Chef express

NorCal Community Media

# perfect picnic recipes

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## introduction

Welcome to "Perfect Picnic Recipes," your ultimate guide to crafting delightful dishes that make outdoor dining both enjoyable and effortless. This collection brings together a range of flavors and textures that are perfect for picnics, barbecues, and al fresco gatherings. Each recipe is designed to be easy to prepare and transport, ensuring your picnic is as stress-free as it is delicious.

# perfect picnic recipes

- Begin with the “Caprese Pesto Sandwiches," where fresh, vibrant ingredients come together in perfection. These sandwiches feature ripe tomatoes, creamy mozzarella, and aromatic basil pesto, all nestled between crusty bread, making them a refreshing and elegant addition to your picnic spread. Next, enjoy the "Watermelon Feta Salad with Mint," a light and invigorating dish that combines juicy watermelon with tangy feta cheese and refreshing mint, offering a cool contrast to the summer heat.

- For a hearty, yet healthy option, try the "Cucumber and Avocado Wraps." These wraps are packed with protein-rich chickpeas, creamy avocado, and crisp vegetables, all wrapped in a soft tortilla for a satisfying and portable meal. The "Chicken Caesar Pasta Salad" is a crowd-pleaser, blending tender pasta with grilled chicken, crisp romaine, and a creamy Caesar dressing, creating a flavorful and filling salad that’s perfect for sharing.

- Lastly, no picnic is complete without a touch of classic comfort—enter "Classic Deviled Eggs." These timeless bites are creamy, tangy, and always a hit, offering a nostalgic taste of summer gatherings.

- With "Perfect Picnic Recipes," you’ll have everything you need to create a memorable and enjoyable outdoor feast. From light and refreshing salads to hearty sandwiches and classic favorites, these recipes will ensure your picnic is both delicious and effortlessly fun.

**Difficulty scale**

■□□ | Easy to do

■■□ | Requires attention

■■■ | Requires experience

# lemon-herb
## chicken salad wraps

■■□ | Preparation time: 15 minutes - Cooking time: 20 minutes

### ingredients

- 2 boneless, skinless chicken breasts (about 12 oz total)
- 1 lemon (juice and zest)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- ¼ cup mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 2 tablespoons fresh parsley, chopped
- 2 tablespoons fresh dill, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 4 large whole wheat tortillas
- 1 cup mixed greens
- ½ cup cucumber, sliced
- ½ cup cherry tomatoes, halved or quartered

### method

1. Season the chicken breasts with salt and pepper. Heat 1 tablespoon of olive oil in a skillet over medium heat. Cook the chicken for 8-10 minutes on each side or until fully cooked. Let it cool slightly, then dice it into small pieces or slices.
2. In a large bowl, mix together the mayonnaise, Dijon mustard, lemon juice, lemon zest, minced garlic, and the remaining 1 tablespoon of olive oil. Stir in the chopped parsley and dill. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
3. Add the chicken to the bowl with the dressing. Mix well until the chicken is evenly coated.
4. Lay out the tortillas. Divide the chicken mixture evenly among them, placing it in the center of each tortilla. Top with mixed greens, cucumber slices, and cherry tomatoes.
5. Fold in the sides of the tortilla and roll it up tightly. Slice in half if desired and serve immediately.

**Serves 4**

### tip from the chef

*Serve with your lemon dill potato salad!*

# caprese skewers
## with balsamic glaze

■□□ | Preparation time: 10 minutes - Cooking time: 5 minutes (for glaze, optional)

### method

1. Wash the cherry tomatoes and basil leaves. Drain the mozzarella balls.
2. On each skewer, thread one cherry tomato, one mozzarella ball, and one basil leaf. Repeat the process until all skewers are assembled.
3. In a small saucepan, combine balsamic vinegar and honey. Simmer over medium heat for about 5 minutes until it reduces and thickens slightly. Let it cool.
4. Arrange the skewers on a serving platter. Drizzle with olive oil and balsamic glaze (if using). Season with salt and pepper.
5. Serve immediately as a fresh appetizer or snack.

**Serves 6**

### ingredients

- **24 cherry tomatoes**
- **24 small fresh mozzarella balls (bocconcini)**
- **24 fresh basil leaves**
- **2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar**
- **1 tablespoon honey (optional, for glaze)**
- **2 tablespoons olive oil**
- **Salt and pepper, to taste**
- **24 wooden or bamboo skewers**

### tip from the chef

*Serve with sliced french bread and extra glaze for dipping!*

# fresh berry salad
## with poppy seed dressing

■□□ | Preparation time: 10 minutes - Cooking time: none

### ingredients

> 6 cups fresh baby spinach
> 1 cup strawberries, sliced
> ½ cup blueberries
> ½ cup raspberries (optional)
> ¼ cup red onion, thinly sliced
> ¼ cup crumbled feta cheese
> ¼ cup sliced almonds, toasted or pecan nuts

*For the Poppy Seed Dressing:*

> ¼ cup olive oil
> 2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
> 1 tablespoon honey
> 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
> 1 tablespoon poppy seeds
> Salt and pepper, to taste

### method

1. In a small bowl, whisk together olive oil, apple cider vinegar, honey, Dijon mustard, poppy seeds, salt, and pepper until well combined.
2. Rinse and dry the spinach and berries. Slice the strawberries and thinly slice the red onion. Toast the sliced almonds in a dry skillet over medium heat for 2-3 minutes until golden.
3. In a large salad bowl, combine the spinach, strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, and red onion.
4. Sprinkle the crumbled feta cheese and toasted almonds over the salad.
5. Drizzle the poppy seed dressing over the salad, toss gently to combine, and serve immediately.

**Serves 4**

### tip from the chef

*Serve with cottage cheese!*



# classic ham
## and cheese croissants

■□□ | Preparation time: 10 minutes - Cooking time: 12-15 minutes

### method

1. Slice each croissant in half horizontally. Spread a thin layer of Dijon mustard on the inside of each half.
2. Place slices of ham, cheese, tomato and lettuce inside each croissant. Close the croissants to make sandwiches.
3. If serving hot: heat oven to 375°F (190°C), assemble sandwiches without the lettuce and tomatoes, bake for 12-15 minutes or until cheese is melted.
4. Remove from the oven, and add the lettuce and tomatoes.

**Serves 4**

### ingredients

- **4 large croissants**
- **8 slices ham (about 8 oz)**
- **8 slices Swiss or cheddar cheese (about 8 oz)**
- **2 tablespoons Dijon mustard**
- **2 tablespoons butter, melted**
- **2 tomatoes, sliced**
- **4 large lettuce leafs**

### tip from the chef

*Serve with favorite homemade or store bought potato salad!*

# mediterranean
## pasta salad with feta

■□□ | Preparation time: 15 minutes - Cooking time: 10 minutes

### ingredients

- 12 oz rotini pasta
- 1 package spring mix greens
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1 cucumber, sliced or avocado
- ½ red onion, thinly sliced
- ½ cup Kalamata olives, pitted and halved, or sliced black olives
- ½ cup crumbled feta cheese or cubed
- ¼ cup fresh parsley, chopped
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- Salt and pepper, to taste

### method

1. Boil the pasta in salted water according to package instructions until al dente. Drain and rinse under cold water to cool.
2. While the pasta cooks, halve the cherry tomatoes, dice the cucumber, thinly slice the red onion, and halve the Kalamata olives.
3. In a small bowl, whisk together olive oil, red wine vinegar, lemon juice, dried oregano, salt, and pepper.
4. In a large bowl, combine the cooked pasta, spring greens, cherry tomatoes, cucumber, red onion, Kalamata olives, and feta cheese.
5. Pour the dressing over the salad and toss to combine. Garnish with chopped parsley and serve immediately or chill before serving.

**Serves 6**

### tip from the chef

*Serve as a side with a cold Italian sub sandwich!*



# mini quiche
## lorraine bites

■□□ | Preparation time: 15 minutes - Cooking time: 15-18 minutes

### method

1. Preheat your oven to 375°F (190°C). Lightly grease a mini muffin tin.
2. Roll out the pie crust on a lightly floured surface. Use a round cookie cutter (about 2.5 inches in diameter) to cut out circles of dough. Press each circle into the muffin tin to form mini crusts.
3. Evenly distribute the crumbled bacon, shredded Gruyère cheese, and chopped onion into each mini crust.
4. In a bowl, whisk together the eggs, heavy cream, salt, and pepper. Pour the egg mixture into each mini crust, filling them almost to the top.
5. Bake in the preheated oven for 15-18 minutes, until the quiches are set and lightly golden. Garnish with chopped chives if desired, and serve warm.

**Serves 6-8 (makes about 24 bites)**

### ingredients

- **1 refrigerated pie crust (or homemade, enough for one 9-inch pie)**
- **4 slices bacon, cooked and crumbled**
- **½ cup shredded Gruyère cheese**
- **¼ cup finely chopped onion**
- **3 large eggs**
- **½ cup heavy cream**
- **Salt and pepper, to taste**
- **1 tablespoon fresh chives, chopped (optional, for garnish)**

### tip from the chef

*Serve with a fresh fruit salad!*

# avocado
## and cucumber sushi rolls

■■□ | Preparation time: 20 minutes - Cooking time: 20 minutes

### ingredients

- 1 cup sushi rice
- 1 ¼ cups water
- 2 tablespoons rice vinegar
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 4 sheets nori (seaweed)
- 1 avocado, sliced
- 1 cucumber, julienned
- Soy sauce, for serving
- Pickled ginger and wasabi (optional, for serving)

### method

1. Rinse the sushi rice under cold water until the water runs clear. Combine the rice and water in a pot and bring to a boil. Cover, reduce the heat, and simmer for 18-20 minutes. Remove from heat and let it sit covered for 10 minutes.
2. In a small bowl, mix rice vinegar, sugar, and salt until dissolved. Gently fold the mixture into the cooked rice. Let the rice cool to room temperature.
3. While the rice cools, slice the avocado and julienne the cucumber into thin strips.
4. Place a sheet of nori on a bamboo sushi mat, shiny side down. Spread a thin, even layer of sushi rice over the nori, leaving a 1-inch border at the top. Arrange avocado slices and cucumber strips horizontally across the center of the rice.
5. Using the bamboo mat, carefully roll the sushi tightly from the bottom edge, pressing gently as you go. Slice the roll into 6-8 pieces with a sharp knife. Serve with soy sauce, pickled ginger, and wasabi if desired.

**Serves 4 (makes about 4 rolls)**

### tip from the chef

*Serve with a cold cucumber salad!*



# prosciutto
## wrapped melon slices

■□□ | Preparation time: 10 minutes - Cooking time: none

### method

1. Cut the cantaloupe in half, remove the seeds, and slice it into 12 wedges. Remove the rind from each slice.
2. If the prosciutto slices are large, cut them in half lengthwise to create 12 strips.
3. Wrap each melon slice with a strip of prosciutto, starting at one end and spiraling around the slice.
4. Arrange the prosciutto-wrapped melon slices on a serving platter. Garnish with fresh basil leaves if desired.
5. Optionally, sprinkle with freshly cracked black pepper and serve immediately as a refreshing appetizer.

**Serves 6-8**

### ingredients

- **1 ripe cantaloupe (or honeydew melon)**
- **12 slices prosciutto**
- **Fresh basil leaves (optional, for garnish)**
- **Freshly cracked black pepper (optional)**

### tip from the chef

*Enjoy your Prosciutto-Wrapped Melon Slices with a chilled glass of Prosecco!*

# lemon
## dill potato salad

■□□ | Preparation time: 15 minutes - Cooking time: 15-20 minutes

### ingredients

- 2 lbs baby potatoes (yellow or red), halved or quartered
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon lemon zest
- ¼ cup fresh dill, chopped
- 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- 2 green onions, sliced
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- extra lemon zest and dill for garnish

### method

1. Place the potatoes in a large pot of salted water. Bring to a boil and cook for 15-20 minutes, until tender. Drain and let cool slightly.
2. In a large bowl, whisk together the olive oil, lemon juice, lemon zest, Dijon mustard, salt, and pepper.
3. Add the warm potatoes to the bowl with the dressing. Toss gently to coat the potatoes evenly.
4. Stir in the chopped dill and sliced green onions, mixing until well combined.
5. Serve the potato salad warm or chilled garnished with the extra zest and dill.

**Serves 6**

### tip from the chef

*Serve as a side dish with your lemon herb chicken salad wraps!*



# honey-lime fruit salad

■□□ | Preparation time: 10 minutes - Cooking time: none

## method

1. Wash the strawberries, blueberries, kiwi, raspberries, mango and pineapple. Slice the strawberries, pineapple, kiwi and mango.
2. In a small bowl, whisk together the honey and lime juice until well combined.
3. In a large bowl, gently toss the prepared fruit to mix.
4. Drizzle the honey-lime dressing over the fruit and toss gently to coat.
5. Garnish with chopped mint and nuts if desired. Serve immediately or chill before serving.

**Serves 6**

## ingredients

- **2 cups strawberries, hulled and sliced**
- **2 cups blueberries**
- **2 cups raspberries**
- **2 cups kiwi, peeled and sliced**
- **1 cup pineapple, diced**
- **1 cup mango, diced**
- **1 tablespoon honey**
- **2 tablespoons lime juice**
- **1 tablespoon fresh mint, chopped (optional, for garnish)**
- **nuts of your choice for garnish**

## tip from the chef

*Serve with greek yogurt and cottage cheese on the side!*

# greek yogurt
## chicken salad sandwiches

■■□ | Preparation time: 15 minutes - Cooking time: 15 - 20 minutes (for chicken, if not pre-cooked)

### ingredients

- 2 cups cooked chicken breast, diced (about 1 pound)
- ½ cup Greek yogurt
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- ¼ cup celery, finely chopped
- ¼ cup red onion, finely chopped
- 2 tablespoons fresh parsley, chopped
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 4 slices whole grain bread (or your choice of bread)
- Leafy lettuce (optional, for serving)
- 1 tomato, sliced or cherry tomatoes (optional, for serving)

### method

1. If the chicken is not pre-cooked, cook it in a skillet over medium heat for 15-20 minutes, or until fully cooked. Let it cool and then dice.
2. In a large bowl, combine Greek yogurt, lemon juice, Dijon mustard, celery, red onion, and fresh parsley. Mix well.
3. Add the diced chicken to the bowl. Stir until the chicken is evenly coated with the yogurt mixture. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
4. Spread the chicken salad evenly over 2 slices of bread. Top with leafy lettuce and tomato slices if desired. Place the remaining bread slices on top.
5. Cut the sandwiches in half if desired and serve immediately.

**Serves 2**

### tip from the chef

*Serve with your favorite potato salad or coleslaw!*



# italian
## antipasto skewers

■□□ | Preparation time: 15 minutes - Cooking time: none

### method

1. Drain the mozzarella balls and cut the roasted red peppers into bite-sized pieces.
2. On each skewer, thread one mozzarella ball, one slice of salami (folded if necessary), one cherry tomato, one olive, and one piece of roasted red pepper.
3. Slide 2 fresh basil leaves onto each skewer, pushing it to the end.
4. Arrange the assembled skewers on a serving platter. If using, drizzle with balsamic glaze.
5. Serve immediately as a delicious appetizer or snack.

**Serves 6 (makes about 18 skewers)**

### ingredients

- **18 small mozzarella balls (bocconcini or ciliegine)**
- **18 slices salami, pepperoni or prosciutto**
- **18 cherry tomatoes**
- **18 Kalamata, black or green olives pitted**
- **½ cup roasted red peppers, cut into bite-sized pieces (optional)**
- **1 cup fresh basil leaves**
- **2 tablespoons balsamic glaze (for drizzling, optional)**
- **18 skewers**

### tip from the chef

*Make assorted skewers using different meats and olives and serve with a pasta salad!*

# vegetable spring rolls with peanut dipping sauce

■■□ | Preparation time: 20 minutes - Cooking time: none

## ingredients

***For the Spring Rolls:***

> 8 rice paper wrappers
> 1 cup shredded carrots or cut into tiny strips
> 1 cup thinly sliced bell peppers (red or yellow)
> 1 cup cucumber, julienned or cut into tiny strips
> 1 cup shredded red cabbage
> 1 cup fresh basil leaves, chopped
> 1 cup fresh mint leaves, chopped
> 1 cup shredded lettuce
> 1 lemon cut into quarters for garnish

***For the Peanut Dipping Sauce:***

> ¼ cup peanut butter
> 2 tablespoons soy sauce
> 1 tablespoon rice vinegar
> 1 tablespoon honey
> 1 teaspoon sesame oil
> 1-2 tablespoons water (to adjust consistency)

## method

1. Wash and slice the carrots, bell peppers, red cabbage, cucumber, and shred the lettuce. Set aside.
2. Fill a shallow dish with warm water. Dip one rice paper wrapper into the water for about 10-15 seconds until it becomes pliable. Lay it flat on a clean surface.
3. Place a small handful of shredded lettuce, followed by a mix of carrots, cabbage, bell peppers, cucumber, basil, and mint leaves in the center of the rice paper. Leave some space around the edges.
4. Fold the sides of the rice paper over the filling, then roll it up from the bottom, making sure to keep it tight. Repeat with the remaining wrappers and filling.
5. In a small bowl, whisk together peanut butter, soy sauce, rice vinegar, honey, sesame oil, and water until smooth. Adjust the consistency with additional water if needed. Serve the spring rolls with the dipping sauce.

**Serves 4 (makes about 8 rolls)**

## tip from the chef

*Enjoy your Vegetable Spring Rolls with Peanut Dipping Sauce!*

# BLT pasta salad

■□□ | Preparation time: 15 minutes - Cooking time: 10 minutes

## method

1. Boil the pasta in salted water according to package instructions until al dente. Drain and rinse under cold water to cool.
2. Cook the bacon in a skillet over medium heat until crispy. Drain on paper towels and cut into pieces.
3. In a small bowl, combine mayonnaise, ranch dressing, and lemon juice. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
4. In a large bowl, toss the cooked pasta with the bacon, tomatoes, shredded lettuce, and red onion.
5. Pour the dressing over the pasta mixture and toss to combine. Serve immediately or chill before serving.

**Serves 6**

## ingredients

- **8 oz rotini or penne pasta**
- **6 slices bacon, cooked and cut into pieces**
- **2 tomatoes, cut into wedges**
- **1 cup shredded lettuce**
- **¼ cup red onion, finely chopped or minced (optional)**
- **½ cup mayonnaise**
- **2 tablespoons ranch dressing**
- **1 tablespoon lemon juice**
- **Salt and pepper, to taste**

## tip from the chef

*Serve with crusty sliced french bread!*

# smoked salmon
## and cream cheese sandwiches

■□□ | Preparation time: 10 minutes - Cooking time: none

### ingredients

- 4 slices of whole grain bread
- 8 oz cream cheese
- 8 oz smoked salmon, sliced
- ½ red onion, thinly sliced
- 2 tablespoons capers
- 1 tablespoon fresh dill, chopped (optional)
- lime or lemon wedges (optional, for serving)
- chopped green onions for garnish
- spring greens mix for garnish

### method

1. Toast the whole grain bread slices.
2. Spread a generous layer of cream cheese on the toasted whole grain bread slices.
3. Top the cream cheese with slices of smoked salmon, a few slices of red onion, and capers.
4. Sprinkle with fresh dill, green onions and spring greens.
5. Serve immediately, with lemon or lime wedges on the side.

**Serves 4 (makes 4 open face sandwiches)**

### tip from the chef

*Serve with watermelon feta salad!*

# zesty orzo

## salad with roasted vegetables

■■□ | Preparation time: 15 minutes - Cooking time: 20 minutes

### method

1. Preheat your oven to 425°F (220°C). Toss the diced bell peppers, zucchini, and red onion with olive oil, salt, and pepper. Spread them on a baking sheet and roast for 20-25 minutes, until tender and slightly charred. Let cool.
2. While the vegetables roast, cook the orzo pasta in salted boiling water according to package instructions until al dente. Drain and let cool.
3. In a small bowl, whisk together lemon juice, red wine vinegar, dried oregano, salt and pepper and minced garlic.
4. In a large bowl, mix the cooked orzo, roasted vegetables, cherry tomatoes, and chopped parsley. Drizzle with the dressing and toss to combine.
5. Gently fold in the crumbled feta cheese. Serve immediately or chill before serving.

**Serves 6**

### ingredients

- **1 cup orzo pasta**
- **1 red bell pepper, diced**
- **1 yellow bell pepper, diced**
- **1 zucchini, diced**
- **1 red onion, diced (optional)**
- **2 tablespoons olive oil**
- **¼ cup fresh parsley, chopped**
- **¼ cup feta cheese, crumbled**
- **2 tablespoons lemon juice**
- **1 tablespoon red wine vinegar**
- **1 teaspoon dried oregano**
- **Salt and pepper, to taste**
- **¼ teaspoon minced garlic**
- **Lemon slices for garnish**
- **1 cup cherry tomatoes**

### tip from the chef

*Serve with crusty french bread!*

# caprese
## pesto sandwiches

■□□ | Preparation time: 15 minutes - Cooking time: none

### ingredients

- 1 baguette
- ½ cup pesto sauce
- 2 fresh mozzarella balls, cut into thin slices
- 2 large tomatoes, sliced
- 12 fresh basil leaves
- 1 tablespoon balsamic glaze (optional, for drizzling)

### method

1. Slice the baguette in half horizontally.
2. Spread a thin layer of pesto sauce on the inside of the baguette
3. On the bottom half of the baguette, layer the tomato slices, mozzarella slices and fresh basil leaves.
4. Drizzle with balsamic glaze if using. Top with the other half of the baguette to complete the sandwich.
5. Arrange the sandwich on a platter, with cherry tomatoes for garnish and serve immediately.

**Serves 2-4**

### tip from the chef

*Serve with a cold pasta salad!*

# watermelon
## feta salad with mint

■□□ | Preparation time: 10 minutes - Cooking time: none

### method

1. Dice the watermelon into bite-sized pieces and cube the feta cheese. Chop ½ the mint leaves.
2. In a small bowl, whisk together olive oil, lime juice, and honey (if using). Season with salt and pepper to taste.
3. In a large bowl, gently toss the diced watermelon, cubed feta cheese, and chopped mint.
4. Drizzle the prepared dressing over the salad and toss gently to coat all ingredients evenly.
5. Serve immediately or chill briefly before serving, and garnish with remaining mint leaves!

**Serves 4**

### ingredients

**4 cups watermelon, cubed**
**> 1 cup feta cheese, cubed**
**> ¼ cup fresh mint leaves**
**> 2 tablespoons olive oil**
**> 1 tablespoon lime juice**
**> 1 tablespoon honey (optional)**
**> Salt and pepper, to taste**

### tip from the chef

*Serve with your favorite picnic sandwiches!*

# cucumber
## and avocado wraps

■■□ | Preparation time: 10 minutes - Cooking time: none

### ingredients

- 1 can (15 oz) chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- ¼ cup fresh cilantro, chopped
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 2 avocado, sliced
- 1 cucumber, cut into strips
- ¼ cup red onion, thinly sliced
- 4 large tortillas or wraps
- 1 cup shredded lettuce (optional)
- ½ cup cherry tomatoes, halved (optional)

### method

1. In a bowl, lightly mash the chickpeas with a fork, leaving some chunks for texture. Add the cilantro, lemon juice, cumin and salt and pepper, mix well.
2. Lay out the tortillas or wraps. Spread a layer of shredded lettuce, red onion, cherry tomatoes, avocado, and cucumber on each tortilla.
3. Spoon the chickpea mixture evenly onto the center of each tortilla.
4. Roll up the tortillas tightly, slice in half if desired, and serve immediately.

**Serves 4 (makes 4 wraps)**

### tip from the chef

*Serve with carrot sticks and ranch dressing for dipping!*

# chicken

## caesar pasta salad

■□□ | Preparation time: 15 minutes - Cooking time: 15 minutes

### method

1. Boil the pasta in salted water according to package instructions until al dente. Drain and rinse under cold water to cool.
2. Dice the cooked chicken breast into bite-sized pieces.
3. In a large bowl, combine the cooked pasta, diced chicken, Caesar dressing, and grated Parmesan cheese. Toss to coat evenly.
4. Gently fold in the cherry tomatoes and chopped romaine lettuce.
5. Sprinkle croutons on top just before serving to maintain their crunch. Serve immediately or chill before serving.

**Serves 6**

### ingredients

- **8 oz rotini or penne pasta**
- **2 cups cooked chicken breast, diced**
- **1 cup Caesar dressing**
- **½ cup grated Parmesan cheese**
- **1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved**
- **2 cups romaine lettuce, chopped**
- **½ cup croutons**

### tip from the chef

*For extra flavor add chopped anchovies!*

# classic
## deviled eggs

■□□ | Preparation time: 15 minutes - Cooking time: 10 minutes

### ingredients

- 6 large eggs
- 3 tablespoons mayonnaise
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon white vinegar
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- Paprika, for garnish (optional)
- Chopped chives or parsley (optional, for garnish)

### method

1. Place the eggs in a pot and cover with water. Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat and simmer for 10 minutes. Drain the hot water and cool the eggs in ice water. Peel and halve the eggs lengthwise.
2. Remove the yolks and place them in a bowl. Mash the yolks with a fork, then mix in mayonnaise, Dijon mustard, white vinegar, salt, and pepper until smooth.
3. Spoon or pipe the yolk mixture into the egg white halves.
4. Sprinkle with paprika and garnish with chopped chives or parsley if desired.
5. Chill the deviled eggs until ready to serve.

**Serves 6 (makes 12 halves)**

### tip from the chef

*Decorate your deviled eggs with different toppings, such as black olives, radishes or bacon bits!*



# marinated
## mozzarella and tomato salad

■□□ | Preparation time: 15 minutes - Cooking time: none

### method

1. Halve the cherry tomatoes and mozzarella balls. Chop the fresh basil leaves.
2. In a small bowl, whisk together olive oil, balsamic vinegar, dried oregano, salt, and pepper.
3. In a large bowl, gently toss the cherry tomatoes, mozzarella balls, and chopped basil.
4. Drizzle the prepared dressing over the salad and toss gently to coat.
5. Garnish with the extra basil leaves and serve immediately or let the salad marinate for 15 minutes to enhance the flavors.

**Serves 4**

### ingredients

- **1 pint cherry tomatoes, halved**
- **8 oz fresh mozzarella balls, halved if large**
- **¼ cup fresh basil leaves, chopped**
- **¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil**
- **2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar**
- **1 teaspoon dried oregano**
- **Salt and pepper, to taste**
- **extra fresh basil leaves for garnish**

### tip from the chef

*Serve with crusty bread and balsamic glaze for dipping!*

# cheddar
## and chive scones

■■□ | Preparation time: 15 minutes - Cooking time: 15-20 minutes

### ingredients

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ cup unsalted butter, cold and cut into cubes
- 1 cup sharp cheddar cheese, shredded
- ¼ cup fresh chives, chopped
- ¾ cup milk
- 1 large egg, beaten (for brushing)

### method

1. Preheat your oven to 425°F (220°C). Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. In a large bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, and salt. Cut in the cold butter using a pastry cutter or your fingers until the mixture resembles coarse crumbs.
3. Stir in the shredded cheddar cheese and chopped chives.
4. Pour in the milk and mix until just combined. Do not overmix.
5. Turn the dough onto a floured surface and pat it into a 1-inch thick circle. Cut into 8 wedges or use a round cutter. Place on the baking sheet, brush with beaten egg, and bake for 15-20 minutes, or until golden brown.

**Serves 8**

### tip from the chef

*Serve with chive and onion cream cheese!*



# rainbow veggie pinwheels

■□□ | Preparation time: 20 minutes - Cooking time: none

## method

1. In a small bowl, mix the softened cream cheese with the ranch dressing until smooth.
2. Spread a thin layer of the cream cheese mixture evenly over each tortilla.
3. Evenly distribute the shredded cheddar cheese, bell peppers, cucumber, shredded carrots, and spinach leaves over the cream cheese layer.
4. Roll up each tortilla tightly from one end to the other. Slice each roll into 1-inch pinwheels.
5. Arrange the pinwheels on a serving platter and serve immediately or refrigerate until ready to serve.

**Serves 4-6 (makes about 12 pinwheels)**

## ingredients

- **4 large flour tortillas**
- **½ cup cream cheese, softened**
- **2 tablespoons ranch dressing**
- **½ cup shredded cheddar cheese**
- **½ cup red bell pepper, thinly sliced**
- **½ cup yellow bell pepper, thinly sliced**
- **½ cup cucumber, thinly sliced**
- **½ cup shredded carrots**
- **¼ cup fresh spinach leaves**

## tip from the chef

*Make a variety of different pinwheels using ham, pepperoni, and chopped black olives!*

# spicy shrimp
## tacos with mango salsa

■■□ | Preparation time: 20 minutes - Cooking time: 10 minutes

### ingredients

*For the Spicy Shrimp:*
- 1 lb large shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon chili powder
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- ½ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- ½ teaspoon onion powder
- Salt and pepper, to taste

*For the Mango Salsa:*
- 1 ripe mango, peeled and diced
- ½ red onion, finely chopped
- ½ red bell pepper, diced
- 1 jalapeño, seeded and finely chopped (optional)
- 2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
- ¼ cup fresh cilantro, chopped
- Salt, to taste

*For the Tacos:*
- 8 hard shell taco shells
- 1 cup shredded red cabbage
- Lime wedges, for serving (optional)
- Sriracha sauce for serving (optional)

### method

1. In a bowl, combine diced mango, red onion, red bell pepper, jalapeño (if using), lime juice, cilantro, and salt. Mix well and set aside.
2. In a bowl, toss the shrimp with olive oil, chili powder, paprika, cayenne pepper, garlic powder, onion powder, salt, and pepper.
3. Heat a skillet over medium-high heat. Cook the shrimp for 2-3 minutes on each side until pink and opaque.
4. Warm the shells in a dry skillet or microwave. Fill each shell with shrimp, mango salsa and some shredded cabbage.
5. Drizzle the Sriracha sauce over the tacos and sprinkle with the chopped green onions.

**Serves 4**

### tip from the chef

*Serve with tortilla chips and extra salsa!*



# chocolate-dipped strawberries

■■□ | Preparation time: 15 minutes - Cooking time: 5 minutes (for melting chocolate)

## method

1. Wash and thoroughly dry the strawberries, leaving the stems intact.
2. In a heatproof bowl, melt the semisweet chocolate chips with the coconut oil (if using) over a pot of simmering water (double boiler method) or in the microwave in 20-second intervals, stirring until smooth.
3. Hold each strawberry by the stem and dip it into the melted chocolate, covering about 2/3 of the strawberry. Allow any excess chocolate to drip off.
4. Place the dipped strawberries on a parchment-lined baking sheet. If using, melt the white or dark chocolate chips and drizzle over the strawberries.
5. Refrigerate the strawberries for about 15-20 minutes, or until the chocolate is set.

**Serves 6 (makes about 12 strawberries)**

## ingredients

- **12 fresh strawberries, washed and dried**
- **8 oz semisweet chocolate chips or chopped chocolate**
- **1 tablespoon coconut oil (optional, for smoother chocolate)**
- **¼ cup white or dark chocolate chips (optional, for drizzling)**

## tip from the chef

*Serve with your favorite chilled Prosecco!*

# pesto
## chicken pasta salad

■□□ | Preparation time: 15 minutes - Cooking time: 15 minutes

### ingredients

- 8 oz pasta (rotini or penne)
- 2 cups cooked chicken breast, diced or sliced
- ½ cup pesto sauce
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved or cubed
- ½ cup shredded mozzarella cheese
- ¼ cup fresh basil leaves, chopped
- Salt and pepper, to taste

### method

1. Boil the pasta in salted water according to package instructions until al dente. Drain and rinse under cold water to cool.
2. Dice or slice the cooked chicken breast into bite-sized pieces.
3. In a large bowl, combine the cooked pasta, chicken, cherry tomatoes, and shredded mozzarella cheese.
4. Pour the pesto sauce over the pasta mixture and toss until evenly coated. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
5. Sprinkle chopped fresh basil on top. Serve immediately or chill before serving.

**Serves 4**

### tip from the chef

*Serve with a green salad and french bread!*



# roast beef
## and cheddar sliders

■□□ | Preparation time: 15 minutes - Cooking time: 15 minutes

### method

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F (175°C). Slice the slider rolls in half and place the bottom halves in a baking dish.
2. In a small bowl, mix together mayonnaise and Dijon mustard. Spread the mixture evenly over the bottom halves of the rolls.
3. Layer the roast beef slices evenly over the rolls. Place a half-slice of cheddar cheese on top of each beef layer.
4. Place the top halves of the rolls on the cheese. Brush the tops with melted butter, then sprinkle with Worcestershire sauce, garlic powder, and onion powder.
5. Cover with foil and bake for 10 minutes. Remove the foil and bake for an additional 5 minutes, or until the cheese is melted and the tops are golden. Serve warm and enjoy!

**Serves 6 (makes 12 sliders)**

### ingredients

**12 slider rolls or small dinner rolls**

- **1 lb roast beef, thinly sliced**
- **6 slices cheddar cheese, cut in half**
- **¼ cup mayonnaise**
- **¼ cup Dijon mustard**
- **2 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted**
- **1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce**
- **1 teaspoon garlic powder**
- **1 teaspoon onion powder**

### tip from the chef

*Serve with any of the picnic salads in this book!*

# apple and brie
## sandwiches with honey mustard

■■□ | Preparation time: 10 minutes - Cooking time: none

### ingredients

- 8 slices of bread (such as sourdough or whole grain)
- 4 oz Brie cheese, sliced
- 1 large apple, thinly sliced (such as Honeycrisp or Granny Smith)
- ¼ cup honey mustard (store-bought or homemade)
- 1 tablespoon butter (optional, for toasting)

### method

1. Thinly slice the apple and Brie cheese.
2. Spread honey mustard evenly on one side of each slice of bread.
3. On four slices of bread, layer the Brie cheese and apple slices. Top with the remaining bread slices, honey mustard side down.
4. If desired, spread butter on the outside of each sandwich and toast in a skillet over medium heat until golden brown and the cheese is melted.
5. Cut the sandwiches in half and serve immediately.

**Serves 4 (makes 4 sandwiches)**

### tip from the chef

*Serve with a fresh fruit salad.*

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