SECRETS FOR A MAKE AHEAD COCKTAIL GATHERING

Featuring One and Two-Bite Appetizers

Zoom Cooking Class

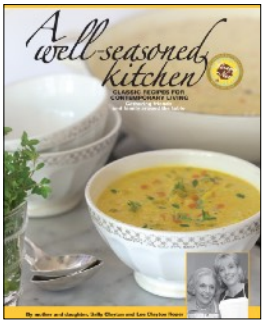
for
Women's Leadership Council of Trinity College

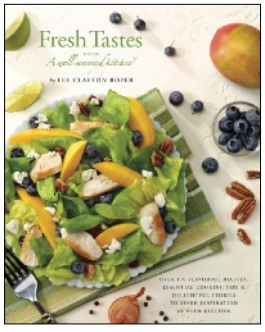
with
Lee Clayton Roper
Food Blogger, Cooking Class Instructor, Public Speaker
and
Author of
A well-seasoned kitchen®

and

Fresh Tastes

Wednesday, March 17, 2021
7:30 pm ET





SECRETS FOR A MAKE AHEAD COCKTAIL GATHERING

Menu

Lemon Ginger Bourbon Cocktail
Sweet & Tangy Lemon Ginger Mocktail

Mushroom Pâté on Toasts

Shrimp Curry Bites

Prosciutto, Fig and Goat Cheese Tarts

LEMON GINGER BOURBON COCKTAIL

(2 Servings)

Rosemary-Infused Honey Simple Syrup (Makes around 1 1/8 cups)

3/4 cup honey
6 tablespoons water
1/4 cup fresh rosemary leaves, plus more for garnish

Lemon Ginger Bourbon Cocktail

1/4 cup Rosemary-Infused Simple Syrup
1/2 cup (4 ounces) good quality bourbon
6 tablespoons (3 ounces) ginger liqueur (I like Domaine de Canton brand)
3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
6 dashes lemon bitters (can also use orange)
Rosemary sprigs, for garnish
Lemon slices, for garnish

DIRECTIONS:

Rosemary-Infused Honey Simple Syrup

In a small saucepan, heat the honey, water and rosemary leaves over medium-low heat, stirring, just until the honey is dissolved. Remove from heat, cover and allow to steep (at room temperature) for several hours or overnight.

Lemon Ginger Bourbon Cocktail

Place 1/4 cup rosemary-infused simple syrup (with the rosemary) in a cocktail shaker. Place the remaining simple syrup in a sealed container and refrigerate for one month for later use. (Can also freeze for up to 3 months.)

Add bourbon, ginger liqueur, lemon juice and lemon bitters to the cocktail shaker. Shake vigorously for around 10 to 15 seconds.

Strain into two cocktail glasses over ice. Garnish with a small rosemary sprig and a slice of lemon.

SWEET & TANGY LEMON GINGER MOCKTAIL

(2 Servings)

Rosemary-Infused Honey Simple Syrup (Makes around 1 1/8 cups)

3/4 cup honey
6 tablespoons water
1/4 cup fresh rosemary leaves, plus more for garnish

Lemon Ginger Mocktail

1/4 cup Rosemary-Infused Simple Syrup
3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
6 dashes lemon bitters (can also use orange) - optional, as some bitters contain alcohol
7 ounces (7/8 cup) ginger beer, labeled "less sweet" (I like Q brand)
Rosemary sprigs, for garnish
Lemon slices, for garnish

DIRECTIONS:

Rosemary-Infused Honey Simple Syrup

In a small saucepan, heat the honey, water and rosemary leaves over medium-low heat, stirring, just until the honey is dissolved. Remove from heat, cover and allow to steep (at room temperature) for several hours or overnight.

Lemon Ginger Mocktail

Place 1/4 cup rosemary-infused simple syrup (with the rosemary) in a cocktail shaker. Place the remaining simple syrup in a sealed container and refrigerate for one month for later use. (Can also freeze for up to 3 months.)

Add lemon juice and lemon bitters (if using) to the cocktail shaker. Shake vigorously for around 10 to 15 seconds.

Strain into two cocktail glasses over ice. Divide ginger beer between the glasses. Garnish with a small rosemary sprig and a slice of lemon.

MUSHROOM PÂTÉ

(Makes around 2 cups)

From "Fresh Tastes" by Lee Clayton Roper

16 ounces baby portabella (cremini) mushrooms
3 tablespoons butter
1 1/2 teaspoons chopped or pressed garlic
1/3 cup chopped green onion (white, light green and some of the dark green portion)
1/4 cup dry sherry
2 teaspoons fresh thyme leaves
6 ounces cream cheese
Juice from 1/2 to 1 lemon
Cayenne pepper, to taste
Salt, to taste
Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
1/4 cup chopped toasted pecans
Crackers, toasted baguette slices or toast points

Remove the stems from the mushrooms, cut the caps in half and thinly slice.

In a large sauté pan or skillet, melt butter over medium heat. Add the garlic and mushrooms; cook, stirring occasionally, until mushrooms are soft and liquid evaporates.

Stir in the green onion and sherry; cook until liquid evaporates.

Reduce heat to low; stir in thyme and cream cheese. Cook, stirring constantly, just until the cheese melts and mixture is blended.

Remove from heat and season to taste with lemon juice, cayenne pepper, salt and pepper. Stir in pecans.

Press mixture into a serving bowl. Cover and refrigerate several hours. Bring to room temperature before serving.

Serve with crackers, toasted baguette slices or toast points.

Make ahead: Pâté can be made up to 2 days ahead, covered and refrigerated.

Variation: spread pâté on toasted baguette slices or small toast points.

SHRIMP CURRY BITES
(Makes around 2 cups filling, for 60 bites)

6 ounces cream cheese, softened
2 tablespoons mayonnaise
1 tablespoon butter, softened
1 tablespoon lemon juice, or to taste
1 1/2 teaspoons curry powder, or to taste
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
1/2 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
Couple dashes hot sauce
3 large green onions, chopped, plus more for garnish
1 tablespoon chopped fresh cilantro (can also use parsley), plus more for garnish
12 ounces medium (41/50) cooked shrimp, shelled completely, deveined and patted dry with paper towel
Kosher salt, to taste
Fresh ground pepper, to taste
60 (4 boxes) prepared mini phyllo shells, cooked per package instructions and cooled

In the bowl of a food processor, blend together the cream cheese, mayonnaise and butter until smooth and well mixed.

Add the lemon juice, curry powder, mustard, Worcestershire sauce, garlic powder and hot sauce; blend until incorporated.

Add the green onions and cilantro and pulse to blend. Spoon mixture in a medium mixing bowl. Don't clean out the processor bowl!

Put shrimp in same food processor bowl and pulse a few times just until chopped (don't purée - you should have some small shrimp pieces). Add to cream cheese mixture and stir to blend well. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Cover and refrigerate for at least 1 hour. Taste and adjust lemon juice, curry powder, salt and pepper as needed.

Spoon around 1 1/2 teaspoons shrimp mixture into each phyllo shell and garnish with additional cilantro or chopped green onion.

Make ahead: Shrimp mixture can be prepared up to two days ahead, covered and refrigerated. Phyllo shells can be prepared earlier in the day and stored at room temperature.

PROSCIUTTO, FIG AND GOAT CHEESE TARTS
(Makes 6 dozen)

From "Fresh Tastes" by Lee Clayton Roper

1 (17.3 ounce) package (2 sheets) frozen puff pastry, thawed in refrigerator (see Tip below)
1 (8 to 8.5-ounce) jar fig spread*
1 cup (6 ounces) chopped prosciutto
1 cup (4 ounces) crumbled goat cheese

*Available in the cheese section at Whole Foods, some major grocery stores and at specialty food stores

Remove 1 sheet of puff pastry from refrigerator. On a lightly floured surface, roll puff pastry into a 12-inch square. Cut into 2-inch squares. Press pastry into small mini-muffin pans and prick with a fork. Spoon a scant 1/2 teaspoon of fig spread into center of each square. Top with chopped prosciutto and goat cheese.

Remove remaining puff pastry sheet from refrigerator; repeat procedure with second pastry sheet. Freeze in muffin pans.

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees.

Bake frozen tarts (in mini-muffin pans) 10 to 15 minutes or until hot and pastry is golden. Serve immediately.

Make ahead: Tarts can be kept frozen for up to 3 months (any longer and they won't bake properly). Remove frozen tarts from muffin pans and place in heavy-duty freezer bags. To bake, place tarts back into mini-muffin pans.

Tip on using puff pastry: It is important when working with puff pastry to keep it cold. If it gets warm, it will be difficult to roll and cut, and won't puff as much when baked.

OTHER ONE AND TWO-BITE APPETIZER IDEAS
(With your own recipes)

Serve your favorite soup (hot or cold) in individual shot glasses (or demitasse cups). Works best with puréed soups.

Fill a small, deep cup (plastic or glass) 1/2 to 3/4 full with your favorite dip to serve with vegetables (like a ranch dip). Place spears of carrots, zucchini, celery, peppers, and/or asparagus standing up in dip.

Fill a small cup, shot glass or demitasse cup with chocolate mousse, butterscotch pudding, or individual parfaits.

Place spreads/dips into individual-sized cups (ramekins work well) and serve with similar portion of crackers or chips, placed on an individual plate. (I find chargeurs are the perfect size for a couples plate.)



Find more appetizer recipes and kitchen inspiration at www.seasonedkitchen.com

HOW TO MAKE YOUR COCKTAIL PARTY MENU WORK FOR YOU

- **Vary your food colors.** We eat with our eyes first.
- **Think about texture.** Make sure to have something crunchy, even a chopped nut garnish on one dish.
- **Don't overdo an ingredient**.
- **Don't serve a dish that's complicated to eat based on the setting.**
- **Do politely ask in advance if guests have any dietary restrictions.** There are ways to work around every need and request.
- **Strive for a menu that you can make ahead.** My cookbook "A Well-Seasoned Kitchen" is predicated on the concept that nearly everything can be made ahead. This allows you to prepare, clean up, get ready and enjoy! There's no reason to have a party if you can't enjoy your guests, too.
- It's okay to duplicate your menus, but only for people who haven't had the dinner before - or in awhile. **For cocktail parties, you can keep many of the dishes the same.** I find people look forward to having a favorite again, but also enjoy sampling something new.
- **In terms of quantity of food for a cocktail party**, it depends on several factors:
  - time of day (meal time vs not),
  - length of the party,
  - age of the guests (younger people eat more),
  - Number of guests (two couples or 20 people?),
  - sex of your guests (men eat more), and
  - number - and heartiness - of dishes prepared.

  Some general guidelines for parties of 12 or more:

  - I prepare 5 to 8 dishes for a 2 hour, pre-meal get together (i.e., 5 to 7 pm) and 6 to 10 dishes for a meal time gathering.
  - I plan on 1 to 3 servings/person - a blend across the various dishes.
  - I find I don't need to double most dips - unless the party is 40 or more people.
  - Include a mix of hot and cold appetizers, some passed and some on a table. And provide a sweet dish or two, even if it's just purchased truffles.
- **I keep an entertaining diary** logging who came, what I served, where I found the recipes and how I set the table, buffet, etc. I try to keep track of guests' likes, dislikes and dietary restrictions, too.

Equipment Recommendations (for these recipes)

Cocktail strainer

Dough E Z Rolling System

Rolling pin covers

Mini Tart Tamper

Lemon and lime squeezer

Kuhn Rikon Garlic Press (or Alpha Grillers Garlic Press)

Find more of my recommended cooking tools at https://www.seasonedkitchen.com/in-the-kitchen/cooking-tools-lee-loves

****

Where to Purchase Lee's Cookbooks

www.amazon.com

www.barnesandnoble.com

www.indiebound.org (find a list of local independent bookstores in your area where you can purchase or order a copy)

www.walmart.com