

# The key to Christmas parties is cooking ahead

By JOANNE SPAHR

**Editor's note:** The following is part one in a series of articles featuring Extension assistant, Susan Doyle, and her recipe ideas for the Christmas holiday. The recipes were obtained at the Lancaster County Homemaker's Christmas program, recently.

LANCASTER, Pa. - This year's annual Lancaster County Extension Service Christmas program was a bigger success than had been imagined. Well over 500 homemakers joined in the festivities at the Farm and Home Center, here, this month.

Among the scheduled activities was a demonstration on how to use the sewing machine to make holiday crafts and gifts, and a presentation on making creative holiday decorations for the home using fresh flowers and greens. The program was given by Mrs. George C. Makin III, who is a noted lecturer and flower show judge.

One other feature of the

program was holiday food ideas presented by Susan Doyle, former Metropolitan Edison home economist and Extension assistant, who is a native of Lebanon County now residing in Lancaster County. She planned a menu complete for open house gatherings, "after caroling" get togethers, Holiday brunches, New Year's Eve Suppers, tree trimmers, stocking stuffers, and take-along gifts.

"The primary purpose of parties," Susan told the group, "is to have fun." And, she reminded the homemakers, it is also important that the hostess have fun as well as the guests. The key to this is getting as much done ahead of time as possible.

"So," she continued, "my presentation could have been entitled, 'Let's have a freeze ahead party.'" Freezing ahead makes the entertaining less harried and more comfortable for the hostess.

Susan believes that a menu for guests should have quite

a bit of variety - both in flavor and temperature, and also in consistency and color. So, she planned each menu with this in mind. For an "open house" get-together, she planned marinated mushrooms, shrimp dip, hot olive cheese puffs, savory ham spread, crackers, fresh fruit, nuts, Christmas candy, cranberry sponge roll, and a holiday punch bowl.

Her first "open house" recipe was an appetizer made with marinated mushrooms covered with homemade French dressing. The recipe is:

## MARINATED MUSHROOMS

1 pound small mushrooms  
2 tablespoons olive oil  
½ cup French dressing  
1 garlic clove, halved

Lightly brown mushrooms in olive oil. Cover with French dressing; add garlic. Marinate for a few hours or overnight in refrigerator. Serve on toothpicks. Makes four to six servings.

French Dressing:  
½ cup fresh lemon juice or vinegar  
1-½ cups olive or other salad oil  
2 teaspoons salt  
¼ teaspoon pepper  
1 teaspoon powdered mustard  
Dash of cayenne

Mix all ingredients in a one quart glass jar; cover tightly and shake until thoroughly blended. Store in refrigerator. Makes two cups.

For this particular recipe, Susan suggests buying mushrooms of uniform size and washing only as many as you need, to insure their freshness.

## WENDY'S SHRIMP DIP

Another appetizer for an open house get-together is shrimp dip. Right now prices for shrimp are quite high but it is a delicious food to prepare for guests. To solve this dilemma, Susan has come up with a recipe that can be made with broken shrimp pieces. This ingredient works very well and is relatively inexpensive. The recipe is:

1 (8-ounce) package of cream cheese  
1 small can shrimp  
¼ cup mayonnaise  
1 tablespoon horseradish  
1 teaspoon lemon juice  
1 tablespoon chili sauce

Mix all the ingredients together and beat well. Prepare at least several hours before serving to allow flavors to mingle.

Susan made this particular recipe even easier by blending her ingredients in a blender.

## HOT OLIVE CHEESE PUFFS

Another delicious food for pop-in guests is olive cheese puffs. This particular recipe must be made ahead of time and put in the freezer. Susan suggests getting the biggest olives possible even though they are slightly more expensive, because they make

nicer puffs. To make the puffs, you mix together the dough and cover each olive with it, then you freeze them on a cookie sheet, re-storing them in freezer bags when they are completely frozen. Then, all you need to do when guests arrive is get them out of the freezer, bake them, and serve.

The recipe is:  
1 cup grated natural sharp cheese  
3 tablespoons soft butter or margarine

½ cup flour  
¼ teaspoon salt  
½ teaspoon paprika  
20 - 24 large stuffed olives

Blend the cheese with the butter or margarine. Stir in the flour, salt, and paprika. Wrap about one teaspoon cheese dough around each stuffed olive, completely covering the olive. Freeze on a cookie sheet. When frozen, remove from cookie sheet and store in freezer bag. To serve: arrange frozen cheese puffs on ungreased cookie sheet. Bake at 400 degrees for 10 - 15 minutes or until golden brown. Serve warm. Makes 20 - 24 olives.

## SAVORY HAM SPREAD

"Ham is an acceptable food for most any guest - even the fussy ones," says Susan. So, you are sure to come up with something everybody likes if you try savory ham spread. The recipe is:

3 pounds canned ham, ground (seven cups)  
¾ cup mayonnaise  
One-third cup sweet pickle relish  
½ cup coarsely chopped parsley  
½ cup pimiento

Combine ham with remaining ingredients. Pack into mold or mixing bowl and refrigerate. Unmold and garnish. NOTE: Other cooked ham can be substituted for canned.

To grind the ham, Susan suggests using the blender, and once the spread is made,

garnish it with holly leaves to give it a holiday look.

## CRANBERRY SPONGE ROLL

A terrific holiday dessert, and one that can dress up other year-round desserts is cranberry sponge roll. First you make the sponge cake, then you roll it up and allow it to cool. After this you top it with a prepared cranberry glaze. This glaze is a quick way to make a cheese cake "Christmas-sy". The recipe is:

4 eggs, separated  
1 cup sugar  
3 tablespoons orange juice  
½ teaspoon grated lemon rind

1 cup sifted cake flour  
¼ teaspoon salt  
1-¼ teaspoon baking powder  
Cranberry topping  
Confectioner's sugar

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Lightly grease a jelly-roll pan (15 X 10 inches) and line with wax paper. Grease paper.

Beat egg yolks until thick and lemon-colored. Gradually beat in three-quarters cup sugar. Add orange juice and lemon rind. Beat egg whites until they stand in peaks. Gradually beat in remaining sugar. Fold in egg-yolk mixture.

Sift the flour with salt and baking powder. Fold into egg mixture and pour into prepared pan. Bake for 15 minutes.

Turn out at once onto a towel sprinkled with confectioner's sugar. Quickly remove paper and roll cake in the towel. Let stand until cold.

Unroll cake and spread with the topping. Roll up and sprinkle with confectioner's sugar.

Cranberry topping:  
1-½ cups fresh cranberries  
¼ cup fresh orange juice  
¾ cup sugar  
1-½ teaspoons cornstarch  
1 tablespoon water  
½ teaspoon grated lemon rind

Mix the cranberries, orange juice, and sugar in a sauce pan. Cover and cook for six to eight minutes, until skins burst.

Blend the cornstarch and water and add to cranberries. Cook, stirring for two minutes, or until mixture thickens.

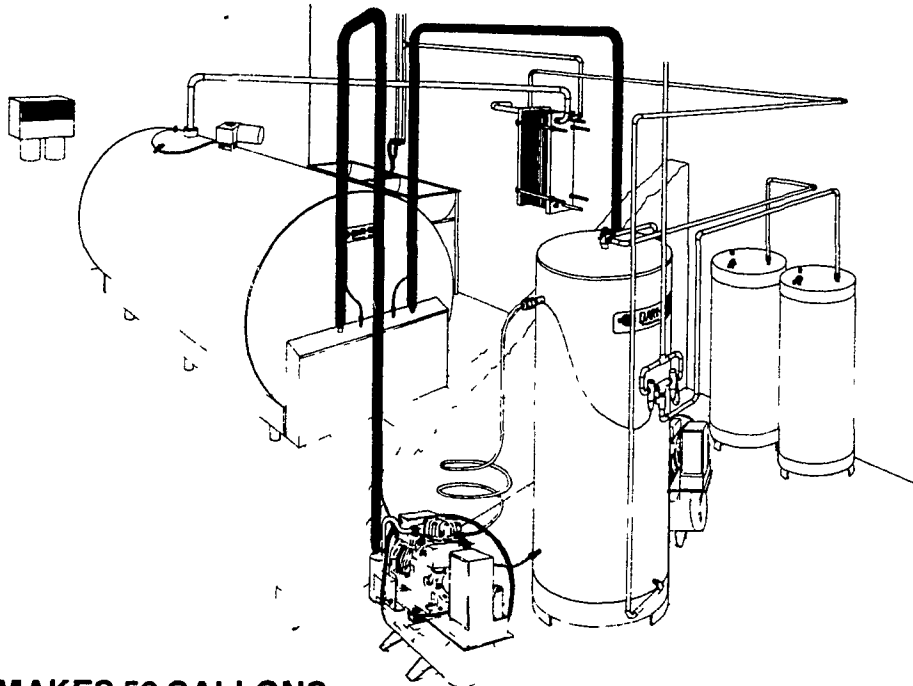
Remove from heat and stir in lemon rind. Chill.

## FRESH FRUIT

Susan also suggests having whole fresh fruit in a compote with nuts on the top. This is a nice dish to serve guests, and it doubles as a centerpiece.

Next week Lancaster Farming will feature Susan's "After Caroling" recipes and ideas.

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