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**INVITING IDEAS**

# Give 'outlaws' cozy welcome into family



RUTH MOSSOK JOHNSTON

With all the upcoming weddings or wedding plans of the season, it may be time for families to meet future in-laws.

Remember the funny parents dinner scene in the original movie "Father of the Bride" (1950) with Spencer Tracy as the over-protective devoted father

and Elizabeth Taylor as the beautiful bride-to-be.

Introductions of in-laws can be quite stressful for all those concerned (in-laws many times may feel more like out-laws). How do you set up an ideal introduction?

Plan your get-together on comfortable turf — make sure the meeting place will not be offensive to either side of the family. Keep whatever you plan casual and cozy. Have an outdoor get-together — cocktails and hors d'oeuvres on a patio or deck, or a dessert get-together later in the evening.

If you're feeling ambitious, host a lunch or dinner. If home turf is your setting, it's nice for the future groom to help the future bride — sharing the responsibility is part of it all, and giving the parents time to converse alone will help them get to know one another.

Have some baby and childhood photos of the bride-to-be and groom-to-be on hand to share with the other set of parents. Childhood photos lend themselves to great conversation!

Keep the conversation light and comfortable, the first meeting doesn't need the added dimension of wedding plans — there's plenty of time to deal with the reality of guest lists and who's paying for what!

When entertaining outdoors I like to serve simple finger foods that don't require much handling or fumbling.

To avoid fumbling, I recently discovered a neat new gadget, Drink Mate™ a plastic ringed clip-on designed especially for stemware which attaches securely to almost any plate including disposable ones, and leaves one hand free. These drink holders come in a variety of colors and can be purchased in small amounts, or large quantities. Custom imprints and colors are available for big events (weddings!) for information on this product contact: Drink Mate International Inc. 1-800-929-9363.

Here are some of my favorite finger foods:

**SPICY SHRIMP SATÉ**

36 medium-to-large raw shrimp (count pieces, not pounds)

- 2 tablespoons high quality olive oil
- 3 garlic cloves, peeled and minced
- 1/8 cup fresh lemon juice
- 1/8 cup fresh lime juice
- 3 tablespoons reduced-fat peanut butter
- 2 1/2 teaspoons lite soy sauce
- 1/2 - 1 teaspoon curry powder
- 1/2 teaspoon chill powder
- 1 teaspoon turmeric
- 2 tablespoons finely minced green onion

**Bamboo skewers**

Shell and devein the raw shrimp, set aside momentarily.

In a skillet over medium-low heat, add oil. Let the oil warm and add the garlic, saute until lightly browned (not burned). Stir in the lemon juice, lime juice, peanut butter, soy sauce, curry, chill powder, turmeric and green onion — this mixture will be quite thick — let simmer while stirring constantly for approximately one minute. Let the mixture cool completely.

In a glass bowl, add the shrimp mix carefully with a rubber spatula, not to break the shrimp. Make sure the shrimp is well coated, cover the bowl with plastic wrap or a tight fitting lid and refrigerate overnight to marinate.

Soak the bamboo skewers in water (to prevent burning), and light your barbecue.

Let the coals or wood chips heat for at least 1/2 hour. Thread three shrimp on each skewer. Cook low over coals or chips until golden brown and crispy (approximately 3 minutes per side). Serve hot. Yield: 6 servings.

**CROSTINI AL DRIED TOMATO, CHÈVRE CHEESE & BASIL**

18 pieces of day old baguette, sliced thin and toasted

18 pieces of chèvre cheese

18 whole fresh basil leaves, washed

18 marinated dried tomatoes in olive oil, drained well

On each piece of toasted baguette, place a slice of chèvre, one basil leaf and top with a sun-dried tomato. Serve at room temperature. Yield: 18 pieces

*Chef's note:* If you prefer fresh bread instead of toasted, use this same idea on slices of fresh baguette.

Ruth Mossok Johnston is an author and food columnist who lives in Franklin. To leave her a voice mail message, dial (313) 953-2047, mailbox 1902.

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