



And they're off! More than just a horse race, the Kentucky Derby is a wonderful reason for hosting a gathering. In 2019, the Kentucky Derby will be held on Saturday, May 4. Since the race only lasts for about two minutes, Derby Day food and drink will be needed to make your party a grand success.

For this year's menu I've chosen five traditional Kentucky recipes. Start your party with Benedictine. This spread was made popular at Louisville's Benedict's restaurant and can be used as a dip or a sandwich filling. What's a Derby party without the drink of the day? A Mint Julep is traditionally served in a silver julep cup but is still very tasty served in a glass. The Kentucky Hot Brown is a regional favorite that originated at Louisville's Brown Hotel earlier this century. Many variations can be found, most commonly mushrooms are added and cheddar sauce is substituted. Every Derby table must be graced with a plate or two of Southern-Style Deviled eggs. For dessert, Derby Pie is a classic. To host an elegant southern affair you should use your finest silver, crystal, china and linens. For a more casual bash, plan a southern barbeque theme using red and white checked tablecloths and fresh flowers. If you decide to join the action this year either theme will capture the flavor of the day. Enjoy!

Benedictine

1 large cucumber

8 ounces cream cheese, softened

2 tablespoons grated onion

¼ teaspoon salt

1 tablespoon mayonnaise

Pare, grate and drain cucumber. Combine with remaining ingredients in a food processor. Serve with vegetables or as a tea sandwich spread.

Mint Julep



¼ cup fresh mint leaves

2 cups water, heated

2 cups sugar

Cracked ice

Kentucky bourbon

To make syrup:

Heat water. Whisk in sugar until dissolved. Remove from heat. Add mint and allow to steep for at least 40 minutes. Remove mint and strain syrup.

For each Mint Julep:

Add cracked ice to julep tumbler or glass. Add 1½ ounces bourbon. Add 2½ teaspoons syrup. Stir lightly. Garnish with fresh mint leaf.

Kentucky Hot Browns



Make party-sized Hot Browns with pumpernickel cocktail toasts.

For the sauce:

½ stick butter

6 tablespoons all-purpose flour

3 cups warm milk

½ cup Parmesan cheese, divided

1 egg, beaten

1 ounce heavy cream, whipped

For the hot browns:

1 tomato, thinly sliced

1 pound roasted turkey, thinly sliced

8 slices bacon, cooked and drained

8 slices bread, toasted

In a large skillet, melt butter over medium heat. Stir in flour. Slowly whisk in the milk and 6 tablespoons of the Parmesan cheese. Stir in egg to thicken the sauce. Season with salt and pepper, to taste. Remove from heat. Fold in whipped cream. For each serving, place two slices of toast onto a heat-proof dish. Cover the toast with tomato slices and turkey. Pour a very liberal amount of sauce over the top. Sprinkle with additional Parmesan cheese. Place under broiler until sauce is bubbly. Remove from broiler and criss-cross two slices of bacon on top. Serve immediately. Serves 4.

Southern-Style Deviled Eggs



These are the best deviled eggs that I've ever eaten. This is my mother's recipe. She always used Miracle Whip and so do I.

12 eggs

4 tablespoons salad dressing or mayonnaise

1 teaspoon Dijon mustard

1 tablespoon sweet pickle relish

Salt

Pepper

Paprika, for dusting

Place eggs in a large saucepan and cover with cold water. Bring to a boil for 12 minutes. Drain hot water from eggs and rinse with tap water until cool enough to handle. Remove eggs from shells and slice in half lengthwise. Separate yolks and place into a bowl. Add salad dressing, mustard, relish and salt and pepper; mash together with a fork until creamy and smooth. Fill the egg white halves with the egg yolk-relish filling. Dust with paprika. Refrigerate; serve cold. Makes about 24.

Derby Pie



For parties, I like to make mini derby pies in bite-sized tart shells.

1 (9-inch) deep-dish pie shell, unbaked

½ butter, melted and cooled

2 eggs

1 cup sugar

½ cup all-purpose flour

1 cup semisweet chocolate chips

1½ cups chopped pecans

2 tablespoons bourbon

Beat eggs with cooled butter. Add flour and sugar. Beat until mixed well. Gently fold in chocolate, pecans and bourbon. Add mixture to pie shell. Bake in preheated 350 degree oven for about 30 minutes, or until set. Serve with fresh whipped cream.

The writer owns Catering by Debbi Covington and is the author of three cookbooks, Celebrate Beaufort, Celebrate Everything! and Dining Under the Carolina Moon. Debbi's website address

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