



November 30, 2016

Zesty Holiday Appetizers to Wow Your Family and Friends

It's that time of year again! Skip the rum balls and fruitcake, and prepare these delectable appetizers this holiday season.

Our Chicken Saltimbocca Skewers shrink this popular Italian dish featuring Marsala-marinated chicken, crispy prosciutto and wintery sage into fun, flavourful bites.

For a simpler dish, try our Brie with Dried Apricot Chutney - the sweet, tangy chutney is a quick, one-pot recipe that can be made ahead, so all you have to do before the guests arrive is warm the brie briefly in the microwave.

We've skipped the olives and anchovies in favour of jarred roasted red peppers and marinated artichoke hearts in our Roasted Red Pepper and Artichoke Tapenade. The red and green colour will be a welcome addition to any festive plate.

CHICKEN SALTIMBOCCA SKEWERS

Ingredients:

16 bamboo skewers
1 cup Marsala or Madeira
1/3 cup fresh lemon juice
1/4 cup chopped shallot*
1/4 cup liquid honey
3 tbsp salted butter
2 cloves garlic, bruised
1/8 tsp thyme, crumbled
1 bay leaf
16 fresh sage leaves
2 lb (1 kg) boneless skinless chicken breasts, cut into 16 strips
16 slices prosciutto
1/4 tsp freshly ground pepper



Method:

1. Soak bamboo skewers in hot water for 30 minutes.
2. Preheat oven to 425°F.
3. To prepare glaze, place Marsala in a small non-reactive saucepan. Bring to a simmer over medium heat and cook, uncovered, stirring occasionally, until Marsala is reduced by one-third, about 5 – 6 minutes.
4. Add lemon juice, shallot, honey, butter, garlic, thyme and bay leaf; stir to combine. Bring to a simmer and cook, uncovered, stirring occasionally, until reduced by half, about 10 – 12 minutes.
5. Strain glaze through a sieve into a heatproof bowl; discard solids.
6. Reserve ¼ cup of glaze to brush over skewers after baking; remaining glaze will be used to baste skewers.
7. Place 1 sage leaf and 1 chicken strip on one end of each prosciutto slice. Roll up prosciutto slices, jelly-roll fashion, enclosing sage and chicken.
8. Thread wrapped chicken onto soaked skewers. Sprinkle with pepper.
9. Place chicken skewers in parchment paper-lined rimmed baking sheets.
10. Bake for 10 minutes.
11. Remove pans from oven and brush chicken with some of remaining glaze.
12. Continue baking, basting every 5 minutes with remaining glaze, until chicken is cooked through, about 20 minutes.
13. Brush with reserved glaze before serving. *Makes 16.*

BRIE WITH DRIED APRICOT CHUTNEY

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup (125 mL) chopped dried apricots
- 1/4 cup (50 mL) water
- 2 tbsp (25 mL) packed golden brown sugar
- 1 tbsp (15 mL) balsamic vinegar
- 1 tsp (5 mL) chopped fresh rosemary

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1/8 tsp (0.5 mL) red pepper flakes
1/8 tsp (0.5 mL) salt
1 round (340 g) brie cheese

Method:

To prepare chutney, combine all ingredients except brie in a small saucepan. Bring to a boil over medium heat. Reduce heat and simmer, covered, stirring occasionally, until slightly thickened and apricots are tender, about 5 - 7 minutes; cool. Cover and refrigerate for up to 2 days. Trim rind off top of brie. Score top edge of brie at 1 inch (2.5 cm) intervals. Place brie in a microwave-safe baking dish that fits it almost exactly. Spread chutney on brie. Microwave, uncovered, on high (100% power) for 1 1/2 minutes or just until brie is melted and heated through. Let stand for 5 minutes. Serve with baguette slices or crackers. *Serves 8.*

Cook's Note: *To make brie easier to trim, first place it in the freezer for 30 minutes*

ROASTED RED PEPPER AND ARTICHOKE TAPENADE

Ingredients:

3 canned roasted red peppers, rinsed and drained
1 jar (6 oz / 170 mL) marinated artichoke hearts, drained
1/2 cup (125 mL) chopped fresh parsley
1/2 cup (125 mL) grated Parmesan cheese
1/3 cup (75 mL) olive oil
1/4 cup (50 mL) drained capers
4 cloves garlic, crushed
1 tbsp (15 mL) lemon juice
Salt and freshly ground pepper

Method:



Combine all ingredients except salt and pepper in a food processor. Process, using an on/off motion, just until coarsely chopped. Mixture should be chunky; do not puree. Transfer to a bowl. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Serve with crackers or pita bread. *Makes 1 3/4 cups (425 mL).*