



APPETIZERS/SIDES

What do you bring when someone asks you contribute a “side dish?” Of the millions of appetizers out there, which ones stand out? My goal in these situations is to bring a small but mighty starter that is capable of stealing the entire show — giving everyone something to talk about — not just your average veggies and dips, or hummus and chips, or chips and salsa. These recipes will put you on the map.



Tracy's Killer Diller Hot Artichoke Dip

1

SERVES

8-10

Everybody needs some version of a hot artichoke dip recipe. I was at a work party a few years back when I came upon this version made by my good friend Tracy. I couldn't stop eating it. I tweaked the recipe slightly . . . I spiced it up a bit . . . and I am confident this will be the one to keep. Throw the others out!

- 1 c. mayonnaise
- 1 c. sour cream
- 2 c. grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 - 14 oz. can chopped artichoke hearts
- 8 cloves crushed garlic
- ½ c. sliced black olives
- ½ t. crushed Red Pepper Flakes
- ½ t. black pepper
- Smoked Paprika

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Mix all ingredients together completely, and then transfer to a lightly greased baking dish. Gently sprinkle top with smoked paprika.
3. Cover with foil, and bake for 40 minutes, or until bubbly. Remove the foil, and then let the top brown for about ten more minutes.
4. Serve warm with crostini, crackers, or veggies...or all of the above. Enjoy!





Quintessential Slow Cooker Buffalo Chicken Dip



SERVES

10-12

Who doesn't love anything with buffalo sauce? I constantly crave the spicy red sauce with some invasion of blue cheese. Really, anything tastes better with buffalo sauce. There are a million versions of buffalo chicken dip out there, but this is my go-to. It's one I've perfected over the years as I tinker with it, and I love that I can literally just dump a simple list of ingredients into my best friend, the slow cooker, and let it do the hard work. Just stir a few times, especially at the end, and you have the yummiest dip out there, perfect for Oscar parties, sporting events, and, yes, binge eating. Dip away!

- 2 8-oz. packages cream cheese
- 2 c. chopped cooked chicken
- 2 c. mild cheddar cheese
- 1 c. buttermilk
- 1/3 c. hot sauce
- 1 T. flour
- 1 t. Worcestershire sauce
- 1 t. cayenne pepper
- 1 t. onion powder
- 1 t. garlic powder
- 1 leek, thinly sliced
- Handful of chopped parsley
- 1/4 c. blue cheese crumbles
- Crackers, celery, and carrot sticks for dipping

1. Place all ingredients, except the parsley and blue cheese, into a slow cooker. Mix well.
2. Cook, covered, on a high setting for 2 hours. The dip will be bubbly and well melted. Stir until the dip is very smooth and combined well.
3. Sprinkle with the parsley and blue cheese, reduce to a warm setting, and serve with crackers, celery, and carrot sticks.



Hypercharged Grilled Halloumi Cheese and Watermelon Stacks

3

MAKES

12 Small Bites

Grilled halloumi cheese makes a perfect vessel for any sort of dip, salad, or topping — it's really the perfect appetizer ingredient. Besides being sturdy and able to withstand a reception/cocktail party without making a mess, it tastes great — salty and slightly tangy. It also makes a great substitute for meat in most recipes. But marinated and topped with watermelon . . . heaven!

- 1 t. dried minced onion
- 1 t. minced garlic
- Pinch of kosher salt
- ¼ c. red wine vinegar
- 1 T. honey
- ½ c. olive oil
- 3 T. chopped pistachios
- 2 T. chopped fresh mint
- 12 small wedges watermelon, rind and seeds removed (you can substitute with cantaloupe slices also)
- 12 oz. halloumi cheese, cut into 12 slices

1. Place the onion and garlic into a medium mixing bowl and throw in a pinch of kosher salt. Add the vinegar and honey, whisking as you go.
2. Slowly whisk in the olive oil, and then stir in the pistachios and mint.
3. Place the watermelon slices in a shallow dish. Pour the dressing over the top, and let it marinate in the refrigerator, covered, for at least 1 hour.
4. Heat a large skillet over medium heat and coat with cooking spray or about 1 tablespoon of olive oil. Add the Halloumi slices and cook for about 1 minute on each side, or until each side is lightly browned. Remove the cheese from the pan.
5. Top each halloumi slice with a piece of the marinated watermelon and serve.



Da Bomb Hot Peanut Sesame Dip



SERVES

4-6

My Aunt Linda loves to say she's not the best in the kitchen, which may or may not be true. But two of my favorite recipes in this book came from her, recipes she doesn't even recall giving to me years and years ago. (See the Wyoming Whopper Cookies recipe on p. xxx.) This dip ... I swear once you start eating it, you will be hooked and not be able to contain yourself. So easy to make, and soooooo good. I've been putting it out at cocktail parties for over 30 years now. Thanks, Linda!

- $\frac{2}{3}$ c. chunky peanut butter
- 6 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 T. soy sauce
- 3 T. chili oil
- 1 T. sesame oil
- 2 T. lemon juice
- 3 T. sugar
- Veggies or crackers for dipping

1. In a small mixing bowl, mix all ingredients together and let the mixture sit up for at least 2 hours.

2. Serve with veggies or crackers. It's amazing!

