



Home on the Range

Holiday Pizzazz

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with assorted fruit such as grapes, strawberries and dry red wine.

HOLIDAY CHICKEN PRESENTS

1 pound skinned and boned chicken breast halves
 ¼ teaspoon garlic salt
 2 tablespoons butter
 2 chopped shallots onion
 ½ small onion, minced
 2 cups fresh mushrooms, sliced
 ½ (8-ounce) package cream cheese, softened
 2 tablespoons milk
 2 tablespoons sherry
 1 teaspoon grated Parmesan cheese
 ¼ teaspoon salt
 ¼ teaspoon pepper
 2 (17½-ounce) packages frozen puff pastry sheets, thawed
 12 (1 ounce) Swiss cheese slices
 12 (1 ounce) country ham slices
 1 egg white, lightly beaten
 ½ cup melted butter or margarine
 ¼ cup Dijon mustard
 1 teaspoon poppy seeds
 1 teaspoon lemon juice
 Sprinkle chicken with garlic salt. Cook in lightly greased non-stick skillet over medium heat for seven to eight minutes on each side or until lightly browned. Remove from skillet; chop chicken, and set aside.

Melt 2 tablespoons butter in non-stick skillet over medium heat; add shallots and onion, and saute three minutes. Add mushrooms, and saute for five minutes. Reduce heat to low; add cream cheese and milk, stirring until blended.

Remove from heat; add chopped chicken. Stir in sherry and next three ingredients.

Unfold three pastry sheets on a lightly floured surface; cut into fourths. Roll onto 10-inch squares.

Place cheese slice and ham slice in the center of each pastry square. Top with ¼ cup chopped chicken mixture. Bring corners together over filling, gently pressing to seal.

Cut remaining pastry sheet into thin strips; tie each bundle with pastry ribbon. Place on baking sheet; brush with egg white.

Bake at 400 degrees for 35 minutes or until golden. Whisk together melted butter and next three ingredients. Serve over pastry bundles. Makes 12 servings.

Source: Southern Living November 2001

CREAMY SHRIMP-AND-SCALLOPS CASSEROLE

16 frozen phyllo pastry sheets
 2½ pounds unpeeled, medium-size fresh shrimp
 2 (10-ounce) packages frozen chopped spinach, thawed
 5 tablespoons butter, divided
 2 garlic cloves, minced
 1 pound fresh bay scallops
 1 (8-ounce) package cream cheese, softened
 1 (8-ounce) container sour cream
 ½ cup shredded Parmesan cheese
 1 teaspoon salt
 1 teaspoon ground red pepper
 ¼ cup all-purpose flour
 2 cups half-and-half

Vegetable cooking spray
 Cut phyllo sheets into 13x9 inch rectangles; reserve half the sheets, keeping covered with damp towel to prevent drying out. Stack remaining eight sheets in a lightly greased 9x13-inch baking dish, lightly coating each sheet with vegetable cooking spray.

Bake on lowest rack in 400-degree oven for five minutes or until lightly browned. Set aside.

Peel shrimp, and devein, if desired.

Drain spinach well, pressing between paper towels.

Melt 1 tablespoon butter in a large skillet over medium heat; add garlic, and saute two minutes. Add shrimp and scallops; cook five minutes or just until shrimp turn pink. Stir in cream cheese and sour cream and next three ingredients until well blended. Remove from heat. Stir in spinach.

Melt remaining ¼ cup butter in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add flour, whisking constantly; cook, whisking constantly, one minute. Gradually add 2 cups half-and-half; cook three minutes or until mixture is thickened. Spoon into prepared baking dish on top of baked phyllo sheets.

Stack remaining phyllo sheets, coating each sheet with cooking spray. Roll up, jellyroll fashion, starting at long end and cut into ¼ inch slices. Unroll each piece and gently twist; arrange twists in a diamond pattern over casserole.

Bake at 400 degrees for 14 minutes or until golden. Let stand for 10 minutes. Makes 8 servings.

Source: Southern Living November 2001

CHOCOLATE KISS TARTS

1 (3-ounce) package cream cheese, softened
 ½ cup butter or margarine, softened
 1 cup unsifted all-purpose flour

Filling:
 24 Hershey's Kisses, unwrapped

Cut 24 three-inch circles of heavy-duty aluminum foil. (Try a coffee cup for a template).

Combine cream cheese and butter in a small mixer bowl; blend in flour. Shape dough into 24 one-inch balls; press dough down on foil circles, covering each. With thumb and forefinger, turn up edges of dough at five points, forming a star. Place on a cookie sheet.

Prepare filling:
 1 egg
 ¼ cup dark corn syrup
 2 tablespoons sugar
 1 tablespoon melted butter
 ¼ teaspoon vanilla
 ¼ cup finely chopped pecans
 Beat egg until foamy; add corn syrup, sugar, melted butter and vanilla. Blend well. Stir in pecans.

Spoon 1 teaspoon filling into each star. Bake at 350 degrees for 20 to 25 minutes or until lightly browned.

Remove from oven; immediately top each tart with an unwrapped Kiss. Cool tarts completely. Carefully remove foil. Makes 24 cookies.

Source: "Hershey's Chocolate Treasury" Golden Press, 1984

Experts Share Holiday Tips

How do the pros do it? Create a fabulous holiday menu, an incredible table setting, a memorable meal and enjoy it?

Here's how four entertaining experts do it (and you can, too!).

• Remember Your Immediate Family — Alicia Ross and Beverly Mills, co-authors of *Desperation Entertaining* (Workman, 2002), say they have realized that the time between Thanksgiving and Christmas can be the most "desperate" time of year, given all of the extra activities added to an already hectic schedule. They have learned that it's necessary to make a concerted effort to

have some special time, not only with friends and extended family, but also with their immediate families. Otherwise, the holidays would pass and they would miss connecting with those who live under the same roof!

So they've created a new tradition a "fancy dinner for four" (they both have a husband and two children). Selecting this menu is just as important as what to fix for the big feast with aunts and uncles, cousins and grandparents.

They choose a menu that's a bit fancy, a bit out of the ordinary for family meals like a succulent steak topped with something special like blue crab or a rich sauce. But, the meal must be easy, just like their book (where all recipes can be made in 20 minutes).

• Enjoy Yourself — Another bit of sage advice comes from B. Smith, the host of *B. Smith With Style*, a nationally syndicated television series. "I always host the kind of party I like going to," Smith says.

No matter what type of party you plan, the objectives remain the same — to make your guests feel welcome with warm hospitality and good food. And most important, your dinner or party should not feel "planned" no matter how much planning went into it.

"It's not just the guests who should be enjoying themselves; you should be having a good time, too," Smith adds.

• Celebrate with Special Foods

For Betty Rosbottom, cookbook author and regular contributor to *Bon Appetit*, the holidays would not be complete without celebrations.

"Nothing gives me more pleasure than taking extra time to cook and then share special dishes with others. The food for these occasions must be or, both in presentation and flavor. Rosbottom says, "Stately standing rib roasts and beef tenderloin, garnished with spicy condiments and fresh vegetables, are among her favorite choices for holiday main courses."

And one more thing, she always offers — several rich and indulgent desserts since no one counts calories during the holidays!

• Savor Your Own Celebration — Now, what about your own holiday celebrations? Big or small? Buffet or sit-down? Casual or fancy? That's all up to you, but the bottom line is, be comfortable with whatever you decide enjoy it!

A roast is one of the easiest and most impressive special meal choices for the holidays. Just put it on a rack in the oven and cook! No turning, no basting, no peeking!

Versatile beef roasts can be prepared simply with salt and pepper as the seasoning or more elaborately (but easy!) as in this *Horseradish-Crusted Beef Ribeye Roast*. Just spread prepared horseradish over a ribeye roast and then coat it with a three-ingredient mixture of cracker crumbs, grated Parmesan cheese and thyme. Not only will it be delicious, but it will make a stun-



Horseradish-Crusted Beef Ribeye Roast makes a delicious centerpiece for your holiday celebration.

ning presentation for the holiday table or buffet.

And for an easy make-ahead accompaniment that will add a very special touch to the menu, try *Savory Mushroom Bread Pudding*, accented with mushrooms, rosemary and Gruyere cheese. Assemble it the night before, refrigerate, then bake for an hour before serving time.

Finish the menu with a favorite salad and fresh vegetable.

For the finale, choose from a tempting trifle, decadent chocolate cake or cranberry sorbet with holiday cookies.

And, most of all, enjoy the food, the occasion and the holiday season!

HORSERADISH-CRUSTED BEEF RIBEYE ROAST

1 well-trimmed beef ribeye roast, small end (6 to 8 pounds)
 ½ cup prepared horseradish
 37-40 butter-flavored crackers
 ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese
 2 teaspoons dried thyme leaves, crushed
Savory Mushroom Bread Pudding (recipe follows):

Heat oven to 350F. Place roast, fat side up, on rack in shallow roasting pan. Spread horseradish evenly over all surfaces of beef roast.

Place crackers in food processor or blender container. Cover; process until fine crumbs form (about 1-¼ cups). Combine cracker crumbs, cheese and thyme in small bowl. Press crumb mixture evenly onto roast over horseradish, generously covering all surfaces.

Insert ovenproof meat thermometer in roast so tip is centered in thickest part of beef, not resting in fat. Roast in 350F oven 2 to 2-¼ hours for medium rare; 2-½ to 2-¾ hours for medium doneness.

Remove roast when meat thermometer registers 135F for medium rare; 150F for medium. Transfer roast to carving board; tent loosely with aluminum foil. Let stand 15 to 20 minutes. (Temperature will continue to rise about 10F to reach 145F for medium rare; 160F for medium.) Carve roast into slices. Serve with *Savory Bread Pudding*.

Makes 8 to 10 servings.

Nutrition information per serving (½ of recipe): 540 calories; 57 g protein; 11 g carbohydrate; 28 g fat; 388 mg sodium; 158 mg cholesterol; 9.2 mg niacin; 0.8 mg vitamin B6; 6.4 mcg vitamin B12; 6.2 mg iron; 13.6 mg zinc.