

Title:

Entertain Easily at Brunch

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507

Summary:

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Keywords:

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Article Body:

Even if you've got a hectic end-of-the-year schedule, you can gather family and friends for a joyous holiday celebration. Entertaining can be relatively carefree and inexpensive if you plan a casual brunch.

Brunch is generally served between the traditional hours for breakfast and lunch, a convenient time that leaves the evening free for you and your guests. Easy on the cook, a brunch menu usually stars comforting and simple-to-prepare dishes, most often based on nature's own convenience food, eggs.

For brunch, you can cook up versatile eggs to please almost anyone. Omelets are a popular brunch choice. You can flavor your omelets simply with herbs and cheese or dress them up with a fancier filling, such as garlic-laced creamed shrimp.

Another option is scrambled eggs, the top egg choice across America. To suit everyone, offer plain scrambled eggs with an assortment of different toppings from which your guests can pick and choose their favorites.

Consider veggies such as sauteed mushrooms, onions and bell peppers; two or three cheeses, perhaps brie or feta, cottage or ricotta, mozzarella, Swiss or Cheddar; and, for a flavorful zip, chopped or minced herbs, such as chives or dill, an herb blend from curry powder to Italian seasoning, or maybe a prepared sauce or two, like pesto or salsa.

For a more unusual treat, serve Baked Eggs in Bread Bowls. With this recipe, simple ingredients that you're likely to have on hand combine into handy, but

elegant, individual servings. Preparation is an uncomplicated matter of stirring together the flavoring ingredients, spooning the veggie mixture into hollowed-out rolls, slipping eggs into each nest and baking. While the eggs are in the oven, set the table and cut up fresh fruit for a colorful compote and toss a crisp green salad. Because bread and carrots are already in the egg dish, that's all you need to round out the meal.

Baked Eggs in Bread Bowls

6 servings

6 Kaiser or round rolls (about

4-inch diameter), uncut

3 tablespoons Dijon mustard

3 tablespoons reduced-fat

mayonnaise

2 cups shredded carrots

(about 8 oz.)

6 eggs

6 tablespoons (about 1.5 oz.)

shredded low-moisture,

part-skim mozzarella cheese

Fresh dill sprigs, optional

Slice tops off rolls about 3/4 inch from top. With fork, scrape out insides of bottoms of rolls, leaving about 1/2-inch wall all around. Save crumbs for another use. Set rolls aside.

In medium bowl, stir together mustard and mayonnaise until well blended. Stir in carrots until evenly coated with mustard mixture. Spoon 1/3 cup of the carrot

mixture over bottom and up sides of each roll to form a nest. Place rolls and tops, cut side up, on baking sheet. Break and slip an egg into each carrot nest. Sprinkle

1 tablespoon cheese over each egg. Bake in preheated 325 degree F oven until whites are completely set and yolks begin to thicken but are not hard, about 30 to 35 minutes. Garnish with dill sprigs, if desired.

Nutrition information per serving of 1/6 recipe without dill garnish: 250 calories, 9 gm total fat, 216 mg cholesterol, 561 mg sodium, 231 mg potassium, 26 gm carbohydrate, 12 gm protein and 10% or more of the RDI for

vitamin A, riboflavin, thiamin