



December 16, 2015

Heavenly Holiday Hors d'oeuvres

Hosting a cocktail party for the holidays this year? Obviously, the refreshments are important, but you can't forget the hors d'oeuvres!

Did you know that you can make your own ricotta at home? We show you how in our Crostini with Citrus Ricotta recipe. If you're pressed for time, just fold the whipping cream, chopped herbs and citrus zest in some from the store. Paired with our Fig and Date Jam, this appetizer is the perfect balance of sweet and savoury.

You will need a strong electric mixer to make our Smoked Salmon Mousse in Endive Leaves recipe! Incorporating lots of air in the mixture is what helps the mousse taste airy and light. The mousse is also delicious on crackers or crostini.

CROSTINI WITH CITRUS RICOTTA

Ingredients:

4 cups homogenized milk
3 tbsp pure white vinegar
Pinch salt
1/2 cup whipping cream
1 tbsp finely chopped chives
1 tbsp finely chopped fresh basil
2 tsp finely chopped fresh parsley
1 tsp grated orange peel
1/2 tsp grated lemon peel
1/2 tsp grated lime peel
1/8 tsp salt
1/8 tsp freshly ground pepper



2/3 cup Fig and Date Jam (recipe below)
30 toasted baguette slices, 1/4 inch thick

Method:

1. To prepare citrus ricotta, place milk in a large non-reactive saucepan over medium heat and cook, stirring, until milk reaches 190°F, about 8 minutes. Do not boil.
2. Add vinegar and pinch of salt; stir once and remove from heat. Let stand until mixture thickens and forms curds, about 10 - 15 minutes.
3. Meanwhile, place a sieve over a large bowl. Line sieve with two layers of cheesecloth.
4. Transfer mixture to prepared sieve; allow to drain and cool to room temperature.
5. Cover filled sieve and refrigerate sieve and bowl for at least 4 hours or up to 24 hours. This allows mixture to drain further.
6. Remove sieve and bowl from refrigerator. Press on mixture to remove any excess moisture; discard liquid in bowl.
7. Transfer strained mixture to a separate bowl. Fold in cream, chives, basil, parsley, orange peel, lemon peel, lime peel, 1/8 tsp salt and pepper. Citrus ricotta may be prepared to this point and refrigerated for up to 3 days.
8. To prepare crostini, spread about 1 tsp Fig and Date Jam evenly over one side of each baguette slice. Top each with about 2 tsp citrus ricotta. Serve immediately. *Makes 30.*

For additional guidance on How to Make Ricotta, visit our YouTube Channel:

www.YouTube.com/theBlueFlameKitchen.

FIG AND DATE JAM

Ingredients:

1 1/2 cups apple juice
1 cup dried Mission figs
1 cup dried pitted dates
3/4 cup balsamic vinegar



1 tbsp chopped fresh ginger

Method:

1. Combine all ingredients in a medium non-reactive saucepan. Bring to a simmer over medium-low heat and cook, uncovered, stirring occasionally, until slightly thickened, about 10 minutes. Remove from heat and cool to room temperature.
2. Transfer mixture to a food processor; process until almost smooth. May be refrigerated for up to 4 days or frozen for up to 1 month. *Makes about 2 cups.*

SMOKED SALMON MOUSSE IN ENDIVE LEAVES

Ingredients:

- 8 oz (250 g) cream cheese, softened
- 8 oz (250 g) frozen smoked salmon, thawed and diced
- 1/4 cup fresh lemon juice
- 1/4 cup whipping cream
- 2 tbsp chopped fresh dill
- 1 tbsp chopped fresh chives
- 1 tbsp grated lemon peel
- 1/2 tsp cayenne pepper
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 36 Belgian endive leaves

Method:

1. Using medium speed of an electric mixer, beat together all ingredients except endive leaves until blended. Salmon mixture may be refrigerated for up to 8 hours.
2. Pipe or spoon about 1 tbsp salmon mixture into each endive leaf. Serve immediately. *Makes 36.*



Cook's Note: Belgian endive grows as small oval-shaped heads of creamy coloured leaves that have a slight bitter taste. It is grown in the absence of light to keep the leaves from becoming green. Look for it in the produce section of grocery stores