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Once the holiday season arrives, the cheer in everyone comes out. And whether the celebration is big or small, it's fun to be a host.

And to keep the celebration fun for your guests, as well as for you the host, it's best to keep the menu simple to prepare and to eat.

A tasty selection of holiday cocktails and bite-sized hors d'oeuvres will satisfy the most discriminating of guests.

When designing your menu, offer a variety of foods that can be prepared in advance. Minimize your time in the kitchen by serving room-temperature items that can stay out on your table for the duration of the event.

So gather your friends and family, and share some holiday cheer!

## OPEN-FACE GRILLED PORK TENDERLOIN SANDWICHES WITH SOUR-CHERRY SAUCE

*Serves 12 to 16*

1 to 1-1/4 lb. pork tenderloin  
Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper  
7 shallots, peeled and halved lengthwise  
2 cups red wine  
1 cup dried sour cherries  
1/2 cup sugar  
2 sprigs fresh rosemary  
1 loaf thinly sliced white bread  
Additional sprigs of fresh rosemary for garnish

Heat a clean grill to medium-high.

Season the pork tenderloin with salt and pepper. Grill over medium-high heat until barely pink in the middle, about 5 to 6 minutes per side. Remove the tenderloin

Open-Face Grilled Pork Tenderloin Sandwiches With Sour-Cherry Sauce

# Holiday Cheer

## Crowd-Pleasing Hors d'Oeuvres

## SPICE IT UP

Regardless of your culinary skill, it's easy to turn a simple ingredient into something sublime.

Enliven a bowl of olives with crushed red pepper flakes, fennel seeds and orange zest. Can't decide between sweet and sour? Candy nuts with a spicy sugar coating. Kick homemade cheese straws up a notch with a generous dash of paprika.



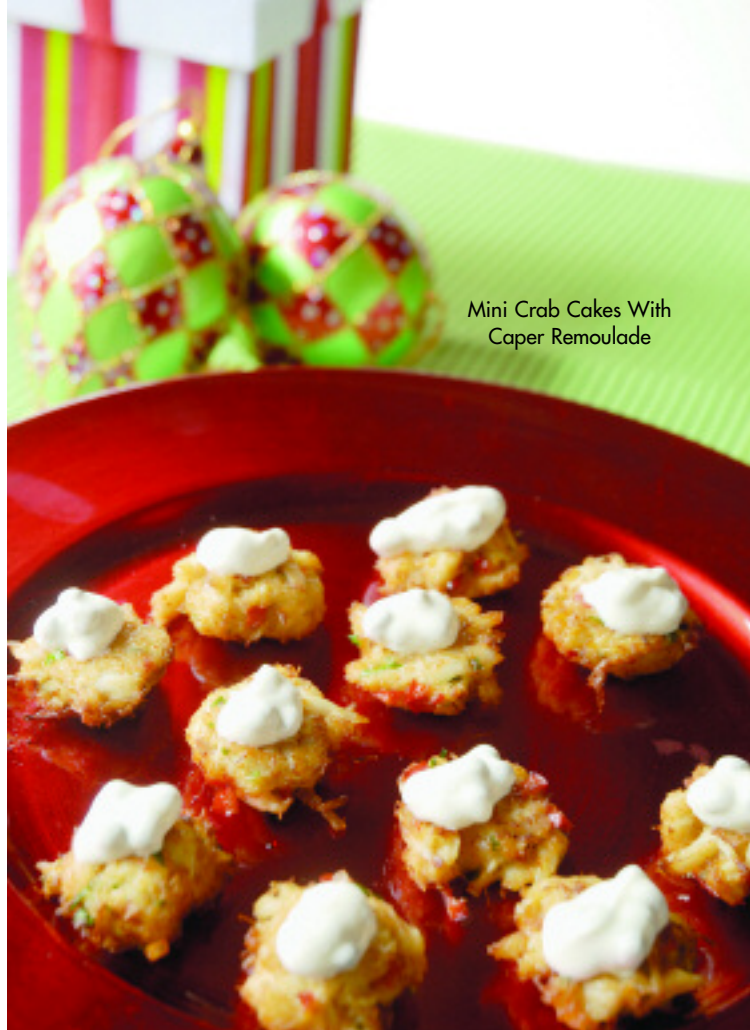
Deviled Eggs With Chives and Caviar



from the heat, and set aside to cool to room temperature. Then cover and refrigerate until ready to serve.

While the pork cools, heat the oil over medium-high heat until a few droplets of water sizzle in a pan. Add the shallots, and sauté until caramelized. Add the wine, and deglaze the pan. Add cherries, sugar and rosemary, and boil until the liquid is reduced to about two cups, about 15 minutes. Discard the rosemary sprigs. Transfer the mixture to a food processor, and pulse until coarsely chopped. Transfer to a bowl, and chill about 1 hour.

Using a round cookie cutter, cut bread into circles approximately the same size as the tenderloin slices. Brush with melted butter, and toast in a preheated 375° F oven until golden. Remove from the heat,



Mini Crab Cakes With Caper Remoulade

and let cool to room temperature.

To assemble the sandwiches, first slice the tenderloin thinly across the grain. Place one slice of pork on top of each piece of toast. Garnish with a spoonful of sour-cherry sauce and a sprig of rosemary.

Tip: Pork and cherry sauce can be made and chilled separately one day in advance.

## DEVILED EGGS WITH CHIVES AND CAVIAR

*Serves 20*

24 large hard-boiled eggs, peeled and halved length-wise

2/3 cup sour cream

1/3 cup mayonnaise

1/4 cup plus 2 tbsp. chopped fresh chives

1 tbsp. Dijon mustard

2 tsp. freshly squeezed lemon juice

Kosher salt

Freshly ground pepper

1 1-oz. jar caviar

Carefully scoop yolks from the egg halves into a large bowl. Set egg white halves aside. Add sour cream, mayonnaise, 1/4 cup chives, mustard and lemon juice to the yolks. Mash with a fork until smooth. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Spoon filling into each egg white half. Arrange on a platter. Garnish each egg with 1/8 tsp. of caviar and remaining chopped chives. Serve immediately.

Tip: Can be prepared 2 hours in advance before garnishing with caviar and chives. Keep covered and refrigerated until ready to serve.



Bacon-Wrapped Dates

## MINI CRAB CAKES WITH CAPER REMOULADE

*Serves 12*

### crab cakes

- 1 lb. jumbo lump crabmeat
- 1 egg, cracked into a small bowl
- 1 tbsp. mayonnaise
- 1 tsp. Dijon mustard
- 1 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
- 2 tbsp. minced fresh parsley
- Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper
- 1/2 red bell pepper, seeded and finely diced
- 1 shallot, minced
- 3 tbsp. breadcrumbs

### remoulade

- 1/4 cup mayonnaise
- 1/4 cup sour cream
- 2 tbsp. freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 4 tbsp. capers, drained
- Vegetable oil for frying

Pick through the crabmeat to remove any extra shell.

In a medium bowl, whisk together the egg, mayonnaise, Dijon mustard, Worcestershire sauce and parsley. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Gently fold the crabmeat, red bell pepper, shallots and breadcrumbs into the egg mixture. Shape into 16 mini crab cakes. Cover with plastic wrap, and refrigerate for 30 minutes.

While the crab cakes are in the refrigerator, prepare the caper remoulade by whisking together the mayonnaise, sour cream and lemon juice in a small bowl. Stir in the capers. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Refrigerate until ready to use.

Fill a large skillet with vegetable oil about 1/4-inch deep. Heat the oil over medium-high heat until a few droplets of water sizzle in the pan. Fry the cakes until golden brown, about 5 minutes per side. Remove from skillet and set aside; keep warm.

Garnish the top of each crab cake with a dollop of caper remoulade. Serve immediately.

*Accessories provided by Babcock Gifts.*

## BACON-WRAPPED DATES

*Serves 8 to 10*

- 1 lb. (about 12 to 13 slices) bacon, preferably thick-cut
- 25 Medjool dates (about 3/4 lb.)

Preheat oven to 450° F.

Cut the bacon in half lengthwise. Set aside. Remove the pits from the dates by cutting the tips off each end of the dates and inserting the flat end of a skewer until it pushes the pit out of the date. Repeat with remaining dates.

Wrap the dates with a slice of bacon and secure with a toothpick. Arrange all the prepared dates on a parchment-lined baking sheet. Roast for 15 to 20 minutes or until bacon is browned and crispy. Remove from the baking sheet. Serve immediately. ●

## BUY IT

Not everything needs to be made from scratch. Store-bought items are time-savers that help relieve the stress of hosting a party.

Pick up an artisan cheese such as the Roaring Forties Blue pictured here, and make a festive arrangement with dried fruits, nuts and flatbread crackers.

Hors d'oeuvres, side dishes and desserts from your favorite market or bakery are also easy additions to supplement your holiday feast.

