

# Prepare snacks ahead of time and enjoy guests

The approaching holiday season is no doubt one of the busiest times of the year for all of us. John and I do a lot more entertaining during December, so I like to keep make-ahead snacks on hand. That way, I can relax and enjoy visiting with family and friends.

Merry Christmas and happy holidays.

## Brie in Puff Pastry

Package of frozen puff pastry (thawed)  
2 - 4 inch rounds of brie cheese

Red or green pepper jelly (optional)

Roll out each half of pastry to 1/8 inch thick and cut into 10 inch round. Place brie in centre of each round and top with 2 tsp. of pepper jelly. Fold pastry around cheese, overlapping edges and sealing with beaten egg. (To make ahead: cover and refrigerate for up to 24 hours at this point.) Place on rimmed baking sheet, brush top with beaten egg and bake at 400 degrees F until golden and puffed, 25 to 30 minutes. Each round makes 4 to 6 servings.



with Reni Tost

## Hot Artichoke Dip

1 can artichoke hearts - drained and coarsely chopped

1 cup mayonnaise (not salad dressing)

1/2 cup parmesan cheese, grated

1 clove garlic, crushed

1/4 tsp. lemon juice

Mix all ingredients together. Put in heat proof dish and bake at 400 degrees F for 10 to 15 minutes or until top starts to brown. Serve with unsalted crackers, crostini or toasted pita wedges.

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# I clearly saw a red light

• from EGGNOG on page 12

great so I'll tell you again. I call it, The Christmas Miracle, or The Year I Personally Saved Christmas. Many years ago, just before Christmas, I was driving the speed limit along a country road north of Toronto on a dark and wintry night. I put my foot on the brakes to let the people in the car look at a cool Christmas light display on a house. Just as I did, a huge reindeer, or at least a deer, with giant antlers,

ran across the road a few feet in front of the car.

If I hadn't slowed down at precisely the time I did, we would have smacked right into it. I figure a few lives might have been saved, including that of the deer. Now, here's where it gets a little unclear. I don't know if it was a reflection from the Christmas display, or if it was coming from the front of the deer, around its nose area, but I clearly saw a red light.



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