



In this week's issue, I've teamed with [L.A. Plume](#) to share our entertaining ideas. Ms. Plume is imparting her wisdom with regard to entertaining etiquette and I'm providing the recipes! Believe it or not, when Vince and I have a rare weekend off we almost always invite friends to our house for dinner or hors d'oeuvres. Even though in most cases, our unsuspecting pals are guinea pigs for tasting my new recipes, it's always a lot of fun! My favorite way to entertain is simple and stress-free. The hosts get to have as much fun as (if not more than) the guests. As your guests arrive serve them a beverage such as wine or champagne. Don't wait until everyone arrives. Serve each person as soon as they walk in the door and have an appetizer on your bar or counter for everyone to snack on. After a short cocktail time, move to the dining area where the table is already set. All you'll need to do is fill the water glasses and light the candles. An easy dinner party menu consists of a salad, bread, entree and dessert. The salad can be made in advance and tossed with the dressing just before serving, bread can be made earlier in the day and placed in a bread bowl covered with saran wrap until ready to serve, the entree can be warming during the cocktail hour and dessert can be pulled out of the fridge and served (with coffee, if you dare) after dinner. Easy and fun! Of course, if you prefer not to cook, you can always call me. I'll be happy to cater your next dinner party!

Easy Entertaining

Written by Debbi Covington
Friday, 17 September 2010 10:23

Cranberry Brie

1 cup whole-berry cranberry sauce, crushed

2 tablespoons brown sugar

1/4 teaspoon rum extract

1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg

1 (14-ounce) round Brie

1/4 cup slivered almonds, toasted

Whole wheat crackers

Delicious apples, sliced

Combine the cranberry sauce, brown sugar, rum extract and nutmeg in a bowl; mix well. Top the Brie with the cranberry mixture. Sprinkle with slivered almonds. Bake at 375 degrees for 12 to 15 minutes. Serve with crackers and sliced apples. Serves 8.

Mesclun Salad and Strawberries with Lemon-Mustard Vinaigrette

4 tablespoons lemon juice

1/2 cup red wine vinegar

1/4 teaspoon soy sauce

1 tablespoon hot Chinese mustard

2 tablespoons sugar

1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper

1 cup vegetable oil

7 cups mesclun salad or spring mix

1/2 cup pine nuts, toasted

3 cups fresh strawberries, sliced

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2 bunches green onions, sliced

1/3 cup Romano cheese, freshly grated

Black pepper, freshly ground

Combine first 7 ingredients in blender. Mix well. Toss salad greens with pine nuts, strawberries, and green onions. Toss with Lemon-Mustard Vinaigrette and Romano cheese. Top with freshly ground pepper. Serves 6.

Sour Cream Muffins

1 cup self-rising flour

1 (4-ounce) container sour cream

1/2 cup butter, melted

Stir together all ingredients just until blended. Spoon batter into a lightly greased miniature muffin pan, filling to the top. Bake in a preheated 350 degree oven for 20 minutes or until lightly browned. Serves 8.

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Shrimp and Wild Rice

1 (6-ounce) package long grain and wild rice

1 (10 and 3/4-ounce) can cream of mushroom soup

1/2 cup (2 ounces) shredded sharp Cheddar cheese

1/4 cup chopped onion

1/4 cup chopped green pepper

1/4 cup chopped red bell pepper

2 tablespoons chopped parsley

1/2 teaspoon lemon juice

1/2 tablespoon mustard powder

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2 pounds shrimp, peeled and deveined

Cook rice according to package directions. Stir in soup, cheese, onion, peppers, parsley, lemon juice, and mustard powder. Gently fold in shrimp. Spoon into a 9x13-inch baking dish. Cover and bake in a 350 degree oven for 30 to 35 minutes. Serves 6 to 8.

Lemon Chess Pie

2 cups sugar

1 tablespoon all-purpose flour

1 tablespoon cornmeal

1/4 teaspoon salt

1/4 cup butter, melted

2 teaspoons grated lemon rind

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1/4 cup lemon juice

1/4 cup milk

4 eggs

1 (9-inch) pastry shell, unbaked

Combine sugar, flour, cornmeal, and salt. Add butter, lemon rind, lemon juice, and milk; mix well. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Pour into pastry shell. Bake at 350 degrees for 50 minutes. Serves 6 to 8.

Vanilla-Almond Coffee

1 cup whole Colombian coffee beans

9 cups water

1 teaspoon ground nutmeg

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4 teaspoons vanilla

2 teaspoons almond extract

Cream

Sugar

Place whole coffee beans in a coffee grinder; process to a medium grind. Place ground coffee beans in coffee filter or filter basket; sprinkle with nutmeg and flavorings. Add water to coffee maker and brew. Serve with cream and sugar to taste. Serves 8.

The writer owns Catering by Debbi Covington and is the author of the cookbook, Dining Under the Carolina Moon. Debbi's website address is www.cateringbydebbicovington.com. She may be reached at 525-0350 or by email at debbic@cateringbydebbicovington.com.

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