

Seasonal Eating
Whitney Danhof, Extension Agent

Easy and Affordable Crab Dip
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The holiday season often calls for appetizers to be shared at gatherings, to welcome guests to a dinner party, to eat while decorating the tree or watching holiday movies or just to enjoy as a snack on a busy day. Actually, I often find during the holidays that I have parties and big meals for lunch or dinner and just need little something for the other meal that day. An appetizer is perfect – savory and just a little filling.

Whatever your needs, a quick and easy dip to spread on crackers or serve with vegetables fits the bill well. This super simple Parmesan Crab Dip is a creamy mixture of mayonnaise and cream cheese is flavored with Parmesan cheese, green onions and crab.

In case you hadn't noticed, groceries are higher today and seafood especially can break a holiday budget. A can of crabmeat can be close to twenty dollars – not exactly what you need when there are gifts and decorations and other expenses. So a good alternative is to use imitation crab which is more like four dollars a pound. Made from fish but flavored like crab, this is actually a really good substitute in things like dips, spreads or salads. My aunt used to make a spread with cream cheese, a little garlic powder and lemon juice with the imitation crab and we loved it spread on crackers with a little cocktail sauce. The crab has a great mild flavor that even kids like. So give this budget friendly option a try in dips and leave the expensive crab for the crab cakes.

The other major ingredient in this dip is Parmesan cheese. Freshly grated cheese off the wedge or block is the best in this application. I use the fine side of my box grater to get little shreds that mix in well. The flavor develops as it sits, so you can make this a few hours or the day before and refrigerate until ready to serve.

Because the cheese is pretty salty, it is best to serve this dip with a plain cracker that doesn't have much salt, like a water cracker, or you can serve it with vegetables like celery or pepper strips.

So break out the holiday appetizers and enjoy the festive season with little bites to share! For more information and recipes check out the Seasonal Eating page at bedford.tennessee.edu.

Parmesan Crab Dip

- 8 ounces cream cheese, softened
- 1/2 cup mayonnaise
- 1/2 cup finely grated Parmesan cheese
- 4 green onions, sliced
- 1/3 pound artificial crab meat, chopped



Beat the cream cheese and mayonnaise together until creamy. Add the Parmesan cheese and mix well. Fold in green onions and crab meat. Store in refrigerator until ready to serve. Serve with crackers or vegetables.