

Title:

Mix and Mingle Appetizer Buffet

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Summary:

Entertain your guests by serving bite-size party foods that allow them to freely mix and mingle while nibbling on easy-to-eat finger foods.

Keywords:

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Article Body:

Entertain your guests by serving bite-size party foods that allow them to freely mix and mingle while nibbling on easy-to-eat finger foods.

Cheese & Spinach Pinwheels

12 oz. (1-1/2 c.) sour cream  
1 c. (4 oz.) shredded Cheddar cheese  
1/2 c. chopped pitted ripe olives  
1 (10-oz.) pkg. frozen chopped spinach, thawed, well drained  
1 (8 oz.) can water chestnuts, drained, chopped  
1/8 tsp. salt  
1 T. finely chopped onion  
1/2 tsp. finely chopped garlic  
1 tsp. Louisiana hot sauce  
6 (10-inch) flour tortillas

In a medium mixing bowl, combine sour cream, cheese, olives, spinach, water chestnuts, salt, onion, garlic and hot sauce; stir together until all ingredients are well combined. Spread approximately 1/2 cup of spinach mixture on each tortilla. Roll up tortillas tightly and wrap individually in plastic wrap. Refrigerate until firm (at least 2 hours). To serve, remove plastic wrap and cut each rolled tortilla into 10 slices. Yields 5 dozen pinwheels.

Hot Pepper Cheese Dip served with Tortilla Chips

- 1 (8 oz.) pkg. cream cheese, softened
- 1 c. sour cream
- 2 c. (8 oz.) shredded Monterey Jack with Jalapeno cheese
- 1/4 c. chopped ripe olives
- 1 (2 oz.) jar diced pimiento, drained
- 1 T. thinly sliced green onion

In a small mixer bowl, combine cream cheese and sour cream. Beat at medium speed, scraping bowl often, until smooth (1 to 2 minutes). Stir in (by hand) shredded cheese, chopped olives, diced pimiento and sliced green onion. Cover and refrigerate for a minimum of 2 hours to allow flavors to develop. Serve with tortilla chips. Yields a scant 4 cups of dip.

#### Marinated Antipasto Platter

##### Marinade:

- 1/2 c. olive or canola oil
- 1/2 c. white wine vinegar
- 2 T. country-style Dijon mustard
- 1 T. honey
- 1/8 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. coarsely ground black pepper
- 1 tsp. dried basil leaves
- 1 tsp. dried parsley
- 1/4 tsp. dried oregano leaves
- 1 tsp. minced garlic

##### Antipasto:

- 2 c. canned whole mushrooms, drained
- 1 pt. cherry tomatoes
- 1 med. green bell pepper, cut into 1/4-inch strips
- 1 (5.75-oz.) can pitted ripe colossal olives, drained
- 1/3 lb. thinly sliced roast beef, each slice cut into 1-inch strips, rolled up and fastened with a wooden pick
- 2 (6-oz. each) jars marinated artichoke hearts, drained
- 1 (11.5-oz.) jar peperoncici (pickled peppers), drained
- 1/2 lb. Provolone or Mozzarella cheese, cut into 1/2-inch cubes
- 1/4 lb. thinly sliced salami, rolled up and fastened with wooden picks

Prepare marinade in a medium bowl by stirring together oil, vinegar, mustard, honey, salt, pepper, basil, parsley, oregano and garlic. Place each of the following ingredients in their own separate container: mushrooms, tomatoes,

green peppers, olives and roast beef. Pour approximately 1/4 cup of marinade into each container; stir to coat. Cover containers and refrigerate, stirring occasionally, for a minimum of 4 hours (best if allowed to marinate overnight). To serve, drain marinade from vegetables, olives and roast beef and arrange on a lettuce-lined platter with artichokes, peperoncici, cheese and salami. Yields 16 servings.

#### Vegetable Platter served with Pineapple Pepper Dip

1 c. chopped assorted bell peppers (red, green and yellow)  
1 c. sour cream  
1 (8 oz.) pkg. cream cheese, softened  
1 (8 oz.) can crushed pineapple, well drained  
1/8 tsp. salt  
2 T. coarsely chopped fresh cilantro or parsley  
2 T. thinly sliced green onion  
2 tsp. finely chopped seeded jalapeno pepper  
1 tsp. grated lime peel  
1 tsp. lime juice  
Platter of assorted fresh vegetables (see Recipe Note)

In a small mixer bowl, combine chopped bell peppers, sour cream, cream cheese, crushed pineapple, salt, cilantro, green onion, jalapeno, grated lime peel and lime juice. Beat at medium speed, scraping the bowl often, until well mixed (1 to 2 minutes). Cover and refrigerate for at least 1 hour before serving. Serve with a platter of fresh vegetables sticks. Recipe yields a generous 3 cups of dip.

<> Recipe Note: Choose from the following list of fresh vegetables to serve with dip: celery sticks, carrot sticks, broccoli, cherry tomatoes, cauliflower, bell pepper strips, cucumber slices, radishes, asparagus spears, zucchini sticks or slices, snow peas.

#### Sweet & Sour Meatballs

##### Meatballs:

1 lb. lean ground beef  
1 (12-oz.) pkg. spicy-bulk pork sausage  
1/2 c. dry bread crumbs  
1/2 tsp. dry mustard  
1 lg. egg, lightly beaten  
1 T. soy sauce

Sauce:

1 (20-oz.) can pineapple chunks in unsweetened juice,  
drained, reserve juice  
2 T. firmly packed brown sugar  
1 T. cornstarch  
1/2 tsp. ground ginger  
1 T. soy sauce  
2 T. cider vinegar  
2 med. green bell peppers, cut into 1-inch pieces

In a large bowl, combine ground beef, pork sausage, bread crumbs, mustard, egg and soy sauce. Shape into 1-inch balls. Place meatballs on a 15x10x1-inch baking pan. Bake in a 350F (175C) preheated oven for 15 to 20 minutes or until browned. Meanwhile, in a 1-quart saucepan, combine reserved pineapple juice, brown sugar, cornstarch, ginger, soy sauce and vinegar. Cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until mixture is thickened and bubbly (4 to 6 minutes). Increase heat and boil for 1 minute, stirring constantly; remove from heat. In a 2-quart casserole, place baked meatballs, pineapple chunks, green pepper and sauce; stir gently to coat. Cover and bake for 10 to 15 minutes or until green peppers are crispy tender. Serve in a chafing dish with wooden picks. Yields 5 dozen meatballs.

Fruit Platter served with Peanut Butter & Honey Dip

1/2 c. creamy peanut butter  
1/4 c. whole milk  
1 c. sour cream  
2 T. honey  
1 tsp. ground cinnamon  
Platter of assorted fresh fruit (see Recipe Note)

In a medium bowl, stir together peanut butter, milk, sour cream, honey and cinnamon. Blend until smooth. Use as a dip for fresh fruit. Dip may also be used as a spread for crackers, bagels, toast or bread. Store refrigerated. Yields 1-1/2 cups.

<> Recipe Note: Choose from the following list of fresh fruit to serve with dip: whole or halved strawberries, sweet cherries, pineapple chunks, orange wedges, kiwi slices, melon balls or slices (cantaloupe, watermelon, honey dew), red and green seedless grapes, mandarin orange segments, papaya wedges.

Honey-Glazed Snack Mix

5 c. bite-size crispy corn cereal squares  
3 c. miniature pretzels  
2 c. pecan halves  
1/2 c. butter or margarine, melted  
1/2 c. honey

In a 15x10x1-inch baking pan combine cereal, pretzels and pecans; set aside. In a small bowl, stir together butter and honey until well mixed. Pour honey mixture over cereal mixture; stir until well coated. Bake in a 300F (150C) preheated oven for 10 minutes; stir. Continue baking for an additional 10 to 15 minutes or until cereal is glazed and honey mixture is absorbed. Immediately transfer snack mix on waxed paper and allow snack mix to cool completely. Store in a tightly covered container. Yields 32 (1/4 cup) servings.

For detailed information on how to successfully plan an appetizer buffet, read the following article, "How to Plan a Party That's Enjoyed by All" at Bedrock Press - <http://www.bedrockpress.com/archives-classes/2004/11-2004.html>

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