

YUMMY NORTHWEST

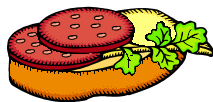
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TASTY BITS

While cleaning out your refrigerator last month, perhaps you pondered what to do with those bits and pieces of edibles besides tossing them into the soup pot.

This month, **Yummy** explores the world of tiny food. Hors d'oeuvres are known by other names, most of them much easier to spell and pronounce. You might also call them appetizers (sounds zesty), finger food (more casual), party snacks (old fashioned) or tapas (the Spanish version). A recent trend in high-class restaurants is to present waiting diners with spontaneously created bites of food, "amuse-bouche."

But whatever you call them, they should be fun for you and your guests. In "French Provincial Cooking," Elizabeth David summed it up nicely: "...the main object of an hors d'oeuvre is to provide something beautifully fresh-looking which will at the same time arouse your appetite and put you in good spirits..."



Somethin' Looks Good at Snuffin's

Based in Gig Harbor, Wash., Snuffin's Catering serves up elegant and award-winning fare all around the Puget Sound area. Owner and chef Sharon Snuffin cheerfully provided **Yummy** readers with an inside look at her fun business.

"Our most popular hors d'oeuvres are crab and artichoke soufflé in fluted phyllo cups, Malaysian prawns (a light marinade of tomato, fresh ginger, garlic and chilies - absolutely yummy!), tequila lime prawns with chipotle sauce, and perhaps the gorgonzola and pistachio crostini.

Many of our appetizers are passed by our uniformed servers on unique serving trays - and



What are these things?

The "Bantam New College French and English Dictionary" succinctly translates "hors d'oeuvre" as "hors d'oeuvre." Dissecting the term, however, yields a meaning something like "out of alignment," that is, apart from the main meal.

An hors d'oeuvre is the traditional introduction to a French meal. As simple as sliced tomatoes drizzled with olive oil, or as elaborate as a soufflé, good French eating begins with a tasty appetite teaser.

In "The Cooking of Provincial France," M.F.K. Fisher writes: "Probably the actual presentation of honest hors d'oeuvre, whether in a home or in a restaurant, is more like classical Japanese food design than any other part of Western gastronomy. The dish must be as artful in its colors and patterns as in its textures and flavors."

Something fresh and crispy, something salty, something chewy, something smooth and bland . . . create a palate of edibles for your deserving family or guests.

always garnished with fresh flowers or greenery. Our clients and their guests love to be pampered by having the staff for butler service.

Largest number of guests: 3,500+ guests at the opening of a major shopping mall. The plus is because, after the first 3,500, the security guards lost count! We had multiple food stations, a huge refrigerated truck to transport our food, and lots and lots of staff. It was great fun and a smashing success.

We have also catered three store openings for Costco in the Pierce County region. We use their food products, but do the cooking and presentation on multiple buffets in each of the store departments and provide the staff. Usually we plan for about 4,000 guests per event, but there is no way to count how many attend. The stores are crowded, guests enjoy the food, and we all wish for roller skates!

What do I like best about catering? Working with the client to produce a wonderful event for them and their guests. It's the most fun when we have the opportunity to do creative food styling and presentation as well as the event decor. We are very flexible in our menu choices and are happy to create custom menus for our clients.

Of course, it's also gratifying when we receive letters and phone calls thanking us and our staff for a fabulous party!

My advice: If you're doing your party yourself, make it wonderful, but keep it simple. Even very easy-to-prepare foods can be presented with elegance! Do foods that are prepared ahead so you can relax and enjoy your own party.

Of course, the best way to have fun at your own party and not worry about a single thing is to hire a great caterer . . . like Snuffin's! "

Find more information about Snuffin's Catering at www.snuffins.com.



Fun

Ewok Eats

6 fresh herb sprigs, a combination of parsley, thyme and chives
1/2 cup plain yogurt
4 ounces cream cheese, at room temperature
1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
1/4 teaspoon garlic salt
1 teaspoon pepper
1 head broccoli



1. Pull the thyme and parsley leaves off the stems and chop. Set aside.
2. Put the yogurt and cream cheese in a mixing bowl and stir until smooth. Add the herbs, Worcestershire sauce, salt and pepper, and stir well. Cover and refrigerate for 1 hour.
3. Cut the head of broccoli into small florets. Be sure to leave a little stem on each floret.
4. Spread the dip in the bottom of a shallow dish such as a pie pan. Stand the florets upright in the dip, side by side, to make an Ewok forest.

4 servings

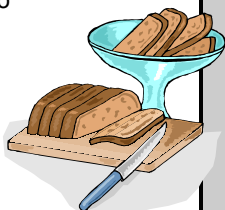
from "The Star Wars Cookbook," by Robin Davis

Healthy

Rosy Pistachio Tofu Spread

Serve this pale pink blend on whole wheat toast cut into star shapes.

14 ounces firm tofu
1 1/2 teaspoons hot sesame oil
1 1/2 teaspoons minced garlic
2 medium-size red bell peppers, julienned
2 tablespoons mellow white miso
1 tablespoon tahini
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
2 teaspoons fresh lime juice
1/2 teaspoon grated lime zest
1/2 teaspoon umeboshi vinegar
1 1/2 tablespoons mayonnaise
1 1/2 tablespoons maple syrup
White pepper
1/4 cup shelled unsalted pistachio nuts, ground to meal in blender
1/4 cup coarsely chopped shelled unsalted pistachio nuts



1. In a pot of boiling water, blanch the tofu for 1 minute. Remove and wrap in a clean dry cloth, squeeze out excess water, and wrap again in another clean dry cloth. Cool.
2. In a skillet over medium heat, heat the oil and sauté the garlic and peppers until partially soft, about 5 minutes.
3. In a food processor or blender, combine tofu, miso, tahini, juices, zest, vinegar, mayonnaise, maple syrup and white pepper. Process until smooth. Transfer to a large bowl and fold in the garlic, peppers and pistachio nuts.

Makes 2 cups

from "The Natural Health Cookbook," by Dana Jacobi



Amuse-bouche Little Bites of Delight

Amuse-bouche are smaller than hors d'oeuvres, mere whisps of taste meant to treat the eyes and tempt the appetite. In "The Cat Who Robbed the Bank," by Lilian Jackson Braun, they are called "fun-bites."

First came the fun-bites, with the compliments of the chef: little somethings that he concocted on the spur of the moment – no two alike. Each guest was served a single bite-sized morsel: smoked salmon sandwiched between two thin slices of strawberry with a dab of sour cream and sprinkling of toasted pine nuts... a cherry tomato stuffed with lobster and hazelnuts... half a shrimp on a potato chip, crowned with a peppery tomato aspic and a miniature gaufrette of cucumber... an inch cube of turkey terrine smothered with black bean salsa and capers.

Comments varied: "What is it?...Just enjoy it and don't ask questions...How many more fun-bites can he invent?"

Polly asked, "How many more poems can be written? How much more music can be composed?"

Exotic

Macadamia Pesto

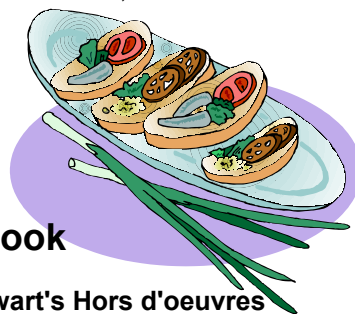
This pesto is nice spread on toasted baguette slices.

1/4 cup roasted, salted macadamia nuts
3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1 1/2 cups packed fresh basil leaves, rinsed and drained
3 tablespoons grated parmesan cheese
Salt

1. In a blender or food processor, whirl macadamia nuts, olive oil and lemon juice until nuts are coarsely ground
2. Add basil and parmesan cheese and whirl until mixture is smooth, scraping container sides as needed. Add salt to taste.

Makes about 1/2 cup

from "The Best of Sunset," March 2002



By the book

Martha Stewart's Hors d'oeuvres Handbook

Martha outdoes herself in this excellent collection. Along with party guidelines and sample menus, there are many recipes for hand-held edibles, such as fragrant baked goods, stuffed vegetables and spicy nuts, and an intriguing assortment of beverages. But the best part of the book is the photo section, where every recipe is illustrated in mouth-watering color. Recipes really are delicious. I made the bite-size Blue Cheese Popovers several years ago for a gathering, and folks are still talking about them.



About YUMMY NORTHWEST

Each monthly issue highlights an edible delight available in the Pacific Northwest.

Contact the editor

Comments, corrections, topic ideas and submissions are all most welcome.
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