

CREATE A KEEPSAKE WEDDING

Many couples today are choosing the warmth and intimacy of a small wedding and at-home reception shared with close friends and family. Since it's an occasion to be cherished for a lifetime, everything must be just right. And it can be, even when time and budget are limited.

Created especially for this type of personalized wedding celebration is the symphony of food and drink offered here. The foods are festive and flavorful, yet the preparations are not complicated and most can be done in advance so only a minimum of last-day effort is required.

Guests will delight in sampling a bountiful array of fanciful hors d'oeuvres. The variety and versatility of processed meats—ham, corned beef, sausages and luncheon meats—make it possible to create an appetizing spread that offers pleasing contrasts in color, texture and flavor. When assembled, the appetite-teasers make an impressive collection, yet individually each is quick and easy to prepare.

All eyes will be on the bride and groom as they cut the beautiful wedding cake made especially for them. While the cake looks like the work of a professional baker, it can be made conveniently at home with frozen vanilla layer cakes. Four of the delicious three-layer cakes form a large base for the double-tiered center. The cake is then prettily decorated with additional tinted frosting and fresh flowers.

Wedding Cake

- 17 ounces each frozen vanilla layer cakes
- 1 can (16-12 ounces) vanilla frosting
- 1 teaspoon rum flavoring
- 1 to 2 tablespoons milk or cream
- Food coloring
- Fresh flowers

Thaw cakes partially at room temperature or in refrigerator. On a 10-inch square serving platter or other flat surface, place 4 of the cakes to form a square. Place remaining 2 cakes, 1 on top of the other in the center of the cake square. Combine frosting with rum flavoring and just enough milk to attain a good spreading consistency, similar to the frosting on the cakes. With a spatula, smooth all seams of cake to conceal them, using additional frosting as necessary. Tint remaining frosting with yellow food coloring. Using a pastry bag fitted with a star tip, press rosettes of frosting to form a continuous row along the edge of cake layers and make a border around the bottom of the cake. With leaf tip, make ribbon designs around sides of cake and tier. Decorate the layers with real flowers, as desired, 40 servings.

Bacon-Cheese Ball

- 2 pounds bacon
- 1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup shredded Cheddar cheese
- 1/4 cup milk
- 2 tablespoons prepared horseradish
- 1 package (1-1/4 ounces) Thin Crackers

Cut strips of bacon crosswise into 1/2-inch pieces. Cook in frying pan, or microwave oven, until crisp; remove to absorbent paper. Combine cream cheese, Cheddar cheese, milk and horseradish. Add bacon, mixing thoroughly; shape into a ball. Wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate 2 hours or overnight. Serve Butter Thin crackers with Bacon-Cheese Ball. Yield: 2-1/2 cups. *May be frozen for 2 weeks.

Corned Beef Sticks

- 12 ounces thinly sliced cooked corned beef
- 1/2 cup horseradish sauce
- 1 package (7-1/2 ounces) Pumpernickel or Sesame Snack Sticks

Cut slices of corned beef in half lengthwise. Spread approximately 1/2 teaspoon horseradish sauce on one side of each strip of corned beef. Diagonally wrap each strip of corned beef around a Snack Stick. Cover loosely and refrigerate. Yield: about 40 appetizers.

Saucy Franks

- 2 packages (16 ounces each) frankfurters
- 1 jar (18 ounces) apricot preserves
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1/4 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/4 teaspoon dry mustard

Cut each frankfurter into five 1-inch pieces. Place apricot preserves in blender container and blend until smooth. Combine apricot preserves, lemon juice, ginger and dry mustard; cook slowly 5 minutes. Add pieces of frankfurter and continue cooking 8 to 10 minutes or until meat is heated through. Yield: 100 appetizers.

Layered Sausage Wedges

- 10 slices bologna
- 10 slices New England sausage
- 3 packages (3 ounces each) cream cheese, softened
- 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- 2 tablespoons chopped chives
- Parsley sprigs, if desired

Combine cream cheese, mustard and chives, mixing thoroughly. Spread approximately 2 teaspoons of cream cheese mixture on each of 8 slices bologna and 8 slices of New England sausage. Stack four slices, alternating bologna and New England to form a cylinder; top each stack with fifth slice of sausage. Wrap and refrigerate. When ready to serve cut each stack into 12 wedges. Garnish each wedge with a small amount of cream cheese and a sprig of parsley, if desired. Yield: 48 appetizers. *May be frozen for 2 weeks.

Ham Stuffed Vegetables

- 3 cups (approximately 1 pound) ground cooked smoked ham
- 3/4 cup shredded Swiss cheese
- 3/4 cup mayonnaise
- 1/2 cup pickle relish
- 3/4 teaspoon dry mustard
- 1 pint cherry tomatoes
- 4 cucumbers (each about 7 inches long), unpared

Place ham and cheese in bowl; add mayonnaise, pickle relish and dry mustard, stirring to combine. Cover and refrigerate. Cut a very thin slice off top of each tomato; scoop out. Drain on absorbent paper. Score each cucumber with lines of fork, trim ends and cut each into six pieces. Scoop out center of one end of cucumber pieces to form cups. Use sharp spoon or melon ball cutter, being careful not to cut through skin or bottom. Fill vegetables with ham salad. Cover and refrigerate. Yield: 48 appetizers.

Salami Cornucopia

- 24 slices salami (approximately 2 ounces)
- 1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese, softened
- 2 teaspoons prepared mustard
- 2 tablespoons finely snipped parsley
- 24 small sweet pickles, cut in half crosswise

Combine cream cheese, mustard and parsley. Spread 2 teaspoons cheese mixture on each slice of salami; cut each slice in half. Roll each half slice of salami to form a cornucopia. Insert pickle half into center of each cornucopia, securing with pick, if desired. Cover and refrigerate. Yield: 48 appetizers.

Honor Bride with Festive Foods

For the traditional shower before the wedding bells ring good food as well as gifts are the order of the day. For an entree that's as special as the occasion, serve Sausage Pasta Salad, featuring slices of flavorful smoked sausage, corkscrew pasta and colorful crisp vegetables in a creamy Italian dressing. The convenience of the fully-cooked link sausage makes the salad easy to prepare well in advance, even the day before.

Bring a ray of sunshine to the shower with a Thousand Layer Torte made with puff pastry and layered with strawberry preserves and creamy vanilla pudding. The light, flaky pastry for this elegant dessert is easily prepared using frozen puff pastry sheets that can be thawed, unfolded and ready to cut and bake in just minutes.

Sausage Pasta Salad

- 2 pounds "fully-cooked" smoked link sausage, cut into 1/2-inch slices
- 4 cups corkscrew pasta (uncooked)
- 3 cups broccoli flowerettes, blanched
- 1-1/2 cups sliced celery
- 1 large red pepper, cut into strips
- 1/4 cup mayonnaise
- 1/2 cup Italian dressing
- 2 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

Prepare pasta according to package directions. Rinse with cold water; drain. Combine sausage, pasta, broccoli, celery and red pepper. Thoroughly blend Italian dressing, mayonnaise, Parmesan cheese and salt. Pour dressing over salad, mixing lightly to coat all ingredients. Cover and refrigerate 4 to 6 hours or overnight, if desired. 12 servings.

Thousand Layer Torte

- 1 package (17-1/4 ounces) Frozen Puff Pastry Sheets
- 1 package (3-1/4 ounces) vanilla pudding
- 1-1/2 cups milk
- 1 tablespoon brandy flavoring
- 1 cup strawberry preserves
- 1 cup 1/2 pint heavy cream
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- Strawberries, halved

Thaw puff pastry for 20 minutes and unfold. Cut both sheets in half making four 5 x 10 inch rectangles. On a lightly floured board, roll out each sheet to a 6 x 14 inch rectangle. Pierce thoroughly with a fork. Bake on cookie sheets in preheated 400°F oven for 15 to 20 minutes or until puffed and brown. Cool. Meanwhile, prepare pudding according to package directions, using milk and brandy flavoring. Cool and then chill. To assemble, place layer of puff pastry on serving platter. Spread with half of the strawberry preserves. Top with second layer of pastry and all of the chilled pudding. Top with third pastry and remaining preserves. Top with fourth pastry. Beat cream with sugar and vanilla until stiff. Spread cream over top of torte. Decorate top with sliced strawberries. Serve at once. Makes one torte, 12 servings.



Celebrate a special at-home wedding with premium champagne, delicious hors d'oeuvres and a picture-pretty wedding cake.



In anticipation of sunny days, plan a shower for the bride featuring a flavorful sausage salad, an impressive puff pastry torte and Light Chablis wine.