

Appetizers For Elegant Entertaining

From Alaska's rugged coastline comes a splendid seafood that's perfect for creating a variety of elegant appetizers to serve whenever guests gather. Alaska King crab comes frozen both in-the-shell and out to use in exciting party fare. Choose from any of the delectable appetizers given below to make your function really special. They're all irresistible and most are designed as serve-yourself dishes that bring guests together.

Conversation begins spontaneously over Fresh Grapes and Steamed King Crab with Hot Cheese Dip as guests gather to plunge crab meat and juicy green California table grapes in a creamy mixture of Gruyere cheese and white wine.

To cool the palate, refreshing King Crab Party Spread is the answer. It's a luscious, smooth combination of cream cheese, olives and succulent Alaska King crab. Serve with crackers or on thin slices of bread.

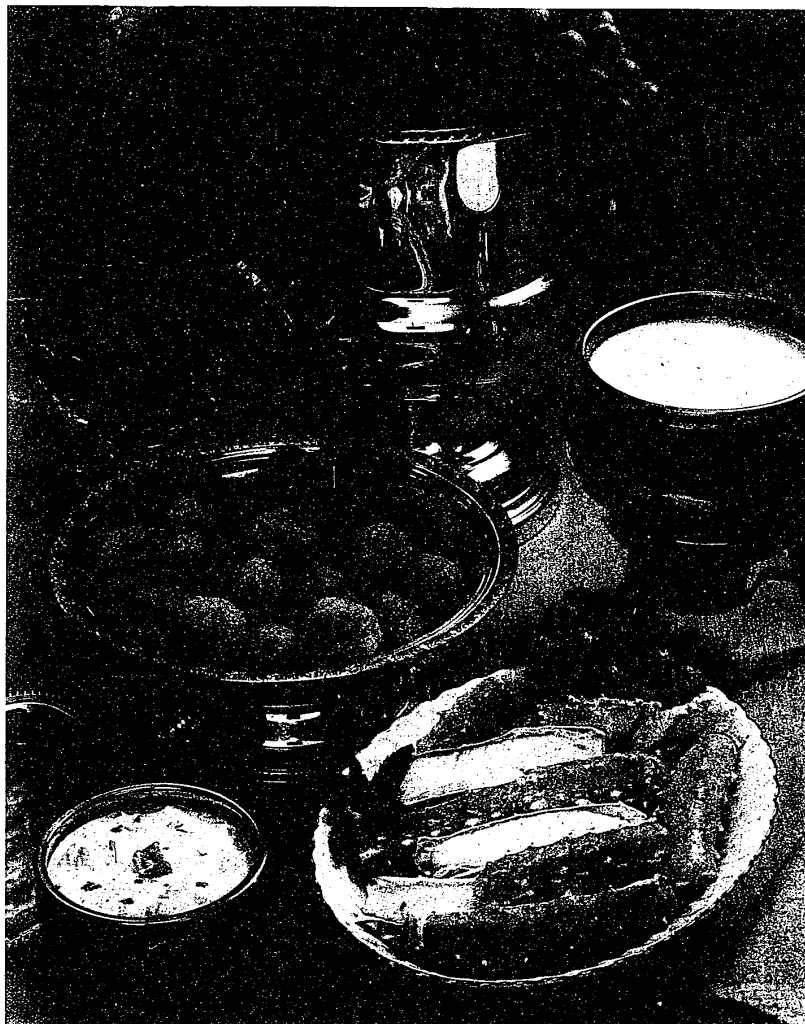
Another great idea is Golden Crab Appetizers, deep-fried to crisp, sizzling perfection. Ground white fish and 6 to 8 ounces of Alaska King crab combine to make these tender morsels. A Spicy Red Sauce or tartar sauce is the perfect accompaniment.

A decidedly fancy appetizer you'll also want to try is Creamy Crab and Grape Kabobs. Colorful fresh table grapes are a refreshing complement to the zesty crab mixture which is shaped into tiny balls and rolled in chopped nuts.

Crab Croustades is another hot appetizer with gourmet appeal. Miniature toast cups, crispy and golden, make decorative containers for a creamy crab filling richly flavored with both Swiss and Parmesan cheese. The recipe makes about 3 dozen delectable appetizers.

Frozen Alaska King crab is the answer to all your entertaining needs, since it's easy to keep on hand and lends itself to so many flavorings and methods of preparation. King crab is famous for its snow-white, tendon-free meat, brilliantly edged in red, and always offering just-caught flavor and firm texture.

For an attractive centerpiece whenever you entertain, arrange clusters of table grapes in a handsome container. Juicy, fragrant and colorful, table grapes from California are one of nature's natural snacks. To enjoy grapes to their fullest, choose those which are firm and attached to a pliable green stem. They should be stored in the refrigerator and washed just before serving.



FRESH GRAPES AND STEAMED KING CRAB WITH HOT CHEESE DIP

- 1 pound fresh grapes
- 1 to 1-1/2 pounds frozen Alaska King crab legs, split
- 1/4 cup butter
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- Dash cayenne pepper
- Half-and-half
- 2 egg yolks, well-beaten
- 1/4 cup dry white wine
- 1 cup shredded Gruyere cheese

Wash and cut grapes into small clusters. Thaw crab legs; reserve liquid. Steam crab legs*. Melt butter in medium saucepan. Remove from heat; blend in flour, salt and cayenne. Add half-and-half to reserved crab liquid to equal 1-1/4 cups; gradually stir into butter-flour mixture. Cook and stir until mixture thickens and boils. Boil 1 minute; remove from heat. Stir about 1/2 cup hot mixture into egg yolks; stir egg mixture into sauce. Add wine and cheese. Cook and stir over low heat until thoroughly heated. DO NOT BOIL. Serve as dip for grapes and crab legs. Makes about 1-3/4 cups.

*To steam crab legs: Cut crab legs into serving-size pieces with kitchen shears. Fill pot, large enough to hold steam basket, with water to depth of 3/4-inch. Place steam basket in pot; bring water to boil. Place crab in basket; reduce heat and steam, covered, about 5 minutes or until crab is thoroughly heated. For ease in serving, cut crab into bite-size pieces.

KING CRAB PARTY SPREAD

- 6 to 8 ounces frozen Alaska King crab meat
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 package (8 oz.) Neufchâtel or cream cheese, softened
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped green onion
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped stuffed green olives
- 1/2 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- Dash bottled hot pepper sauce
- 1/4 teaspoon garlic salt

Thaw, drain and slice crab; reserve one piece for garnish. Sprinkle with lemon juice. Blend softened cheese with crab and remaining ingredients; mix thoroughly. Turn into bowl; chill. Garnish with reserved crab. Serve with crackers, melba toast or thin slices of bread. Makes about 1-1/3 cups.

GOLDEN CRAB APPETIZERS

- 6 to 8 ounces frozen Alaska King crab meat
- 1 pound firm, light-fleshed fish, uncooked
- 1/4 cup minced onion
- 3 tablespoons flour
- 1 teaspoon garlic salt
- 1 egg
- 1/8 teaspoon ground ginger
- Dash pepper
- 1/4 cup fine dry bread crumbs
- Spicy Red Sauce or prepared tartar sauce

Thaw crab; reserve 1 tablespoon liquid. Shred or chop crab. Grind or mince uncooked fish. Add remaining ingredients except crumbs and sauce. Form into 1-inch balls; roll in crumbs. Deep-fry at 375° F. until crisp and well-browned. Drain. Serve with Spicy Red Sauce or prepared tartar sauce. Makes about 36 balls.

Spicy Red Sauce: Combine 2 teaspoons each dry mustard and water; blend well. Add 1/2 cup catsup and 2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce; mix well. Makes 1/2 cup.

CREAMY CRAB AND GRAPE KABOBS

(Not Pictured)

- 6 to 8 ounces frozen Alaska King crab meat
- 1 package (8 oz.) cream cheese, softened
- 3 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 teaspoons prepared horseradish
- 1/2 to 3/4 cup finely chopped walnuts
- About 6 dozen green, red or blue/black grapes

Thaw and thoroughly drain crab. Blend, by hand, cream cheese, Parmesan cheese and horseradish. Add crab; mix well. Chill thoroughly for ease of handling. Form into 1-2 inch balls; roll in nuts. For each appetizer, skewer grape, crab-cheese ball and grape on toothpick. Refrigerate until served. Makes about 38 appetizers.

Easy Method: Crab-cream cheese mixture may be formed into one large ball, rolled in nuts and served with small clusters of assorted grapes.

CRAB CROUSTADES

(Not Pictured)

- 6 to 8 ounces frozen Alaska King crab meat
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 tablespoon flour
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1 cup shredded Swiss cheese
- 2-1/2 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons minced chives
- 1/4 teaspoon seasoning salt
- Croustades

Thaw, drain and slice crab. Melt butter; blend in flour. Gradually add milk. Cook and stir until thickened. Add cheeses; stir until melted. Add lemon juice, chives, seasoning salt and crab. Fill Croustades with crab mixture. Bake at 350° F. 10 minutes or until thoroughly heated. Makes about 3 dozen appetizers.

Croustades: Cut 3 dozen 2-1/2-inch circles from thin-sliced sandwich bread. Carefully fit into well-buttered muffin pans, 2-3/4-inches wide at the top. Bake at 400° F. 8 to 10 minutes or until lightly browned. Cool. Croustades may be frozen.