

TAILGATING

FROM PAGE B1

"Sometimes, people try to do too much," said Kelli Lewton, a guest chef instructor at Schriener College's Continuing Education Program in Livonia and owner of Troo Unique in Bloomfield Hills and Aunt Olive's Good Food to Go in Birmingham. "Easy is better for tailgate parties."

Grilled Italian sausage with onions and green peppers is great for those bringing portable grills for pre-game festivities, Lewton suggested. Or bring chili stored in a thermos with plastic spoons and bowls.

If you want a healthier version of tailgate food, try whole grain bread without any white flour and a bag or grapes — or replace meat in chili with dif-

ferent types of beans, Lewton suggests.

Chef Devik Smart of The Good Food Co. with locations in Canton, Ann Arbor, Troy and Rochester, suggested black bean burgers.

They can be pre-cooked and eaten cold or heated on the grill and served on a bun. Gary Keeper, a manager at Good Food Co. suggested either turkey hot dogs or soy-based vegetarian hot dogs for a traditional sports snack with a twist.

Use foods that keep well. Keep hot food warm by wrapping it in aluminum foil and a towel. Keep six-pack coolers for cold foods or condiments.

The Lions may be mediocre at best, as everyone knows, but the food doesn't need to follow suit.

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Conventional, contemporary tailgating dishes

OREO CHEESECAKE

CRUST:
1 cup crushed OREO cookies (about 12 cookies)
1 tablespoon butter or margarine, melted

FILLING:
4 package (8 oz. each) PHILADELPHIA Cream Cheese, softened
1 cup sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla
4 eggs
20 OREO cookies, coarsely chopped

CRUST:
Mix crushed cookies and butter; press onto bottom of 9-inch spring form pan. Bake at 325°F for 10 minutes.

FILLING: Mix cream cheese, sugar, and vanilla with electric mixer on medium speed until well blended. Add eggs, mixing on low speed just until blended. Gently stir in chopped cookies. Pour over crust. Bake at 325°F for 60 minutes or until center is almost set. Run knife or metal spatula around rim of pan to loosen cake; cool before removing rim of pan. Refrigerate four hours or overnight. Garnish with additional cookies. Makes 12 servings.

from heat and let cool.

Pierce the casings of the smoked turkey sausage in several places with the tines of a fork. Place the sausage in a sauté pan. Add the beer and the thinly sliced onion. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to medium-high and cook until most of the beer is absorbed and the onions are very soft, approximately 20 minutes. Remove from heat and set sausages aside. Discard the onion. Turn broiler on high. Place the smoked sausage on a foil-lined broiler pan. Blend the honey and the orange juice together and brush liberally on the smoked sausages. Broil on high until crispy about one minute. Repeat on the other side. Remove from the heat and allow to cool. Refrigerate until ready to serve. To serve, slice each sausage link into 3-4 thick slices. Dip in the mustard of your choice.

tablespoons of basil pesto on top of the cheese mixture. Gently place another quarter of the cheese mixture on top of the pesto, smoothing with again with the back of a wet spoon. Add the remaining nuts in a single layer over the cheese mixture. Top this with the roasted peppers. Spread another quarter of the cheese mixture on top of the peppers. Top with the olive pesto.

Finish the torta with a final layer of the cheese mixture.

Refrigerate 3-4 hours. Unmold the torta onto a serving plate. Carefully remove the plastic wrap.

MEDITERRANEAN TORTA

8 ounces sheep's milk feta
8 ounces cream cheese, room temperature
1/2 stick butter, room temperature
2 cloves garlic, minced
4 tablespoons pine nuts or almonds, toasted
1/2 tablespoons green peppercorns or capers, drained well
2 tablespoons basil pesto
3 tablespoons roasted red peppers, minced
117 tablespoons kalamata olive pesto

Combine the feta, cream cheese, butter and garlic in a food processor bowl fitted with a steel blade. Process until smooth. Add the green peppercorns and pulse to just mix without completely crushing the peppercorns. Oil a 4-5 cup mold and line with plastic wrap, allowing the plastic to hang over the sides of the mold. Place two tablespoons of the pine nuts or almonds on the bottom of the mold. Top with one quarter of the cheese mixture, smoothing it with the back of a wet spoon. Spread the two

MARINATED ARTICHOKE AND MUSHROOM SALAD

2 cans of whole artichoke hearts, drained
1 dozen medium-sized white mushrooms, cleaned and halved
1/2 small red onion, thinly sliced
1/3 cup of juice from navel oranges
1/8 teaspoon anise extract
1 teaspoon sugar a few grinds of fresh black pepper
12 teaspoon salt
1/3 cup good quality extra virgin olive oil
10-12 fresh basil leaves, chopped

Place the artichokes, mushrooms and red onion in a large bowl. Make the vinaigrette by placing the orange juice, anise extract, sugar, pepper and salt in the bowl of a food processor fitted with a steel blade. With the machine running, slowly drizzle in the olive oil and process until the ingredients are emulsified. Remove from the processor and pour over the vegetables in the bowl. Toss with the fresh basil. Keep refrigerated until one half hour before serving.

12 ounces (3 cups) grated natural Swiss cheese
1/2 teaspoon fresh minced garlic
1 teaspoon dry mustard
1/2 to 3/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
1 teaspoon Morton Nature's Seasoning or seasoned salt
1 loaf unsliced French bread, cut into 1-inch cubes

Place soup in sauce pan on medium high heat. Heat 5 minutes. Add beer, cheese, garlic, mustard, cayenne, and seasoning. Reduce heat to medium-low. Stir with wire whisk and continue to heat until cheese is melted and texture is creamy. Pour cheese mixture into a warm fondue pot. Keep fondue warm, but not bubbling hot, during the meal. Use fondue forks or bamboo skewers for spearing bread.

Serve with a basket of French bread cubes and a green salad. A bottle of dry, white wine will complement the flavor of the cheese fondue.

VARIATIONS:
Substitute equal amount of cheddar cheese for the Swiss cheese.

Apple slices may also be served for dunking into the fondue sauce.

HOW TO EAT CHEESE FONDUE

Each person should have a dinner fork and bamboo skewers or a fondue fork, which has a long metal handle and small tines. Each person should be responsible for preparing his dinner by spearing the bread cubes, one at a time. The cubes should then be submerged in the cheese (in the fondue pot) for a few seconds to coat the cubes well and then drained for a few seconds before placing hot cheese-coated bread on plate. Be careful with the hot cheese and hot fork to avoid burning your mouth.

Source: <http://www.packer.com/tailgate/>

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SMOKED SAUSAGES w/2 MUSTARDS

2 pounds lean turkey sausage
2 cups dry red wine
1 cup brown fennel seeds
2 cups beer
1 onion, thinly sliced
2 pounds smoked turkey sausage
1/2 cup honey
1/2 cup orange juice

Pierce the lean turkey sausage casings in several places with the tines of a fork. Place in a bowl with the red wine and fennel. Let it sit in the refrigerator for at least 4-6 hours. After marinating: Place the wine, fennel and sausage in a sauté pan. Bring to a boil and reduce heat to medium-high and cook until most of the wine is absorbed by the sausages, about 20-30 minutes. Remove

WINE PICKS

FROM PAGE B1

"Basically," Evans said, "I've made two major changes in the way Alderbrook wines are made. The grapes are gently belt fed to the press instead of being pumped and harvesting grapes is done only when the grapes have reached full flavor maturity. Then, I take a minimalist approach to winemaking. For pinot noir, we've upgraded with new clonal

plantings in the coolest areas of the Senoma Coast, including the Green Valley appellation."

TASTING ALDERBROOK WINES

The sleek new Alderbrook bottle design gives the first clue that there's much to be discovered inside.

■ 2000 Alderbrook Chardonnay \$20 is fresh and bright with balanced oak. Only 28 percent new French barrels were used.

The creamy mouthfeel stems from 100 percent malolactic fermentation and a regimen of stirring the lees.

"For the 2001 chardonnay," said Evans, "I've dialed down the oak flavor to 25 percent, so it can share the stage better with the fruit."

■ 2000 Alderbrook Sauvignon Blanc \$16 sports aromas and flavors of

Crenshaw melon, lemongrass and lime. This wine is a sure fire match with sushi and other Asian foods.

■ 2000 Alderbrook Pinot Noir \$27 highlights bright cherry aromas and flavors, a juicy, plump middle and a splendid, smooth, elegant finish.

■ 2000 Alderbrook Zinfandel, "Old Vines Old Clones" \$24 is a blend of grapes from 10 vineyards, ranging in age from 20 to 75 years.

This fruit-forward, juicy wine is brimming with raspberry and bramble bush fruit from first taste to the last drop in the glass.

The Heads are Troy residents who write about wine, spirits, food, and restaurants for the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers. To leave them a voice mail message, dial (734) 953-2047, mailbox 18644.

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