

Three simple solutions to holiday party prep: sun-dried tomato basil crostini, honey-baked ham on cheddar biscuits with cranberry mustard sauce and pickled shrimp.

## holiday party pick-ups

Along with the invite to your friend's holiday soiree often comes the request to bring an hors d'oeuvre. So what should you prepare? To help solve that dilemma, here are three classic dishes redefined.

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Flavorful, marinated shrimp is party-perfect, a refreshing stand-in for the more predictable shrimp cocktail.

### PICKLED SHRIMP

- 4 pounds medium shrimp, boiled and peeled
- 1 large yellow onion, thinly sliced
- 6 garlic cloves, minced
- 5 lemons, thinly sliced
- 1 teaspoon celery seeds
- 1 teaspoon coriander seeds
- 1 teaspoon fennel seeds
- 1 teaspoon mustard seeds
- 1 tablespoon crushed red pepper flakes
- 8 bay leaves
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- 1 1/2 cups extra virgin olive oil
- 2/3 cup white wine vinegar
- 1/2 cup freshly squeezed lemon juice

Place all the ingredients in a large bowl and toss until thoroughly combined. Marinate, covered, in a non-reactive container (such as a glass jar) in the refrigerator for at least 8 hours and up to 2 days. *Serves 18*

### SUN-DRIED TOMATO AND BASIL CROSTINI

- 1 baguette, cut into 1/4-inch thick slices
- 1/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1 cup sun-dried tomatoes marinated in oil, coarsely chopped
- 1/2 small yellow onion, finely chopped
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper
- 1/4 cup fresh goat cheese

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

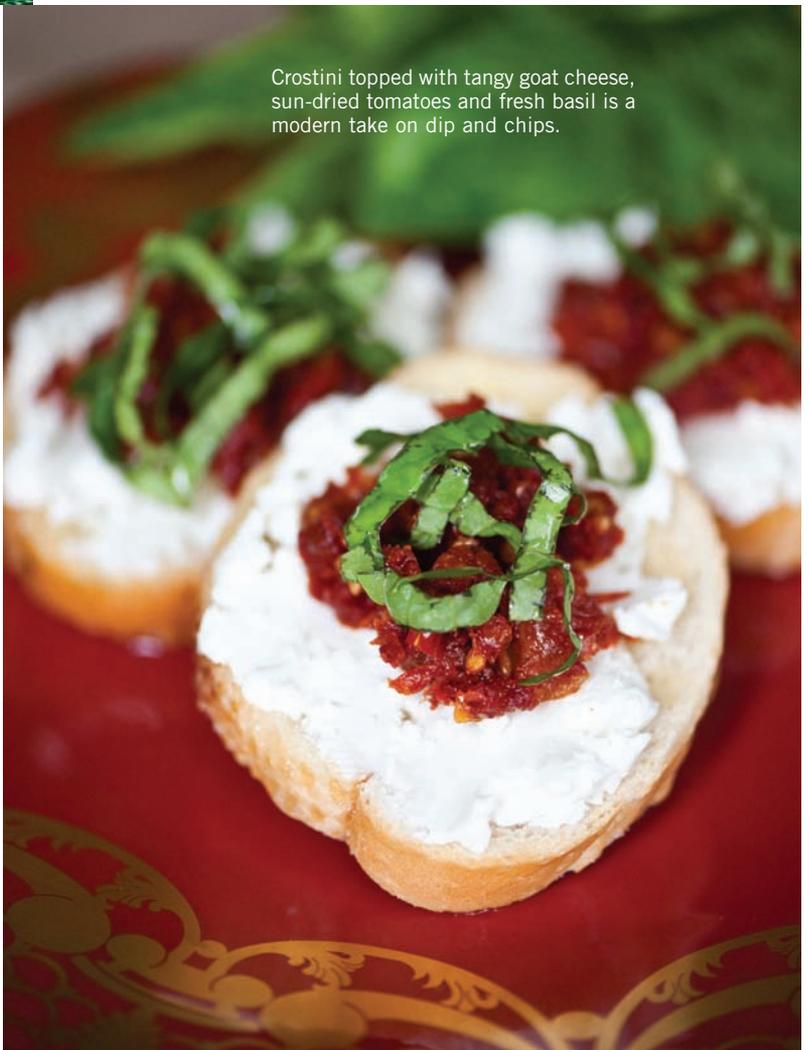
Arrange the baguette slices in a single layer on a baking sheet, drizzle with 2 tablespoons olive oil and bake until toasted, about 8 minutes.

In a blender or food processor, puree the tomatoes, onion, garlic and the remaining 1/4 cup olive oil until smooth. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Spread the cheese lightly over the crostini. Spoon about 1/2 tablespoon tomato mixture onto each crostini. Top with shredded fresh basil. Serve immediately.

**TIP:** When taking this to a party, transport the crostini, cheese, tomato mixture and basil separately. Assemble at the party. *Serves 8 to 10*

Crostini topped with tangy goat cheese, sun-dried tomatoes and fresh basil is a modern take on dip and chips.



### HONEY-BAKED HAM ON CHEDDAR BISCUITS WITH CRANBERRY MUSTARD SAUCE

**12 cheddar biscuits, recipe follows**  
**1/2 cup cranberry mustard sauce,**  
**recipe follows**

**1 pound sliced honey-baked ham**

Slice the biscuits in half. Place one small slice of ham on each biscuit and then top with a spoonful of the cranberry mustard sauce. Cover with the top of the biscuit and serve. *Makes 2 dozen.*

#### *Cranberry Mustard Sauce*

**1/2 cup jellied cranberry sauce**  
**2 tablespoons grainy Dijon mustard**  
**1 tablespoon brown sugar**  
**Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper**

Combine the cranberry sauce, mustard and brown sugar in a small mixing bowl, whisking until smooth. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Refrigerate until ready to use. *Makes 1/2 cup.*

#### *Cheddar Biscuits*

**2 cups all-purpose flour**  
**1 tablespoon baking powder**  
**1 1/2 teaspoons kosher salt**  
**12 tablespoons (1 1/2 sticks) chilled unsalted butter, finely diced**  
**1/2 cup buttermilk, chilled**  
**3 large eggs, chilled**  
**1 cup grated sharp cheddar cheese**

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees.

Place the flour, the baking powder and salt in the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment. With the mixer on low, add the butter and mix until the mixture resembles coarse meal.

Combine the buttermilk and two eggs in a small bowl and beat lightly with a fork. With the mixer still on low, quickly add the buttermilk mixture to the flour mixture and mix only until the dough comes together, about 15 seconds. Then add the cheese to the dough. Mix only until roughly combined.

Turn the dough out onto a floured board and knead lightly about 5 times. Roll the dough out to a rectangle about 3/4-inch thick. Cut the dough into biscuits, using a 2-inch round cookie cutter. Transfer to a sheet pan lined with parchment paper. In a small bowl, whisk the remaining egg with 1 tablespoon water. Brush the tops with the egg wash and bake for 15 to 18 minutes, or until golden and cooked through. *Makes 2 dozen.* **DU**



When pork tenderloin and rolls become tired, these delicious little pre-assembled ham and cheddar biscuits come to the rescue.

*Serving pieces courtesy of Babcock Gifts, Memphis.*