



THE BEST

# Christmas

COCKTAIL PARTY  
DRINKS & APPETIZERS

THE BEST  
*Christmas*  
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## The Fresh Cooky: The Best Christmas Cocktail Party Recipes

This book was written to provide recipes, fresh tips, and information to readers and subscribers. The content is the sole property of the author.

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# Hiya FRIEND!

Welcome to the Best Christmas Drinks and Appetizers!

This book is a compilation of Christmas recipes featured on The Fresh Cooky blog. And I think they would make the perfect holiday party, don't you?

After you try each one, I would sincerely appreciate it if you would go to the recipe on my site and leave a review. It is such a blessing to hear from my readers!

Thanks for your interest in this book; I hope you enjoy it! And have a Very Merry Christmas!

Happy Fresh Cooking!

LOVE, Kathleen



START WITH A  
*Cocktail*



# ELDERFLOWER FRENCH 75 WITH ST. GERMAIN



1 Serving



5 Minutes

## Ingredients

- 1.5 ounces of gin
- ½ ounce St. Germain
- 1/2 ounce lemon juice, fresh squeezed
- 4 ounces dry champagne
- Lemon twist



## Instructions

1. Gather the ingredients, wash, and prepare the lemon twist garnish, by using a paring knife or channel knife to remove a curl of lemon peel.
2. Add gin, elderflower liqueur, and lemon juice to a cocktail shaker filled with ice.
3. Shake vigorously, 15-20 shakes, pour into a champagne glass, top with sparkling wine (champagne), and garnish with a lemon twist.

# SPICED POMEGRANATE SANGRIA



4 Servings



4 Hours 15 Minutes

## Ingredients

- 1 750 ml bottle red wine
- 1 small can sparkling water
- 1 medium apple
- 1 medium naval orange
- 1/2 cup pomegranate arils
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 4 cinnamon sticks
- 3 star anise
- 5 sprigs rosemary



## Instructions

1. Wash apples and oranges, and slice into rounds, or if preferred dice them.
2. Add apples, oranges, pomegranate arils, star anise, cinnamon sticks and rosemary to a tall pitcher. Drizzle with honey.
3. Pour the wine into the pitcher, stirring everything together. Refrigerate for 4 hours or preferably overnight.
4. To serve, spoon some fruit from the sangria into individual glasses, then pour spiced wine over the top, adding a splash or two of sparkling water if desired. Garnish with extra rosemary and if desired, a stick of cinnamon or star anise.



# CHRISTMAS MARGARITA

## HIBISCUS & POMEGRANATE



1 serving



5 minutes prep

15 minutes cook

## Ingredients

### Add simple syrup

- 1.5–2 ounces hibiscus pomegranate syrup
- 1.5–2 ounces tequila, use 100% agave tequila, silver
- ½–1 medium lime, juiced
- ½ ounce orange liqueur, such as Cointreau or Grand Marnier

## Instructions

1. In a small saucepan, place the sugar, juice and hibiscus flowers. Mix and place on medium-low heat stirring until it boils, about 15 minutes.
2. Turn off the heat, strain or remove hibiscus petals with a slotted spoon or through mesh strainer and set aside. *Let it cool to room temperature before using.*
3. In a cocktail shaker, add a couple pieces of ice (not full, just to chill the drink and add some froth). Pour over hibiscus pomegranate simple syrup, tequila, triple sec and lime juice. Shake 10-15 vigorous shakes.
4. Strain into an ice filled coupe glass, margarita glass or old fashioned glass and garnish with extra pomegranate, hibiscus flowers, rosemary, cranberries or other edible flowers.



## POMEGRANATE MULE



1 serving



5 minutes

## Ingredients

- 1-2 ounces vodka
- Ice
- 2 ounces pomegranate juice
- ½ lime, fresh squeezed
- 5 ounces ginger beer, your favorite brand

## Instructions

1. Fill the cup with ice, and measure out 2 ounces of vodka\* and pour over ice.
2. Pour in 2 ounces of pomegranate juice and then squeeze ½ a lime and pour over vodka, top with ginger beer, give a gentle stir.
3. Add a mint sprig and a few pomegranate arils.

\*Flavor-infused vodka is yummy too, I like using a cranberry vodka for this delicious mule, but lemon and grapefruit or citrus would all be good too.



# CRANBERRY BOURBON SOUR COCKTAIL



1 serving



5 minutes

## Ingredients

- 2 ounces bourbon
- 1.5 ounce unsweetened 100% cranberry juice, no sugar
- ½ ounce lemon juice, fresh squeezed
- 1 ounce simple syrup
- Lemon slices, raspberries and cranberries for garnish

## Instructions

1. Fill a cocktail shaker (or mason jar with a lid) with ice about 2/3 full.
2. Pour in bourbon, cranberry juice, freshly squeezed lemon juice, and simple syrup.
3. Place lid on shaker, and vigorously shake 20-30 times. The longer you shake the more diluted it will become, which for me is a good thing.
4. In an old-fashioned glass, fill with ice, whiskey stones, or an ice ball. Pour the cocktail over ice.
5. Garnish with a slice of lemon, fresh or frozen raspberries or sugared cranberries, enjoy immediately.



## CRANBERRY LEMON DROP MARTINI



1 serving



5 minutes - Cocktail  
1 hr 25 mins - Simple  
Syrup

## Ingredients

- 2 ounces cranberry simple syrup, see below
- 1-2 ounces lemon juice, fresh squeezed
- 1-2 ounces vodka
- Ice

## Instructions

1. Rough-chop cranberries and place in saucepan with water. Bring to simmer over medium heat, reduce to simmer and cook 20 minutes.
2. Gently mash cranberries, straining through a fine strainer or cheesecloth. It should yield about 1 cup of pulpy cranberry juice, add water to make a cup if not.
3. In a medium saucepan, add cranberry "juice" and 1 cup sugar. Bring to boil and IMMEDIATELY remove from heat, set aside to cool. Store in fridge. Simple syrup lasts about 3 months refrigerated.
4. Fill shaker or mason jar with ice about  $\frac{2}{3}$  full. Pour in 2 oz of cranberry simple syrup, lemon juice and vodka. Adjusting vodka and lemon down if preferred.
5. Rub lemon juice on rim of martini glass and dip in all-natural sugar.
6. Shake, shake, shake the covered jar or shaker, 40-60 vigorous shakes.
7. Pour into glass, garnish with lemon twist and sugared cranberries. Serve immediately.



## HIBISCUS DARK & STORMY



1 servings



5 minutes

## Ingredients

- 1.5–2 ounces dark rum
- ½ lime, fresh squeezed
- 1 can hibiscus ginger beer
- Ice
- Garnish with lime wedge and hibiscus flower

## Instructions

1. Add ice to old-fashioned or highball glass.
2. Pour in dark rum, and lime juice and top with hibiscus ginger beer\*.
3. Garnish with a lime wedge and dried hibiscus flower.

\*If you cannot find hibiscus ginger beer, use a splash (1-2 ounces) of hibiscus simple syrup along with the ginger beer.



## POMEGRANATE COCKTAIL



16 servings



10 minutes

## Ingredients

- 2 cups pure pomegranate juice
- 1 cup cranberry juice cocktail
- 1 cup vodka
- 1 cup orange-flavored liqueur\*
- 1 cup club soda, chilled
- ½ cup lemon juice, fresh squeezed
- ½ cup simple syrup
- Garnish with cranberries and rosemary frozen in ice cube molds, or with slices of oranges

## Instructions

1. Measure out the pomegranate juice, cranberry juice, vodka, and orange-flavored liqueur\*, pouring in a 64-ounce pitcher.
2. Stir in the fresh lemon juice and simple syrup and chill until ready to serve. Just before serving, pour in chilled club soda and add decorative ice cubes if made.
3. Serve with ice or make enough ice (using ice molds) for everyone to have one, a large ice cube melts slower and dilutes the drinks less.
4. This recipe easily doubles or triples! Store leftovers in the fridge for up to 4-5 days. When ready to enjoy again, add a fresh splash of club soda.

\*You can use triple sec, but my favorite is Contreau or Grand Marnier. For a twist, try Chambord for a black raspberry flavor.



# CRANBERRY MIMOSA



1 servings



5 minutes

# Ingredients

- 2 ounces orange juice, chilled
- 2 ounces cranberry juice, chilled (see notes)
- 4 ounces Champagne or sparkling wine, chilled
- Fresh rosemary, fresh cranberries, and/or orange peel, optional garnish

# Instructions

1. Pour the orange juice in the champagne flute, followed by the cranberry juice, and top it off with Champagne. Enjoy.

## NOTES:

1. Champagne flutes are typically between 6 and 10 ounces. True mimosa glasses are 10 ounces. This recipe is written for a 10 ounce champagne flute. If yours is smaller, cut back the same amount on each ingredient to fill your glass properly. Proportions are 1 part orange juice, 1 part cranberry juice, 2 parts champagne
2. Use your preference of cranberry juice. Most 100% juice varieties are a blend of cranberry juice and other juices. 'Cranberry cocktail' juice usually has sugar in it. Or you can find 100% pure cranberry juice, which is quite tart, but my personal favorite. If too tart, add a teaspoon of simple syrup to the drink before adding the champagne.
3. Tall slender glasses help retain the effervescence of the drink.





# Converting a Single-Serving Cocktail to a Pitcher or Punch Bowl

To easily convert a single-serving cocktail to a pitcher or punch bowl, it's just simple math. Take each measurement for the single serving and multiply by the total number of glasses in your pitcher or punch bowl.

Here is an example based on my Christmas Margarita recipe.

## Single Serving:

- 1 ½-2 ounces hibiscus pomegranate syrup
- 1 ½-2 ounces tequila
- ½ - 1 medium lime juice (one lime yields about 2 tablespoons)
- ½ ounce orange liqueur

**Pitcher:** Average pitcher holds | 64 ounces = 10.5 (6 oz) servings

I typically calculate the alcohol on the lower side for a punch since it's easier for people to pour more. Here's the math:

1.5 x 10.5 = 15.75 ounces or a little less than 2 cups (Pom Syrup and Tequila)

1 tablespoon lime x 10.5 = 10.5 tablespoons lime juice

.5 x 10.5 = 5.25 ounces orange liqueur

## Final Recipe Alteration

- 2 cups hibiscus pomegranate syrup
- 1 ¾ cups tequila
- 10.5 tablespoons lime juice (Tip: start with a little less lime juice and add more as needed for desired tartness)
- 5-5 ½ ounces orange liqueur

**Punch Bowl:** Average punch bowl holds | 2 gallons/256 ounces = 51 (5 oz) servings

1.5 ounces x 51 servings = 76.5 ounces divided by 8 ounces per cup = 9.5 cups

1 tablespoon lime juice x 51 servings = 51 tablespoons or 6 cups (when multiplying acidic ingredients start with about half the amount, taste and add more)

.5 x 51 servings = 25.5 ounces about 3 cups

## Final Punch Bowl Recipe

- 9.5 cups hibiscus pomegranate syrup
- 9 cups tequila
- 3 cups fresh lime juice (possibly up to 6, taste test)
- 2 ½-3 cups orange liqueur







Good news! All of the cocktail recipes above can be made as a mocktail! Just take out the alcohol and adjust the flavor profile to suit.

## Tips for How to Convert Most Cocktails to a Mocktail

Making the best mocktails involves a combination of creativity, flavor balance, and presentation. Mocktails are non-alcoholic beverages designed to mimic the taste and experience of cocktails, so they should be equally delicious and beautiful.

The **simplest and easiest way** to **convert a cocktail to mocktail**, is replace the alcohol with equal amounts of juice or mixer that is called for in the recipe.

### Mocktail Common Ingredients

- Fresh fruits and herbs
- Non-alcoholic spirits | These non-spirits mimic the flavors of your favorite spirit. Check them out at your local liquor store.
- Fruit juices
- Soda water, tonic water, or favorite mixer (i.e. ginger beer)
- Syrups, simple syrups
- Ice

Then, follow these steps to a stunning and tasty creation without the alcohol:

1. Choose your base flavor: fruit juice
2. Add in the complementarity flavors: herbs, other juices, or citrus
3. Sweeten the beverage with simple syrup to balance the tartness.
4. Pour in the fizz: soda water, tonic water, ginger beer or favorite mixer.
5. Choose the ice style and garnishes.
6. Always taste until it is just right!

## CRANBERRY SIMPLE SYRUP



8 servings



20 minutes

## Ingredients

- 12 ounce bag fresh cranberries, about 2 cups
- 1 ½ cups water
- 1 cup all natural cane sugar or white sugar

## Instructions

1. In a medium saucepan, combine water, sugar, and cranberries. Heat the mixture over medium heat until it comes to a simmer.
2. Allow it to simmer for approximately 15 minutes, or until the sugar has completely dissolved, stirring occasionally and the cranberries have burst and softened.
3. Strain the mixture through a fine mesh strainer into a heat proof bowl.
4. Transfer the cranberry simple syrup into glass containers, and it's ready to be served as you like. Store up to 1 month in fridge.



## CRANBERRY SPRITZER



1 servings



5 minutes

## Ingredients

- Crushed ice or **clean fresh, snow**
- 2 ounces cranberry simple syrup\*
- ¼ to ½ lemon juice, depending on desired tartness
- lemon-lime soda, stir gently to combine
- Garnish with sugared cranberries & slice of lemon
- Amarena cherries (optional)
- 1-1.5 ounces vodka, optional for cocktail

## Instructions

1. Fill glass with crushed ice (I use my [Ninja blender](#) to pulverize my ice, but crushed or even cubes would be just fine) or grab some newly fallen snow.
2. Pour in 2 ounces of [cranberry simple syrup](#). Squeeze ¼ to ½ lemon (depending on how tart you want it). Top off with lemon-lime soda, stir gently to combine. If adult cocktail is desired, add vodka prior to lemon-lime soda.
3. Garnish with [sugared cranberries](#) or a dark, rich Amarena cherry.



# SKINNY GRAPEFRUIT PALOMA SPRITZER



1 serving



5 minutes

## Ingredients

- 3 ounces grapefruit juice, fresh squeezed is best
- 3 ounces of ginger beer
- 1/4 medium lime, use to wet the rim for sugar and squeeze into glass
- Ice, crushed or cubed

## Instructions

1. Pour some granulated sugar on a small plate, sweeping a wedge of lime around the rim of the glass.
2. Turn the glass upside down and place it on the plate of sugar to coat the rim of the glass, giving it a few light swirls to get plenty of sugar. Set aside.
3. Juice the grapefruit, removing any seeds.
4. Using the same lime wedge you used to wet the rim, squeeze the rest of it into the glass.
5. Add ice, grapefruit juice, and ginger beer. Garnish with fresh lime and/or fresh rosemary and a half wheel of fresh grapefruit if desired.



SOME LIKE IT

Hot



# WASSAIL HOT CIDER



10-14 servings



55 minutes

## Ingredients

- ½ gallon apple cider
- 1.5 cups orange juice, fresh squeezed
- 1 cup pineapple juice
- ¼ cup lemon juice, fresh squeezed
- 2-4 tablespoons brown sugar
- 4 sticks cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- ½ teaspoon ground cloves
- ½ teaspoon ground allspice
- 2 star anise, optional

## Instructions

### BASIC INSTRUCTIONS for ALL THREE METHODS

1. Combine cider, orange juice, pineapple juice, lemon juice, and brown sugar. Stir to mix well, in each pot method.
2. Place nutmeg, cloves, allspice, star anise, and cinnamon sticks in a piece of cheesecloth and tie it up for easy clean-up. Place ingredients into crockpot, Instant Pot or large pot. Place sliced apples and oranges into the pot as well.

### CROCKPOT

- Follow above instructions and place ingredients into 6 qt crockpot, cover and set the slow cooker on LOW for 4-6 hours or HIGH 3-4 hours.

### INSTANT POT

- Follow basic instructions, place ingredients into Instant Pot. Cover, seal vent and set manual mode for 10 minutes. Allow pressure to *naturally release* for 10 minutes, carefully release any remaining steam.

### STOVETOP

- Follow basic instructions, placing ingredients into large pot; bring to a simmer over medium-low heat, reduce heat to low and simmer for 30-45 minutes, ladle into mugs, serve with a cinnamon stick and garnish with a slice of fresh apple and orange if desired.



## CLASSIC IRISH COFFEE



1 serving



5 minutes

## Ingredients

- 7 ounces hot coffee
- 2 teaspoons brown sugar
- 1-1.5 ounces Irish Whiskey
- ¼ cup whipped cream



## Instructions

1. Add hot water to Irish coffee mugs to warm the cups, and let them sit for a minute while you gather the rest of your ingredients. Pour out hot water and add hot coffee and brown sugar to your mug, stirring until the sugar has dissolved.
2. Stir in the whiskey. Top with whipped cream; please look at the notes for how to make whipped cream and float it on top of the coffee.

### How to Make Whipped Cream for this Easy Irish Coffee Recipe

1. In a cold bowl or bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, pour 1 cup of cold heavy cream (for whipping) into a bowl and whip at low speed for a minute until the cream thickens slightly; add 1-2 tablespoons of powdered sugar and ½ teaspoon vanilla extract.
2. Increase speed and whip until soft peaks form, as opposed to my [stabilized whipped cream](#), whipped longer and stiffer; fantastic as a Cool Whip replacement in recipes like this [Oreo](#)

## HOMEMADE HOT CHOCOLATE



2 servings



7 minutes

## Ingredients

- 1 ½ tablespoons cocoa powder
- 4 ½ tablespoons water
- 2 cups whole milk
- ½ cup semi-sweet chocolate chips
- 1-3 tablespoons granulated sugar
- ⅛-¼ teaspoon sea salt
- ½-1 teaspoon vanilla extract

## Instructions

1. Start by whisking together your cocoa powder and water in a small saucepan. Turn heat to medium-high, pour in milk, whisking to combine. Whisk occasionally, but do not let the mixture boil, just heat until steaming.
2. Reduce heat to low, adding chocolate chips. Let stand for 30 seconds until chocolate is melted, then whisk or stir to combine.
3. Add sugar a tablespoon at a time until desired sweetness is achieved. Add a little salt (less for sweeter hot chocolate). Continue stirring until warmed through. Stir in vanilla extract and serve.





# HOT BUTTERED RUM BATTER & COCKTAIL

## Batter Ingredients

- 2 sticks real butter, salted or unsalted, room temp
- 2 cups powdered sugar
- 1 ½ cups lightly packed brown sugar
- ½ teaspoon nutmeg
- ½-1 teaspoon cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon cloves, optional
- ½ quart vanilla ice cream, slightly softened



35 mugs (approx)



15 minutes

## Rum Drink Ingredients

- 1-2 tablespoons butter rum batter
- 1-1.5 ounces dark rum, omit for non-alcoholic version
- Hot water, or substitute with hot cider
- Optional whipped Cream to top
- Fresh nutmeg or cinnamon sprinkled on top

# Instructions

### Start with the Batter

1. In the bowl of a stand mixer (or use a hand mixer), whip butter, sugars, and spices together until creamy and light, scraping down sides occasionally, about 2-3 minutes.
2. Add softened ice cream and blend until smooth, scrape sides and bottom, and mix until smooth. Place batter in a container with a lid and freeze.
3. Freeze batter for up to 6 months

### How to make Hot Buttered Rum Drink

1. Boil water. Place a heaping tablespoon of batter into a heat-safe mug. Pour in dark rum and top off with hot water. Top with a dollop of whipped cream.
2. To make a mocktail, simply leave out the rum, adding another half scoop of hot buttered rum batter.



# CHRISTMAS MORNING CHAI



1 serving



20 minutes

# Ingredients

- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup chai tea concentrate
- $\frac{1}{3}$ -  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup half and half (or favorite milk or plant-based product)
- 1-2 tablespoons white chocolate sauce
- whipped cream, to top the drink
- nutmeg, fresh grated is best

# Instructions

1. On the stovetop, in a small saucepan, heat the desired number of servings of chai concentrate until simmering and hot. Or place in a mug and heat in the microwave.
2. Meanwhile, in a frother or on the stovetop, heat half and half until hot but not boiling. See below for how to froth if you don't have a frother.
3. Squirt white chocolate sauce into a mug, lining the sides if desired. Pour in hot chai, and stir in white chocolate sauce if desired.
4. Add heated half and half and spoon foam on the top. Top with whipped cream, grated nutmeg, and a drizzle of white chocolate sauce. Serve immediately.

## FROTHING WITHOUT A FROTHER

There are many ways to get that frothy good foam from your cream without a frother. Warm the milk product of choice, then use a whisk, a hand frother, or use a blender. Easy Peasy!



## EGGNOG LATTE



2 servings



10 minutes

## Ingredients

- 3-4 ounces espresso, brewed, or very strong coffee
- 1/3 cup whole milk, or other % milks or plant-based milk
- 2/3 cup eggnog, I like full-fat, but may use other %, or plant-based eggnog

### Optional Toppings

- 2 tablespoons whipped cream
- 1/8 teaspoon nutmeg, fresh grated is best, but ground may be substituted



## Instructions

1. Add the milk and eggnog to a frother and heat until hot and increased in size. Be careful that your frother holds this quantity, after frothing.
2. If not, heat the milk and eggnog in a small saucepan until just hot (do not boil), then use a handheld frother to add the volume. See tips if you don't have a frother.
3. Meanwhile, make the espresso or very strong coffee.
4. Pour espresso into a mug and top with  $\frac{1}{2}$  the milk and eggnog mixture, topping with whipped cream and fresh grated nutmeg (the best!).

### FROTHING WITHOUT A FROTHER

There are many ways to get that frothy good foam from your eggnog without a frother. Warm the eggnog and milk, then use a whisk, a hand frother, or use a blender.

## WHITE HOT CHOCOLATE



1 serving



7 minutes

## Ingredients

- 3 ounces high-quality white chocolate, chips, or bar of white chocolate, chopped a scant  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup
- $\frac{1}{2}$ -1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract, try [bourbon vanilla extract](#)
- 2 cups milk, I use whole milk, but you can use half & half, 2% or other favorite
- 1 pinch of salt, I like flaky sea salt for this

## Instructions

1. In a small saucepan, pour in milk and heat over medium-low heat until steaming, but not boiling.
2. Remove from heat, add white chocolate to the warm milk and let sit for 30 seconds, then whisk into the mixture. Return to low heat, add vanilla and flaky sea salt, stirring until smooth.
3. Heat until hot, but not boiling, serve immediately.
4. Store any leftovers in fridge, up to 3 days. To reheat, place in saucepan and heat over low heat until warmed through, stirring occasionally.
5. Top with fresh whipped cream, marshmallows, marshmallow creme or fluff, fresh grated nutmeg, cocoa powder, chocolate jimmies, white or dark chocolate curls.



LET'S SHARE AN

# Appetizer





## COWBOY CRACK DIP



10 servings



Prep 15 minutes

Chill 1 hour

## Ingredients

- 8 ounces cream cheese, room temp\*
- 1.5 cups sour cream
- 1 tablespoon ranch dressing mix
- 1 small shallot
- 2 cups cheddar cheese, shredded
- 3-4 slices thick cut bacon, cooked

## Instructions

1. In a medium bowl with a hand mixer, beat the cream cheese and sour cream until you have a smooth texture. \*Your mixture will be smoother if you make sure your cream cheese and sour cream are at room temp.
2. Add the remaining ingredients and mix with a wooden spoon or on low speed until everything is well combined.
3. Place in the fridge for 1 hour before serving, this will allow the flavor to develop.
4. Garnish with additional bacon bits, shredded cheese, and some diced green onions or chives.
5. Serve with your favorite dipping chips or veggies.



## PESTO APPETIZER WITH BURRATA



6-8 servings



Prep 15 mins

Cook 20 mins

### Crostini

- 1-16 ounce baguette
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- Black pepper, optional

## Ingredients

### Roasted Cherry Tomatoes

- 2 cups cherry tomatoes
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- Kosher salt & black pepper

### Burrata Pesto Appetizer

- 8-ounces burrata cheese
- 3-4 tablespoons pesto
- 3-4 leaves fresh basil
- 1-2 tablespoons pine nuts
- Balsamic glaze & 1 tablespoon olive oil

## Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 425° F (220° C) and slice the baguette into about ½ inch slices. Place in single layer on baking sheet. Then brush one side with olive oil and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Bake for 10 minutes and cool.
2. Increase heat to 450°F (230° C). In a bowl, toss halved cherry tomatoes with 1 tablespoon of olive oil and sprinkle with salt and pepper, Place on sheet and roast for 18-20 minutes, and allow to cool. May be made up to 1 day ahead.
3. Remove the burrata from the water and pat dry, then lay it on the serving platter.
4. Slice or use a spoon to cut each burrata into quarters or eighths, pulling apart slightly.
5. Sprinkle on roasted tomatoes, drizzle with pesto, and 1 tablespoon olive oil.
6. Add basil and pine nuts, and sprinkle with flaky sea salt and pepper. If desired, add a little swirl of balsamic glaze.
7. Serve immediately with crostinis.



## CRANBERRY CREAM CHEESE DIP



6-10 servings



Prep 15 mins

Cook 18 mins

## Ingredients

- 2 cups extra-sharp Cheddar cheese, grated, divided
- 8 ounces cream cheese, full fat, or Neufchatel, room temperature
- $\frac{1}{4}$  heaping cup cranberry sauce
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup fresh cranberries, may substitute with frozen, do not thaw
- Nutmeg, optional

## Instructions

1. Lightly spray a small 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  quart baking dish with a little spray oil and preheat the oven to 375° F (190° C) (350° F (175° C) if using convection oven or mode).
2. In a medium-large mixing bowl, stir together the cream cheese and 1 $\frac{3}{4}$  cups Cheddar cheese until combined.
3. Grate some fresh nutmeg into the cheese mixture and combine, this is a taste preference. I like a little more, about  $\frac{1}{2}$  a teaspoon (ground may be substituted).
4. Gently stir in the cranberry sauce and 1/2 cup reserved fresh cranberries, then spooning the cranberry mixture evenly into prepared baking dish, and top with remaining 1/4 cup shredded cheddar. Baking 18-23 minutes (15 minutes if convection) until bubbly in the middle and the edges.
5. Cover if needed with some foil (shiny side down) if browning too quickly.
6. A few minutes before you are ready to pull it out of the oven, sprinkle remaining aged cheddar cheese on top and remove foil to brown a bit.
7. Serve immediately with crostini, crackers or pita chips. If desired, grate a little more fresh grated nutmeg over the top.



# WHIPPED GOAT CHEESE WITH BACON, DATES, & HONEY



8-12 servings



Prep 15 mins

Cook 10-18 mins

## Ingredients

### Rosemary Honey

- 1 tablespoon fresh rosemary
- 1/4 cup honey
- Sea Salt

### Candied Bacon and Dates

- 6-8 slices thick-cut bacon
- 8-12 Medjool dates, pitted, torn
- 1 tablespoons fresh rosemary, minced
- 1 teaspoon light brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon honey
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper



### Whipped Goat Cheese

- 1-10 ounce log creamy goat cheese, room temperature
- 4 ounces cream cheese, room temperature
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- Flaky sea salt- pinch
- Pomegranate arils
- Serve with assorted crackers, carrot chips, cucumbers and apples for gluten-free, low-carb option

## Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 400° F (205° C) and line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. **Rosemary Honey** | In a small bowl, combine 1/4 cup honey, finely chopped tablespoon of fresh rosemary, and a pinch of cayenne pepper, and a pinch of sea salt. Stir and let infuse while assembling the rest of the appetizer.
3. **Candied Bacon & Dates** | In a medium bowl, toss together the chopped bacon, dates, rosemary, brown sugar, honey, and cayenne.
4. Toss to coat, then spread evenly in prepared sheet pan.
5. Bake 8-18 minutes until the bacon is crisp, stirring occasionally if needed.
6. **Whipped Goat Cheese** | While bacon and dates are baking, make the goat cheese mixture. In the bowl of a food processor or stand mixer, pulse or mix the goat cheese, cream cheese, olive oil, and pinch of flaky sea salt until smooth and creamy.
7. Spoon cheese into a serving bowl, using the back of a teaspoon to create spiral troughs in the cheese.
8. Top with warm candied bacon and date mixture, then drizzle a little rosemary honey. Sprinkle with fresh pomegranate arils. \*also try hot honey!

## CRUDITE DIP FOR VEGGIE PLATTERS



16 servings



5 minutes

Chill 30 minutes

## Ingredients

- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 1 cup Greek yogurt
- 1 tablespoon red wine vinegar
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- 1 teaspoon chives
- ½ teaspoon dill
- 1 tablespoon dried parsley flakes
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper

## Instructions

1. In a medium-sized bowl, add the mayonnaise, yogurt, garlic powder, onion powder, chives, dill, parsley, salt, and pepper. Stir until everything is combined and smooth.
2. Transfer to a serving bowl, cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate. It can be served immediately but is best after chilling for at least 30 minutes, preferably overnight to 24 hours, to allow the flavors to meld.
3. Serve with your choice of crisp vegetables, making a beautiful crudite platter. Serve with carrots, peppers, celery, broccoli, tomatoes, cauliflower, onions, cucumbers, etc. It may also be served with chips, pretzels, or crackers.





## CRANBERRY MEATBALLS



15-20 servings



Prep 5 mins

Cook 3 hours

## Ingredients

- 2 pounds meatballs, frozen, fully cooked (do not thaw)
- 1 cup whole berry cranberry sauce, canned or homemade
- 1-1.5 cups favorite barbecue sauce
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce, optional
- Parsley or chives for garnish, chopped

## Instructions

### For the Meatballs:

1. Mix together cranberry sauce, barbecue sauce, and if using, Worcestershire sauce in the bottom of a 6 quart or larger crockpot. Stir in frozen meatballs making sure to coat well.
2. Cover and cook: LOW 3-4 hours HIGH 2 hours, stirring occasionally. Garnish with freshly cut parsley or chives, and serve hot. See below for how to make on a stovetop or oven.

**Stovetop Cranberry Meatballs** | Pour all sauce ingredients into a large, heavy-bottomed pot or Dutch oven. Stir and add frozen meatballs, stir to coat. Heat low heat between 25 to 30 minutes.

**Oven-Baked Cranberry Meatballs** | Preheat the oven to 325° F (165° C) F. Stir all sauce ingredients in an oven-safe pot or 9×13-inch casserole dish. Stir and add frozen meatballs, stir to coat. Cover, baking for 25-30 minutes.

Want to make homemade Cranberry Sauce for your meatballs? Follow my instructions in the full blog post.

# GOAT CHEESE APPETIZER WITH HOT HONEY, FIG AND PISTACHIOS



6-8 servings



5 minutes

## Ingredients

- 1 (4-10 oz) goat cheese log, room temp
- ¼ cup roasted, salted pistachios, chopped
- dried cranberries or cherries, chopped (optional)\*
- 2 tablespoons hot honey or regular honey
- 1-2 tablespoons fig preserves
- Pomegranate arils
- Crackers or bread for serving, sliced apples, carrot chips, cucumber slices

## Instructions

1. On a piece of parchment paper or wax paper, roll softened goat cheese log a little narrower and longer.
2. Using a small plate, spread the chopped pistachios and then roll the goat cheese on the pistachios, rolling to cover all sides. \*If using cranberries or cherries, chop and add to pistachios for rolling.
3. Transfer the goat cheese log to serving plate, large enough to accommodate the crackers.
4. Stir the fig spread until it can be spooned over the goat cheese log, if necessary, place 1-2 tablespoons in a microwave safe dish and microwave for 10 seconds, then drizzle over the goat cheese log.
5. Drizzle with desired amount of hot honey or regular honey.
6. Serve with crackers, bread, carrot chips, cucumber slices and/or apple slices for a gluten-free option.



# About the Author



Kathleen is a recipe developer, food photographer, and food writer who is passionate about encouraging families and friends to gather at the table.

With fresh and healthier options for everyday recipes, Kathleen encourages her readers to make the recipes "their own" and share their cooking success with her.

When not in the kitchen or behind the camera, Kathleen enjoys traveling and exploring Colorado as a newly empty nester with her husband.

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# basic liquid Measurement Conversion Chart

- 1 cup = 8 fluid ounces
- 1 fluid ounce =  $\frac{1}{8}$  cup
- 1 cup = 16 tablespoons
- 1 tablespoon =  $\frac{1}{16}$  cup
- 1 cup = 48 teaspoons
- 1 teaspoon =  $\frac{1}{48}$  cup
- 1 tablespoon = 3 teaspoons
- 1 teaspoon =  $\frac{1}{3}$  tablespoon
- 1 fluid ounce = 2 tablespoons
- 1 tablespoon =  $\frac{1}{2}$  fluid ounce



# to-do list for Cocktail Parties

## Planning

- Choose a date, time & location
- Decide on a theme or style
- Create a guest list
- Send out invitations

## Menu Planning

- Select cocktails and mocktails
- Add selection of hot beverages
- Choose appetizers to compliment
- Include a pitcher of iced lemon water
- Create a shopping list for menu

## Shopping

- Purchase alcohol and mixers
- Include garnishes
- Purchase all ingredients for appetizers
- Get the decorations

## Decoration & Set Up

- Plan and set up party space
- Ensure there is enough seating
- Decorate in theme or style
- Set up ample space for display of drinks and food.
- Be sure restrooms are clean & supplied

## Bar Set Up

- Set out barware and tools
- Prep garnishes and chill
- Display recipes if needed

## Food Prep

- Prepare make-ahead appetizers
- Arrange cold foods and store in fridge
- Prepare hot appetizers
- Display on platters

## Music & Entertainment

- Create appropriate playlist
- Set up games or photo booth



# Supplies for a Cocktail Party

## Drinks

- Assorted alcoholic beverages (vodka, gin, rum, whiskey, tequila, etc.)
- Mixers (soda, tonic water, cola, fruit juices, etc.)
- Bitters and syrups (grenadine, simple syrup, etc.)
- Fresh fruits for garnishes (lemons, limes, oranges)
- Fresh herbs (mint, basil, etc.)
- Ice cubes or crushed ice
- Cocktail napkins and straws
- Glassware (martini glasses, highball glasses, etc.)
- Cocktail shakers, strainers, and bar tools
- Cutting board and knife for garnish preparation

## Appetizers

- Ingredients for all chosen appetizers
- Serving Platters
- Serving Utensils
- Bowls and spoons for dips and condiments
- Napkins and small plates

## Other Supplies

- Invitations or digital invites
- Decorations (flowers, menus, tablecloths, themed elements)
- Music playlist and speakers
- Party games or entertainment (cards, board games, etc.)
- Photo booth with props (if desired)
- Trash bags and recycling bins
- Plates, napkins, utensils, and serving platters
- Cleaning supplies for post-party cleanup
- Extra seating or furniture, if needed



