

Ideas For Holiday Entertaining

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EPHRATA (Lancaster Co.) —

With the holiday season in full swing, you may be looking for some unique ideas to entertain last-minute guests or perhaps you'd like to have a few friends over but don't feel energetic enough to provide a full-course dinner.

It's perfectly legitimate to skip the full-course dinner and have guests for dessert only.

Mim Enck, who manages the Old Philadelphia Roasting Company at the Farmers Market at Doneckers of Ephrata, recently demonstrated creative ways for using unique blends of coffee. She thinks coffee sipped leisurely from your best china or crystal is the perfect ending to a holiday meal or to dessert only. From the recipes below, you'll see that Mim believes in using real whipping cream for that extra special touch to coffee.

The food demonstration also included ideas for entertaining with cheeses and holiday leftover ideas. Clip these recipes for your holiday file.

SPICED COFFEE

6 cups strong hot coffee
4 cups water
½ cup packed dark brown sugar
4 3-inch cinnamon sticks, broken
4 2½-inch strips orange zest
½ teaspoon allspice

In saucepan, combine water, sugar, cinnamon sticks, orange zest and allspice. Over moderate heat, bring mixture to a boil, then remove pan from heat. Allow to set for a few minutes. Strain and divide equally among 6 cups.

BUTTERY CASHEW BRITTLE

2 cups sugar
1 cup light corn syrup
½ cup water
2½ cups coarsely chopped salted cashews
½ cup butter
2 teaspoons baking soda
Butter 2 large cookie sheets, set aside. Combine sugar, corn syrup and water in 3-quart mixing bowl or casserole. Microwave on high 8 to 10 minutes, stirring twice, until soft ball stage is reached. Stir in cashews. Microwave on high 10 to 12 minutes, until hard crack stage is reached. Stir in butter and baking soda. Pour half of mixture on cookie sheet, spreading to ¼-inch thickness. Cool completely. Break into pieces.

CHEESE FONDUE

¾ pound Emmenthal (Switzerland Swiss) cheese, grated
¼ pound Swiss Gruyere cheese, grated
1 cup dry white wine
1 tablespoon cornstarch
Dash nutmeg
1 clove garlic
Pinch baking soda
Crust bread

Mix grated cheese with cornstarch and allow to come to room temperature. Rub a ceramic fondue pot with the split clove of garlic. Add lemon juice and wine. Heat the liquids until champagne-like bubbles begin to appear on side of pot. Remove garlic and discard. Add cheese and fold until smooth. Add dash of freshly grated nutmeg and a pinch of baking soda. Put cube of crust bread on end of fondue fork and dip with a figure eight in fondue pot. Makes 2 to 4 servings.

PRALINE BRIE

15 ounces baby brie, room temperature
½ cup roasted slivered almonds
½ cup brown sugar
Slice thin layer off top of brie. Sprinkle with slivered almonds and brown sugar. Place on flat pan under broiler for 3 to 5 minutes. When sugar bubbles, remove from heat. Allow to stand a few minutes and serve.

MARINATED MIXED BEAN SALAD

2 cups cooked cut green beans
1 cup cooked chickpeas
1 cup cooked lima beans
1 red onion, sliced
1 carrot, shredded
Italian dressing:
1 egg
½ cup chopped parsley
2 tablespoons capers
2 cloves garlic
2 teaspoons anchovy paste
1 cup green olive oil
½ cup balsamic vinegar
Salt
Shredded escarole leaves
In a bowl, combine green beans, chick peas and beans, onions and carrot. For dressing, combine egg, parsley, capers, garlic, anchovy paste, oil and vinegar in a blender and puree. Pour dressing over salad and season to taste with salt. Chill. Serve on a bed of escarole leaves. Makes 6-8 servings.



Use your best china, crystal and silver to make your guests feel special during your holiday entertaining. Here Mim Enck adds a dollop of whipped cream to Turkish coffee.

TURKISH COFFEE

4 cups strong hot coffee
4 tablespoons honey
4 cardamon seeds
Whipped cream to garnish
Divide honey and cardamon seeds equally among 4 cups coffee. Top with dollops of whipped cream and serve immediately.

COFFEE FLOAT

1½ cups strong hot coffee (preferably espresso)
½ cup heavy cream
4 teaspoons honey
8 scoops of ice cream
Grated dark bittersweet chocolate to garnish
Whip cream and honey until stiff. Place two scoops ice cream in four tall stemmed glasses. Pour on coffee, dividing evenly among servings. Dollop with whipped cream and garnish with grated chocolate.

TURKEY CAJUN GUMBO

½ cup butter
¼ cup all-purpose flour
1 onion, chopped
1 green bell pepper, seeded and chopped
2 stalks celery, chopped
4 cloves garlic, chopped
2 cups sliced fresh zucchini
1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
1 tablespoon chili powder
2 cups canned tomatoes, undrained
2 cups chicken broth
1 teaspoon powdered sassafras leaves
4 cups diced cooked turkey
Salt
Cooked rice
In a 2-quart saucepan, melt butter, add flour and stir over low heat until mixture is deep brown but not burned. Add onion, pepper, celery, garlic, and zucchini and stir over medium heat for 5 minutes. Add Worcestershire sauce, chili powder, tomatoes, broth and sassafras leaves. Cover and simmer, stirring occasionally for 20 to 25 minutes or until vegetables are tender. Stir in chicken and season to taste with salt. Simmer 5 minutes. Serve in bowls spooned over rice. Makes 6 servings.



Marinated Bean Salad demonstrated by Lisa Kudela is a perfect addition to buffets or full-course dinners and can be a perfect way to dress up leftover beans.



Hold a Christmas Tea and have each guest bring their own favorite teacup and tell how they received it. From left, Mary Goshert, Doris Gates, Jeanne Kramer, and June Unruh share stories about their cups and saucers. Some teacups came from other countries, as presents, and some represented hobbies or careers of the owners.



One sure hit with guests is serving unique cheeses. Sandy Bowman demonstrates how easy it is to serve cheese fondue.