

Football play-off season is here. Planning a game-day gathering? Need to try out some new snacks? Over the next few weeks, we will have some ideas for you.

If you have a recipe to share, please submit to ads@thedrummer.com.

Homecoming Punch

Level: Easy
Total: 5 min
Prep: 5 min
Yield: 12 servings

1 (64 oz.) container cranberry juice cocktail, chilled
1 (12 oz.) can frozen orange juice concentrate, thawed
1 (12 oz.) can frozen pink lemonade concentrate, thawed
2 c. brandy
1 bottle extra-dry sparkling wine or Champagne, chilled
4 c. ice cubes

Combine all ingredients in a large pitcher or punch bowl with 4 cups of ice.

Artichoke Spinach Dip with Roasted Red Bell Peppers

Level: Easy
Total: 31 min
Prep: 6 min
Cook: 25 min
Yield: 6 to 8 servings

14 oz. canned (or frozen, thawed) artichoke hearts, drained, diced (not marinated)
9 oz. frozen creamed spinach, thawed
1/2 c. finely diced red onion
1/2 c. diced roasted red bell pepper
1/3 c. grated Parmesan
2 T. jarred pesto sauce
2 T. mayonnaise
1 tsp. freshly cracked black pepper
1/2 tsp. salt
1 pkg. tortilla chips
1 pkg. pita chips

Preheat a gas or charcoal grill to 350 degrees F.

In a medium mixing bowl, add all the ingredients, except the chips, and mix well. Transfer to a 9 by 9-inch foil baking pan and cover with aluminum foil. Put on the grill over indirect heat (350 degrees F is ideal) and cook for 15 minutes, turning every 5 minutes, to keep the heat even. Carefully remove from the grill and serve with the chips.

Cook's Note: The dip can be prepared in advance and kept in the refrigerator until ready to cook. If this is done, please add 10 minutes to the cook time.

Bacon BBQ Nachos

Level: Easy
Total: 50 min
Active: 30 min
Yield: 12 servings

1 (12 oz.) pkg. smoked bacon (12 strips)
1 (14 oz.) bag white corn tortilla chips
3 T. barbeque seasoning
2 T. sour cream
2 T. barbeque sauce
1 tsp. hot sauce
2 T. all-purpose flour
1 (12 oz.) can evaporated milk (1-1/2 cups)
1/2 cup low-sodium chicken stock
1/2 tsp. kosher salt
1 cup shredded mild Cheddar
1 (15 oz.) can baked beans, warmed
1/4 c. pickled jalapenos
2 T. pimientos
2 scallions, chopped

Place the bacon in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat until crispy and cooked through on both sides, about 16 minutes. Remove the bacon to a paper-towel lined plate, reserving the fat in the skillet. Once the bacon has cooled slightly, chop into bite-sized pieces. Set aside.

Place the chips on a large serving platter and sprinkle the barbeque seasoning over the top.

Combine the sour cream, barbeque sauce and hot sauce in a small bowl to make a barbeque crema. Set aside.

Place the skillet with the reserved bacon fat over medium-low heat. Add the flour and whisk until a smooth paste forms. Cook this mixture until thin and slightly tan, 2 to 3 minutes. While continuously whisking, pour the evaporated milk and stock into the flour mixture. Reduce the heat to low and cook, whisking occasionally, until the sauce slightly thickens and lightly coats the back of a spoon, about 8 minutes. Whisk in the salt and cheese until melted. Remove from heat, as the sauce will continue to thicken.

Spoon the warm beans over the chips. Sprinkle half of the chopped bacon over the beans. Pour the warm cheese sauce generously over the platter. Sprinkle the jalapenos, pimientos, remaining bacon and scallions on top. Drizzle with the barbeque crema and serve immediately.

Comfort Meatballs

Level: Easy

Total: 2 hr

Prep: 15 min

Inactive: 45 min

Cook: 1 hr

Yield: 6 to 8 servings

Meatballs:

1-1/2 lbs. ground beef

3/4 c. quick oats

1 c. milk

3 T. very finely minced onion

1-1/2 tsp. salt

Plenty of ground black pepper

4 T. canola oil

1/2 c. all-purpose flour

Sauce:

1 c. ketchup

4 to 6 T. minced onion

3 T. distilled white vinegar

2 T. sugar

2 T. Worcestershire sauce

Dash of hot sauce

For the meatballs: In bowl, combine the ground beef and oats. Pour in the milk, and then add the onions, salt and pepper. Stir to combine. Roll the mixture into tablespoon-size balls and refrigerate them for 30 to 45 minutes to firm.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F.

Heat the canola oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Dredge the meatballs in the flour, and then brown the meatballs in batches until light brown. As they brown, place them into a rectangular baking dish.

For the sauce: Stir together the ketchup, onions, vinegar, sugar, Worcestershire sauce and hot sauce. Drizzle the sauce evenly on the meatballs.

Bake until bubbly and hot, about 45 minutes.

Make-Ahead Sandwich Rolls

Level: Easy

Total: 2 hr 15 min

(includes chilling time)

Active: 15 min

Yield: 10 to 12 servings

Sandwich Rolls:

6 flatbreads or tortillas in assorted colors/flavors (2 red, 2 green, 2 white)

12 slices American cheese

1 lb. shaved turkey

1 head romaine lettuce, shredded

1 lb. shaved smoked ham

Chipotle Mayonnaise:

1 c. mayonnaise

1 canned chipotle chile in adobo, diced

Kosher salt & freshly ground black pepper

Serving suggestions: mayonnaise & Dijon mustard

For the sandwich rolls: On each piece of flatbread, lay 2 slices of American cheese, a layer of shaved turkey, a layer of lettuce and finally a layer of shaved ham. Roll each flatbread into a large roll and wrap in plastic wrap. Refrigerate for several hours.

For the chipotle mayonnaise: In a medium bowl, mix together the mayonnaise, diced chipotle and salt and pepper to taste.

When ready to serve, remove the flatbreads from the fridge and slice each into 4 or 5 thick rounds. Serve with the chipotle mayonnaise, regular mayonnaise and Dijon mustard.

Teriyaki Chicken Wings

Level: Easy
Total: 40 min
Prep: 10 min
Cook: 30 min
Yield: 12 cocktail servings

Wings:

2 doz. chicken wings, about 3-1/4 lbs., rinsed & patted dry
Salt & freshly ground black pepper
Olive oil
1 T. sesame seeds, toasted in a skillet over medium heat until lightly browned
Leaves from 1/2 bunch fresh cilantro, chopped

Teriyaki Sauce:

1 c. low-sodium soy sauce
1 c. grapefruit juice
1/4 c. hoisin sauce
1/4 c. ketchup
3 T. rice wine vinegar
1/4 c. brown sugar
1 fresh, hot red chile, halved
5 garlic cloves, halved
2" piece fresh ginger, smashed with the side of a large knife

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F.

Season the chicken wings with salt and pepper and drizzle a little olive oil on them to prevent sticking. Lay the wings in a single layer on a baking sheet. Bake for 30 minutes or until the skin gets crispy and the wings are cooked through.

Meanwhile, combine the teriyaki sauce ingredients in a large saucepan. Simmer over low heat and reduce until slightly thickened. Pour the sauce into a large bowl. Dump the wings into the bowl and toss to coat them with the sauce. Transfer to a serving platter and sprinkle with the sesame seeds and cilantro. Serve hot.

Tropical Avocado Salsa

Level: Easy
Total: 15 min
Prep: 15 min
Yield: 3 cups
(about 8 servings)

1 T. chopped peeled fresh ginger
1 jalapeno, seeded if desired, chopped
1/2 clove garlic, chopped
Kosher salt
1 c. finely chopped fresh pineapple, plus more for garnish
1/2 c. fresh cilantro leaves, coarsely chopped, plus a few sprigs for garnish
1/4 c. finely chopped red onion
1/2 c. grape tomatoes, quartered
2 ripe avocados, peeled, seeded & chopped
2 T. fresh lime juice
Sweet potato, blue corn & plantain chips, for dipping

Place the ginger, jalapeno, and garlic on a cutting board. Using a large knife, chop the ingredients together until they are minced and well combined. Sprinkle the mixture with 1/4 teaspoon salt and use the side of the knife to work the mixture into a coarse paste. Transfer the paste to a medium bowl and add the pineapple, chopped cilantro, onions, tomatoes, and avocados. Toss gently to combine. Add the lime juice and 3/4 teaspoon salt and toss again. Taste and add additional salt if desired. Transfer the salsa to a serving bowl and garnish with a few pieces of diced pineapple and cilantro sprigs. Serve with the chips. Cook's Note: If you're making this salsa ahead of time, you can refrigerate it, covered, for up to 4 hours. When ready to serve, stir well, transfer to a serving bowl and garnish.

Spiced Mixed Cocktail Nuts with Pretzels

Level: Easy
Total: 1 hr (includes cooling time)
Active: 10 min
Yield: about 4 cups

Cocktail Spice Blend:

3 T. sugar
1-1/2 tsp. paprika
1-1/2 tsp. minced fresh thyme
3/4 tsp. ground mustard
1/4 tsp. ground cinnamon
Kosher salt & freshly ground black pepper

Nuts:

Vegetable or canola oil, for oiling the baking sheet
1 lg. egg white
1 c. unsalted raw cashews
1 c. unsalted raw peanuts
1 c. unsalted raw pecans
1 c. unsalted raw walnuts
1-1/2 c. mini pretzels

For the cocktail spice blend: Mix together the sugar, paprika, thyme, mustard, cinnamon, 1 1/2 teaspoons salt and 1/4 teaspoon pepper in a small bowl and set aside.

For the nuts: Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Lightly oil a rimmed baking sheet.

Put the egg white in a large bowl and whisk until frothy. Add the cashews, peanuts, pecans, walnuts and pretzels and toss to coat in the egg white. Add the spice blend and toss again to coat.

Spread the nut mixture evenly on the prepared baking sheet and bake, stirring occasionally, until golden brown, 15 to 20 minutes. Let cool on the baking sheet, then transfer to a large bowl.

Mini Chocolate-Pecan-Caramel Cheesecakes

Level: Easy

Total: 4 hr 20 min (includes cooling and freezing time)

Active: 45 min

Yield: 24 servings

Crust:

24 chocolate graham crackers (large rectangles), broken into large pieces
8 T. (1 stick) salted butter, melted
1/2 c. sugar

Filling:

3 (8 oz.) pkgs. cream cheese, softened
1 c. sugar
2 lg. eggs
1 tsp. vanilla extract
1/2 c. jarred salted caramel

Ganache:

12 oz. white chocolate, chopped
3/4 c. heavy cream

Toppings:

1/2 c. pecans, chopped fine
1/2 c. mini semisweet chocolate chips

For the crust: Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Line a 24-cup muffin tin with cupcake liners.

Pulse the graham crackers in a food processor until fine crumbs form. Add the butter and sugar, then pulse until well combined. Distribute the crumbs among the prepared cups, about 2 tablespoons in each, and press to firm them up.

For the filling: Beat the cream cheese in an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment until smooth. Mix in the sugar and eggs. Add the vanilla and 3 tablespoons of the salted caramel and mix again. Distribute the batter among the muffin cups, about 3 tablespoons per cup. Tap the tin on the counter to distribute the batter evenly.

Bake, watching to make sure they don't burn, until set in the middle, 15 to 17 minutes. Cool on a wire rack, then chill for 2 hours.

For the ganache: Place the chopped chocolate in a bowl and set aside. Heat the cream in a saucepan until warm and bubbles begin to form around the edges, 1 to 2 minutes. Pour over the chocolate and allow to sit for 2 minutes. Mix until smooth, then set aside to cool slightly.

Place about 1 tablespoon ganache on top of each cheesecake. Sprinkle the top with the pecan pieces and mini chocolate chips. Drizzle with the remaining 1/4 cup plus 1 tablespoon caramel and freeze, uncovered, for 1 hour. Transfer to an airtight freezer container and freeze for up to 3 months.

Allow to thaw at room temperature for 30 minutes before serving.

Quote of the Week:

“Be at war with your vices, at peace with your neighbors, and let every new year find you a better man.”

~ Benjamin Franklin