

Traditional Holiday Recipes

Fancy Deviled Eggs

Deviled eggs have a long history. The first known version that resembles what we serve on holiday tables in the United States dates back to the late 1800s. Deviled eggs are versatile and can be dressed up in so many ways to look beautiful on a platter centered on your appetizer table. This recipe is mostly classic, with the addition of blue cheese to add a little something extra for the special occasion.

Serves 16 | Prep. time 20 minutes | Cooking time 10 minutes

Ingredients

- 8 large eggs
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1 tablespoon capers, chopped
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup blue cheese crumbles
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup parsley, chopped
- Pomegranate seeds for garnish

Directions

1. Place the eggs in a single layer in a large pot. Cover with water and bring to a boil. Once the water comes to a boil, remove the pot from the heat, cover, and let sit for 10–12 minutes.
2. Remove the eggs from the water and allow them to cool enough to handle and peel.
3. Cut each of the eggs in half lengthwise and scoop out the cooked yolk. Reserve the yolks in a separate bowl.
4. Cover the egg whites and refrigerate until ready to use.
5. Mash the egg yolks slightly and then add the mayonnaise, Dijon mustard, capers, and salt and pepper to taste. Mix well until the yolks are creamy. Use a blender or electric mixer if needed to achieve a creamy consistency.
6. Place the egg yolks in a pastry bag with a piping tip.
7. Take each egg white half and carefully pipe the filling into the center.
8. Top each egg with crumbled blue cheese, fresh parsley, and pomegranate seeds to serve.

Stuffed Bacon-Wrapped Dates

Also called devils on horseback, bacon-wrapped and stuffed dates have been popular since the late 19th century. They're rich, decadent, and easy to make, so it's no wonder they became a popular dish at holiday gatherings.

Serves 16 | Prep. time 15 minutes | Cooking time 40 minutes

Ingredients

- 1 pound maple smoked sliced bacon, each strip cut in half
- 32 dates, pitted
- 1 cup blue cheese crumbles

For the sauce

- 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- ½ cup light brown sugar

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F (191°C) and line a baking sheet with parchment paper for easy clean-up.
2. Take each date and make a slice lengthwise to open it up. Be careful to not cut it all the way through.
3. Open the date and stuff it with blue cheese crumbles. Set it aside and repeat with the others.
4. Once all the dates have been stuffed, wrap each one with half a strip of bacon.
5. Place the stuffed dates on the baking sheet so that the tail of the bacon strip is on the bottom of the date. This will help keep the bacon in place while cooking.
6. Place the tray in the oven and bake for 40 minutes, or until the bacon is crisp. Turn the dates over once about 25 minutes into cooking.
7. Meanwhile, combine the balsamic vinegar and light brown sugar in a saucepan over medium heat.
8. Stir while bringing the mixture to a boil. Then reduce the heat to medium-low and let simmer, stirring occasionally, for 20 minutes, or until the sauce has thickened.
9. Remove the dates from the oven and serve on a platter with a bowl of dipping sauce. Offer toothpicks or appetizer forks for easy dipping.

Roasted Pork Loin with Cranberry Sauce

Roasted pork loin is a traditional dish that is served in many different ways during the holidays. Every culture that enjoys pork has its own version of this dish, but we couldn't resist including this recipe with a delicious cranberry glaze for your special holiday table.

Serves 8 | Prep. time 15 minutes | Cooking time 55 minutes

Ingredients

- 1 (3-pound) pork loin roast
- ¼ cup olive oil
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon coarse ground black pepper

For the cranberry sauce

- 1 cup fresh cranberries
- ½ cup water
- ½ cup apple juice
- ¼ cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon butter
- ½ cup shallots, minced
- 2 tablespoons garlic, minced
- 2 teaspoons dried thyme
- 1 cup vegetable or chicken stock
- 3 tablespoons apple cider vinegar

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F (204°C) and heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat.
2. Season the pork loin with salt and coarse ground black pepper.
3. Place the pork in the skillet and sear on each side until browned.
4. Place the seared roast in a baking pan and place it in the oven. Roast for 30–45 minutes, or until the center reaches a food-safe temperature of at least 145°F.
5. Meanwhile, add the cranberries, water, apple juice, and sugar to a saucepan.
6. Heat over medium while stirring until the mixture comes to a boil. Reduce the heat to low and simmer for 15 minutes.
7. When the pork loin is done roasting, remove it from the roasting pan and place it on a serving plate to rest. Cover with aluminum foil to keep warm.
8. Place the roasting pan with the pork loin drippings on a burner over medium heat. (If the roasting pan is not stovetop safe, use a saucepan instead.)
9. Add the butter, shallots, garlic, thyme, chicken stock, and apple cider vinegar to the roasting pan.
10. Stir, while scraping meat bits from the bottom of the pan, for 5 minutes.
11. Add the cranberry sauce mixture to the saucepan. Continue to heat over medium while stirring until the sauce comes to a low boil.
12. Reduce the heat to low and simmer for 10–15 minutes until it thickens to a glaze.
13. Remove the aluminum foil from the pork loin and spread the cranberry glaze over the pork loin before serving.
14. You can also serve the glaze on the side as an accompaniment.

Christmas Seafood Stew

Christmas seafood stew is a long-standing Italian tradition for Christmas Eve. It's enjoyed to welcome the Christmas holidays and celebrate by not eating beef. You don't have to live in Italy to enjoy this beautiful stew on Christmas Eve, or for any special holiday dinner.

Serves 8 | Prep. time 20 minutes | Cooking time 30 minutes

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons butter, divided
- ½ pound scallops
- ½ cup dry white wine
- 1 cup vegetable or seafood stock
- 1 pound mussels
- ½ pound clams
- 1 tablespoon anchovies, minced
- 1 cup sweet yellow onion, sliced
- 1 cup fennel, sliced
- 2 tablespoons garlic, minced
- 1 (28-ounce) can crushed tomatoes
- 1 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
- ¼ cup fresh parsley, chopped
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- ½ pound whitefish, cubed
- 1 pound salmon fillet, cubed
- ½ pound medium-sized shrimp, peeled and deveined

Directions

1. Heat one tablespoon of the butter in a large, deep skillet over medium heat.
2. Add the scallops and brown for 1–2 minutes on each side. Remove and set aside.
3. Add the dry white wine and vegetable or seafood stock to the pan. Deglaze the pan. Once the liquid is warm to almost boiling, add the mussels and cook for 3–5 minutes until they open.
4. Remove the mussels from the skillet, discarding any that didn't open.
5. Repeat with the clams. Strain the cooking liquid into a bowl and set it aside.
6. Next, add the remaining butter to the skillet, along with the anchovies, onion, fennel, and garlic. Cook, stirring occasionally, for about 5 minutes.
7. Add the tomatoes, crushed red pepper flakes, and salt and pepper to taste. Cook for 5 minutes, or until the sauce thickens slightly,
8. Add the whitefish, salmon, and shrimp. Cover and cook for 5–10 minutes, or until the fish is cooked through.
9. Add the scallops, mussels, and clams back into the skillet.
10. Cook for 2 minutes to warm through.
11. Serve immediately.

Wild Rice and Cranberry Pilaf

Wild rice and cranberries are a duo that just screams holidays. Wild rice dishes date back to the pioneer times or earlier, but the addition of dried cranberries is a more modern touch.

Serves 8 | Prep. time 10 minutes | Cooking time 40 minutes

Ingredients

- 1³/₄ cups turkey or chicken stock
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 fresh rosemary sprig, or one tablespoon chopped rosemary
- 1 cup wild rice
- 1 tablespoon fresh thyme
- Salt and pepper to taste
- ¼ cup butter
- 1 cup red onion, diced
- 1 cup celery, diced
- 1½ cups long grain rice
- 2½ cups boiling water
- 1 cup dried cranberries, chopped
- 1 apple, cored, peeled, and cubed
- ½ cup pecans, chopped

Directions

1. In a stockpot or large saucepan, combine the turkey or chicken stock, bay leaves, rosemary, thyme, and salt and pepper. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat.
2. Add the wild rice and stir. Cover, reduce the heat to low and cook until the rice has absorbed the liquid and is tender for about 40 minutes.
3. Meanwhile, melt the butter in a deep skillet over medium heat.
4. Add the red onion and celery. Sauté for 10 minutes, or until soft and translucent.
5. Add the long grain rice and stir. Cook while stirring until the rice is lightly toasted.
6. Pour 2½ cups boiling water over the rice and stir. Bring the liquid to a boil in the skillet, then add the cranberries and apple.
7. Reduce the heat to low, cover, and cook for 20 minutes or until the rice is tender.
8. Combine both rice mixtures in a serving bowl along with the pecan. Season with salt and pepper as desired before serving.

Creamed Spinach with Nutmeg

Creamed spinach is rumored to have African origins, but made its way to American dinner tables at some point in the mid-1900s. Its creamy and decadent texture was a way to dress up what was otherwise seen as a boring vegetable. Plus, its vibrant color was perfect for the holiday table. This recipe also uses Gruyere cheese for a slightly nutty flavor that compliments other holiday dishes.

Serves 8 | Prep. time 15 minutes | Cooking time 20 minutes

Ingredients

- 1 pound frozen spinach, thawed
- ¼ cup butter
- 1 cup sweet yellow onion, chopped
- 2 tablespoon garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon nutmeg
- ¼ cup all-purpose flour
- 3½ cups heavy cream
- ½ cup cream cheese
- 1 cup Gruyere cheese, shredded
- ½ cup Parmesan cheese, shredded
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- Salt and pepper, to taste

Directions

1. Begin by using a cheesecloth or a towel to squeeze as much moisture from the spinach as possible. Repeat until the spinach feels dry.
2. Melt the butter in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the onion and sauté for 10 minutes, or until soft and translucent.
3. Add the garlic and nutmeg. Cook for 2 minutes.
4. Sprinkle the flour over the onions and stir. Cook for 2–3 minutes, until the flour, is lightly browned and is giving off light, nutty aroma.
5. Slowly stir in the heavy cream, whisking as you go to break up any lumps. Continue cooking as you stir until the heavy cream comes to a low boil. Reduce the heat to low and cook for 5 minutes or until the sauce thickens.
6. Stir in the cream cheese and Parmesan. Mix well until the cheeses are blended and creamy. Add the spinach, lemon juice, and season with salt and pepper to taste.
7. Preheat the oven's broiler. Transfer the creamed spinach to an oven-safe serving dish.
8. Sprinkle the gruyere cheese on top and place in the oven to broil until the cheese is melted and turns golden.
9. Serve immediately.

Yule Log Cake

The yule log cake represents the yule log that families would burn over the Christmas holiday season. Whether you have a log in the fireplace or not, this cake is a delicious holiday tradition.

Serves 12 | Prep. time 30 minutes

Refrigeration time 2 hours | Cooking time 10 minutes

Ingredients

For the cake

- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup all-purpose flour
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup plus 1 tablespoon cocoa powder
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
- 4 eggs, separated
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup white sugar
- 2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sour cream
- 4 tablespoons butter, melted

Filling

- $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups heavy whipping cream
- 1 cup powdered sugar
- 1 cup mascarpone cheese
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon rum extract

Frosting

- 1 (8-ounce) package dark chocolate, shredded or chopped
- 1 cup heavy cream

Garnish

- Marzipan mushrooms
- Sugared Christmas trees
- Sugared stars

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F (191°C) and line a baking sheet or jelly roll pan with parchment paper.
2. In a large bowl, combine the flour, cocoa powder, baking powder, and salt.
3. In a separate bowl, combine the egg yolk and sugar until well blended. Add the vanilla extract, sour cream, and butter. Mix until smooth.
4. Working in increments, add the wet ingredients to the dry ingredients. Mix just until blended.
5. Add the egg whites to another bowl and beat them with an electric mixer until stiff peaks form.
6. Working in batches, fold the egg whites into the cake batter.
7. Spread the cake batter out into the pan and place it in the oven.
8. Bake for 10 minutes, or until a fork stuck in the center comes out clean
9. Carefully lift the cake from the pan using the parchment paper and set it aside to cool.
10. Meanwhile, prepare the filling. Using an electric mixer, whip the cream with the powdered sugar and rum extract until peaks form.
11. Add the mascarpone cheese and mix again until peaks form.
12. Spread the filling out over the completely cooled cake, then carefully roll it into a log.
13. Wrap the cake log tightly in plastic wrap and place it in the refrigerator to chill for 2 hours.
14. After 2 hours, remove the cake from the refrigerator and unwrap it.
15. Make the frosting by placing the heavy cream in a saucepan and bringing it to a low boil over medium-high heat.
16. While the cream is heating, add the chocolate to a heatproof bowl.
17. Pour the cream over the chocolate, stir, and let sit for a few minutes.
18. Stir again and then allow the frosting to cool completely until it firms up.
19. Once firm, whisk or blend the frosting to make it creamy.
20. Spread the frosting over all sides of the cake.
21. Use a fork or cake decorating tool to score lines in the frosting to resemble tree bark.
22. Decorate the log and serve.

Spiced Homemade Eggnog

Eggnog has been a popular holiday beverage for centuries but somewhere in the late 20th century, we began to fear the homemade variety due to salmonella. Warming the custard that goes into the nog takes care of that concern, and the result is so much better than anything you'll ever find in the store.

Serves 12 | Prep. time 20 minutes

Refrigeration time 6 hours+ | Cooking time 15 minutes

Ingredients

- 4 cups whole milk
- 1 vanilla bean, halved and scraped
- 4 whole cloves
- 2 cinnamon sticks
- 12 egg yolks
- 1½ cups white sugar
- 2 cups spiced rum or brandy
- 4 cups cream
- 1 teaspoon fresh ground nutmeg
- Ground cinnamon, cinnamon sticks, anise stars for serving

Directions

1. Combine the whole milk, vanilla bean scrapings, cloves, and cinnamon sticks in a large saucepan over low heat.
2. Slowly bring the mixture to a boil, stirring, taking care not to scald it.
3. Meanwhile, combine the egg yolks and sugar in a bowl. Whisk until creamy and frothy.
4. Slowly add about ½ cup of the warm milk mixture to the eggs, whisking as you do. This is to temper the eggs so that they don't cook instantly when meeting the rest of the hot liquid, so take care in going slow.
5. Slowly add the egg mixture to the pot, whisking as you go.
6. Cook over low heat, stirring constantly, for 3–4 minutes or until thickened.
7. Remove from the heat and strain out the cloves and cinnamon sticks.
8. Allow to cool for 45 minutes to an hour.
9. Once cooled, stir in the cream, spiced rum or brandy, and fresh nutmeg. Mix well.
10. Cover and refrigerate overnight before serving.
11. Decorate each glass with a cinnamon stick and anise stars if desired. Dust with ground cinnamon before serving if desired.

***These recipes and more are found in Louise Davidson's *Vintage Holiday Cookbook - Timeless Memorable Old-Fashioned Recipes for Christmas and the Holiday Season*. To get your copy, click on the cover below or click [here](#).

