried chamomile flowers (optional)



*continued*

### Spirit and syrup pairing recommendations

- **Blackberry Lavender:** Mezcal, white tequila, gin, or vodka.
- **Lemon Chamomile:** Vodka, white tequila, white rum, gin, or limoncello.
- **Orange Verbena:** Bourbon, Scotch, brandy, rum, cognac, mezcal, absinthe, or vodka.
- **Strawberry Hibiscus:** Rum, mezcal, gin, cognac, or vodka.
- **Raspberry Rose:** Gin, rum, cachaça, vodka, or white port.

## EASY COCKTAIL

Makes 1 cocktail

If using fruit juice, pick one to match or complement the fruit used in the syrup you choose.

- Ice
- 1 ounce flavored syrup (page 7)
- 1 ounce spirit, of choice
- 1 ounce fresh fruit juice (optional)
- Sparkling water

Fill a cocktail shaker and a glass with ice. Add the syrup, spirit, and juice to the shaker. Shake until thoroughly cold. Strain into the glass then top off with sparkling water. Serve immediately.



From left: Sparkling Kir (page 8), Virgin Fizz (page 8), Easy Cocktail, Blackberry Lavender Syrup (page 8).