

Seasonal Eating

UT Extension

Cooking Demonstration

New Ideas to
Use Seasonal Fruits and Vegetables



December 2014 Festive Appetizers

<https://utextension.tennessee.edu/bedford/Pages/Seasonal-Eating.aspx>
Seasonal Eating Market Blog:
<https://utextension.tennessee.edu/bedford/seasonaleatingblog/default.aspx>

Concord Grape Sipper

1 1/2 cups water
1 1/2 cups sugar
1/2 cup sliced fresh ginger root
4 sprigs fresh mint leaves
2 1/2 cups concord grape juice
3 cups spicy ginger ale, such as Vernors or Buffalo Rock
3 cups club soda
1/2 cup fresh lemon juice

In a small saucepan, bring water, sugar, ginger root and mint leaves to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce heat to low and cook for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Let cool to room temperature, discard ginger root and mint. In a large pitcher, stir together grape juice, ginger ale, club soda, lemon juice and syrup. Serve over ice.

Spinach Leek Dip with Wonton Crackers

1 leek
2 tablespoons butter
1 (10-ounce) box frozen chopped spinach, thawed and pressed dry
1 (4-ounce) jar chopped pimiento, drained
1 cup finely grated Parmesan cheese
16 ounces sour cream
2 cups mayonnaise
1 teaspoon seasoned salt
1 teaspoon garlic powder
1/2 teaspoon onion powder
1/4 teaspoon black pepper

Wonton wrappers
Melted butter
Salt

Cut the leek where the white and green parts meet and discard the green leaves. Cut off the roots and cut the white part lengthwise. Rinse well, running water between the layers. Finely chop the leek. In a skillet, melt the butter and add the leek. Sprinkle with a little salt and pepper and cook slowly until tender and browned, 5-10 minutes. Place in a bowl and allow to cool. Add the spinach, pimiento and Parmesan cheese and mix well. Add the sour cream, mayonnaise, salt, garlic powder, onion powder and black pepper. Stir well to combine. Let sit in refrigerator for a couple of hours for the flavors to meld together.

For the wonton chips, cut the wonton wrappers in half diagonally to create triangles. Lay on an ungreased baking sheet and brush tops with a little melted butter. Sprinkle with a little salt and bake at 375 degrees until lightly browned and crisp, about 5 minutes.

Spinach Balls

2 (10-ounce) boxes frozen leaf spinach
6 eggs, well beaten
1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese
1/2 teaspoon thyme
3 cups seasoned stuffing mix
1/2 onion, finely chopped
10 tablespoons butter, melted
1 teaspoon black pepper
1 1/2 teaspoons garlic powder

Defrost and drain the spinach. Mix all ingredients. Roll into bite sized balls. Bake on greased cookie sheet at 375 degrees for 15 - 20 minutes or until lightly browned.

Caprese Stuffed Tomatoes

30 cherry tomatoes
Salt
1/2 avocado, pitted, peeled and cut up
2 ounces cream cheese, softened
2 tablespoons basil pesto sauce
1 teaspoon lemon juice
1 ball fresh mozzarella cheese, cut into 30 (3/8") cubes
Snipped basil

Cut a thin slice from the top of each tomato. (If desired, cut a thin slice from bottoms of tomatoes so they stand upright.) With a small spoon or melon baller, carefully hollow out the tomatoes. Line a baking sheet with paper towels. Sprinkle insides of tomatoes with a little salt and invert on the towels. Let stand 30 minutes to drain. Meanwhile, for filling, in a food processor bowl combine avocado, cream cheese, pesto and lemon juice. Cover and process until smooth. Season with salt to taste. Spoon filling into a pastry bag or zip top plastic bag with the corner snipped. Place tomatoes, open sides up, on a serving platter. Place a cube of cheese in each tomato. Pipe filling into the tomato cups, over the cheese cube. Serve immediately or cover loosely and refrigerate up to 4 hours before serving. Sprinkle with snipped basil before serving.

Collard Green Stuffed Mushrooms

12 large white button mushrooms
1/3 cup olive oil
2 cloves garlic, pressed
8 ounces collard greens
4 slices bacon chopped
1/2 onion, chopped
2 teaspoons white wine vinegar
1 tablespoon sherry
1/2 cup chicken broth
5-6 dashes Tabasco sauce
Black pepper
1/2 cup grated Asiago cheese, divided
Kosher salt

Brush dirt off the mushrooms with a damp paper towel. Remove the stems and place on a cutting board. Using a metal teaspoon, scrape out the gills and any extra stem left in the center of the mushroom. Place the scrapings on the board with the stems and chop. In a bowl, combine olive oil and garlic. Let stand while you make the filling.

Prepare the collards by washing well and then removing the leaf part from the stem. Chop up the leaves and discard the stems. In a large skillet, cook bacon until crispy and browned. Remove with a slotted spoon to a paper towel. Add onion to the drippings in the pan and cook until translucent. Add the chopped mushroom stems and collard greens with the vinegar, sherry, chicken broth, Tabasco sauce and a sprinkle of black pepper. Cover and cook over medium high heat for 15-20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Remove the lid and cook until the liquid is evaporated, stirring often, about 10 minutes. Remove from heat and let cool slightly. Add the reserved bacon and all but 2 tablespoons of the cheese. Mix well.

Dip the prepared mushroom caps in the garlic oil and place on a baking sheet so they don't touch each other. Sprinkle with a little kosher salt and black pepper. Pick up a mushroom cap, spoon in the collard green mixture and return to the baking sheet. Bake on the bottom shelf of the oven at 425 degrees for 10 minutes. Remove from oven and sprinkle with remaining 2 tablespoons of cheese. Let cool slightly and serve.

Ham Biscuit Crostini with Spicy Cranberry Sauce

12 ounces fresh cranberries
1 (10-ounce) jar red hot pepper jelly
2 cups peeled and diced Granny Smith apples (2 apples)
3/4 cup sugar
1/2 cup water
1/2 cup dried cranberries
24 frozen tea biscuits
5 tablespoons butter, melted
1/4" thick slices fully cooked ham

In a large saucepan, combine cranberries, jelly, apples, sugar and water. Bring to a boil, stirring often. Reduce heat and simmer 10-15 minutes or until cranberries pop and mixture thickens. Remove from heat and stir in dried cranberries. Cool completely, about 45 minutes. Can store in the refrigerator for 2 weeks. Bake tea biscuits according to package directions. Cool on a wire rack 20 minutes. Cut biscuits in half and brush cut sides with melted butter. Arrange, cut sides up, on a baking sheet. Bake at 350 degrees for 8-10 minutes or until edges are golden. Cut ham into biscuit size pieces and place on biscuits. Top with spicy cranberry sauce and serve immediately.