

These dips are easy to do

Don't be in the kitchen while your guests are enjoying themselves in your living room. Plan your New Year's open house around a trio of easy dips that are done ahead quickly and serve themselves right after the door bell rings.

Each, curry and tomato-cheese offer great flavor and the touches of color that will brighten up your coffee table and bring everyone together where the food is.

Then relax, the party's swinging and there's plenty of time for you to have a good time too.

ZIPPY TOMATO-CHEESE DUNK

1 cup (1 1/2 ounces) condensed tomato soup

1/2 cups shredded sharp Cheddar cheese

Huon or French bread cubes

1. In 1 1/2-quart saucepan over medium heat, combine soup and cheese. Heat until cheese melts, stirring occasionally.

2. Pour into 1-quart candle-warmer dish to keep warm while serving. Spear bread with fork or toothpick; dip bread into dip. Makes 2 cups dip.

CURRIED CHEESE DIP

1 can (11 ounces) condensed cheddar cheese soup

1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese, softened

1/2 cup chopped pitted ripe olives

1 tablespoon finely chopped sweet pickle

1. In medium bowl with mixer at medium speed, gradually blend soup into cream cheese until mixture is smooth.

2. Add onion, green pepper and hot pepper sauce.

3. Cover; refrigerate at least 2 hours. Serve with crackers or chips. Makes 1 1/2 cups.

2 teaspoons curry powder
Chopped parsley
Assorted vegetable dippers

1. In medium bowl with mixer at medium speed, gradually blend soup into cream cheese. Beat just until smooth (overbeating makes dip thin).

2. Stir in olives, pickle and curry powder.

3. Cover; refrigerate at least 2 hours. Garnish with parsley. Serve with vegetable dippers. Makes 2 1/2 cups.

CHILI CHEESE DIP

1 can (11 1/4 ounces) condensed chili beef soup

1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese, softened

3 tablespoons finely chopped onion

1 tablespoon finely chopped green pepper

1/2 teaspoon hot pepper sauce

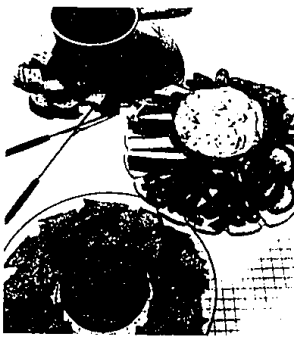
Assorted crackers

Tortilla or potato chips

1. In medium bowl with mixer at medium speed, gradually blend soup into cream cheese until mixture is smooth.

2. Add onion, green pepper and hot pepper sauce.

3. Cover; refrigerate at least 2 hours. Serve with crackers or chips. Makes 1 1/2 cups.



Festive but easy-to-make dips make entertaining a snap.

Freeze foods for easy entertaining

If you are feeling overwhelmed by the prospect of frantic holiday cooking and baking, be sure to consider the ways that your freezer can be put to use. By observing several simple tips, frozen foods can be as delicious when defrosted as when first prepared.

Since foods containing such spices as onion and cloves undergo flavor changes during freezing, it is always best to season only lightly before freezing and then adjust flavoring during reheating.

All packages should be tightly wrapped and sealed to prevent air from coming in contact with the food, which would alter its texture and flavor. After wrapping tightly, label and date each package so that the longest-stored food can be used first.

Preparing double batches of main courses and freezing meals or individual-sized portions is a commonly used means of streamlining food preparation, but it is far from being the only time-saving freezer use.

It may be beneficial to freeze desserts and breads which can then be heated and served with little fuss and no mess.

IF YOUR holiday baking plans include several batches of cookies, try rolling unbaked dough into sausage-shaped rolls, wrapping them in foil and freezing them.

When you want freshly baked cookies, just place the dough in the refrigerator, allow it to soften slightly, slice, and bake. This procedure will work for all dough containing at least 1/4 pound of fat to each pound of flour.

When using a soft dough, simply pipe the cookies onto a baking tray, place in the freezer for about one hour and, when frozen, place in plastic bags for storage. These cookies can be baked straight from the freezer.

Unfrosted cakes can be frozen for up to three or four months, and butter-

cream frostings have a comparable freezer lifespan.

The frosting should be allowed to thaw at room temperature; an eight-ounce portion will take between two and three hours to return to spreading consistency.

Bread, whether baked or unbaked, can also be frozen satisfactorily. Sliced loaves can go directly from freezer to toaster, while whole baked loaves should be allowed to defrost in their own packaging for three to six hours, depending on size.

Unbaked dough can be frozen unrisen for up to three months if lightly sealed in a lightly greased plastic bag. To bake, simply unseal bag, let loosely and thaw at room temperature for five to six hours.

KEEP IN mind that individual ingredients can also be frozen. Unsalted butter can be stored in the freezer for six months, but because salt speeds up rancidity, salted butter should be frozen for no more than three months.

Hard-boiled egg whites become leathery when frozen, but fresh eggs can be frozen for up to six months provided they are appropriately prepared for storage.

Whole eggs must always be removed from their shells before freezing in order to avoid breakage.

Egg whites can be frozen without any additions, but adding a small amount of sugar or salt to whole eggs and yolks is necessary to prevent thickening. Freeze eggs in ice cube trays, and then transfer to plastic bags for convenient storage. Eggs should be thawed at room temperature for about 40 minutes, used immediately, and never be refrozen.

By fully utilizing your freezer, you can provide the customary seasonal treats, while alleviating the usual holiday rush.

Create this Welsh bread bowl

Today entertaining often becomes more consuming than the hostess forgoes to enjoy herself. Don't let that happen to you! Throwing a party should be fun, and, with careful planning, it will be.

Whether formal cocktails or a casual nice house, create a menu that requires a minimum of work. Surprisingly, that doesn't mean your choices are limited to cheese and crackers. By starting with a frozen prepared entrée or side dish, the possibilities are limitless.

Here are two festive hors d'oeuvres ideas from the kitchen of Stouffer Foods.

WELSH BREAD BOWL

2 packages of Welsh rarebit, defrosted

1 Tbsp. crumbled blue cheese

1/2 tsp. minced onion

1/2 tsp. tabasco sauce

1 tsp. Worcestershire sauce

1/4 tsp. garlic salt

3/4 cup bottled, cooled beer

1 one-pound unsplit, round bread (pumpernickel, rye or sourdough)

Combine first six ingredients until smooth. Slowly add cooled beer; blend well. Chill three hours or overnight.

To make bread bowl: Cut a circle around crown of bread. Scoop out most

of the interior, leaving a shell about 1 inch thick. When ready to serve, fill bread shell with chilled dip. Cut leftover bread into cubes and place around bread bowl with cherry tomatoes, sliced mushrooms, cauliflower and other raw vegetables.

SPINACH STUFFED MUSHROOMS

1 pkg. spinach souffle, defrosted

1 cup toasted bread crumbs

2 tsp. lemon juice

1 tsp. instant minced onions

1/4 tsp. salt

24 large mushrooms

Melted margarine

Parmesan cheese

Wash mushrooms and remove stems. In a medium size bowl, combine Spinach Souffle, bread crumbs, lemon juice, onion and salt.

Place mushrooms on a baking tray; brush with melted margarine. Stuff with spinach mixture; sprinkle with cheese. Bake in a 375 degree oven for 15-18 minutes. Makes 24.

Microwave method: Remove frozen Spinach Souffle from metal tray; place in a 1 1/2 quart microwave proof dish. Defrost Spinach Souffle on defrost cycle (50% power) 6-7 minutes. Microwave proof dish 3-4 minutes, rotating dish once.

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