



Crisp spring weather puts me in the mood for entertaining and this menu is one of my favorites. Invite your friends over and let the good times roll! Crab and Spinach Canapes are an excellent appetizer to serve with a cool glass of pinot grigio. Begin your meal with Mesclun Salad with Bacon-Wrapped Scallops. Mesclun salad greens are the base for this delicious salad tossed with sweet vinaigrette and topped with scallops wrapped in thick slices of bacon. Peppered Maple Salmon is a fabulous entree. The combination of the maple-soy marinade and the spicy black pepper are wonderful! Pair the salmon with savory Poppy Seed Dumplings. For dessert, serve Pina Colada Cream Pie. It's a great show off dessert that's always a big hit at dinner parties! You now have an easy and elegant spring seafood supper. Enjoy!

Crab and Spinach Canapes

2/3 cup shredded Swiss cheese

1/3 cup salad dressing

1 stalk celery, chopped

1 tablespoon dried minced onion

1 (8-ounce) package frozen chopped spinach, thawed and squeezed dry

1 (2-ounce) jar diced pimento, drained

8 ounces lump crab meat

Nutmeg

Salt

Pepper

6 slices ciabatta or French bread

In a medium bowl, combine Swiss cheese and next 5 ingredients. Gently fold in crab meat. Season with nutmeg, salt, and pepper. Spread crab mixture on bread slices. Bake in a preheated 350 degree oven for 10 to 15 minutes until heated through. Serves 6.

Mesclun Salad with Bacon-Wrapped Scallops

1 (10-ounce) bag triple-washed mesclun salad mix

For the Sweet Vinaigrette:

9 slices thick-cut bacon

1/2 small red onion, very thinly sliced

1 tablespoon olive oil

1/2 cup sherry vinegar

1 tablespoon Dijon mustard

1 tablespoon light brown sugar

1/2 teaspoon salt

Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

For the Bacon-Wrapped Scallops:

18 sea scallops, about 1 pound

Reserved bacon from the vinaigrette

Teriyaki sauce

Fry bacon in a medium skillet until partially cooked but still pliable. Remove bacon and drain on a paper towel-lined plate. Remove all but 2 tablespoons of the bacon drippings from the skillet. Heat the remaining drippings over medium-high heat and add the onions. Saute until tender, about 5 minutes. Whisk in the remaining ingredients and season to taste. Set aside at room temperature until ready to serve. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. Cut the reserved bacon strips in half. Wrap each scallop with a piece of the bacon and secure with a toothpick. Sprinkle with teriyaki sauce and place on a baking sheet. Bake for 10 to 15 minutes. Place the salad greens in a large bowl. Dress, to taste, with the vinaigrette and toss well. Top with the warm scallops and serve. Serves 6.

Peppered Maple Salmon

1/2 cup maple syrup

1/4 cup soy sauce

6 (6-ounce) salmon fillets

1/3 cup coarsely ground black pepper

Combine maple syrup and soy sauce in a shallow baking dish. Place salmon fillets in the marinade. Cover and chill for at least four hours or overnight. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Place pepper in a shallow dish. Remove salmon from marinade and press top of each fillet into the pepper. Place on lightly greased baking sheet and roast for 10 minutes. Serves 6.

Poppy Seed Dumplings

1/2 cup sour cream

1/3 cup butter, melted

1 tablespoon fresh chopped parsley

3/4 teaspoon garlic salt

1/2 teaspoon poppy seeds

1/8 teaspoon pepper

8 ounces extra-wide egg noodles, cooked

1/2 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese

Fresh parsley sprigs

Combine first 6 ingredients; stir well. Combine sour cream mixture and hot cooked noodles; add cheese, and toss until pasta is coated. Spoon into a serving bowl and garnish with fresh parsley sprigs. Serve immediately. Serves 4.

Pina Colada Cream Pie

1-1/3 cups shredded coconut

3/4 cup sugar

1/4 cup cornstarch

1/4 teaspoon salt

3 cups whole milk

4 egg yolks, beaten

4 tablespoons butter

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

2 tablespoons rum or 1 teaspoon rum flavoring

Baked crust (Dough or Crumb) for 9-inch pie

1 cup heavy cream, whipped

Toast coconut on a baking sheet 5-7 minutes in a 350 degree oven, tossing frequently, until barely brown. Remove. Mix sugar, cornstarch and salt thoroughly. Gradually whisk in milk, then egg yolks. Mix thoroughly. In a heavy saucepan over medium heat, cook mixture, stirring constantly and vigorously so that no lumps form, until it begins to boil. Reduce heat to simmer and continue to cook and stir 2 minutes. Remove from heat and immediately stir in butter, vanilla extract, rum, and toasted coconut. Stir until butter melts. Cover tightly with plastic wrap (to prevent a skin from forming on top of mixture) and let cool 15-20 minutes. Stir thoroughly again and pour into prepared pie shell. Chill at least 2 or up to 8 hours. When ready to serve, mound with whipped cream. Serves 6 to 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.