

Cupboards

Christmas party pickings from the pantry

Easy snacks for holiday entertaining

by Margot McCallum

The festive season is upon us. Do you limit your pantry food to a good pizza from Bruno's? Why? Are you afraid of the expense? Can't find the time for the extra shopping? Or, can't find time, at the last minute, between bedtime stories and baths, or 'cause you're tired out from cleaning the house?

Well, to answer last things first, just pick up, put away and dust; your friends want a relaxed you. Clear refrigerator space and have most things prepared the day before and all by noon of party day.

Buy a lot of toothpicks, and if your oven timer is not reliable, ask a friend for a pre-Christmas present — or your teenager could be official oven and clock watcher.

Beverages vary from group to group, but for something zippy and non-alcoholic get the rhubarb that your thrifty gardening friend pressed upon you out of the freezer and make Rhubarb Juice Cocktail.

Rhubarb Juice Cocktail

1 pound rhubarb
1 cup water
1/2 cup sugar
2 tablespoons lemon juice
1 cup chilled gingerale

Cut rhubarb in small pieces; add water and cook until rhubarb is tender, about 10 minutes. Strain through a fine sieve.

Return to heat; add sugar and bring to boiling point. Cool and add lemon juice. Chill thoroughly. Just before serving add gingerale. Serves 6.

Or try Turkish Coffee for that something hot:

Turkish Coffee (six servings)

2 cups water
6 lumps sugar
6 heaping teaspoons of finest ground coffee

Place water, sugar and coffee in small saucepan. Bring to boil. Remove from heat and cool slightly. Repeat boiling process twice more, before draining syrup from the grounds. Serve in demitasses.

Are you afraid of the words canapés and hors d'oeuvres? Canapé is the original French word for sofa, couch or Divan. Something to rest on, so we use it to rest a little something on. Clever of us. Hors d'oeuvre is the French term meaning "outside of work", so save on dishwashing and nibble away.

Cold snacks on picks:

Bologna-Cheese Stacks

4 tablespoons cream cheese
1/4 teaspoon minced onion
1/8 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon horseradish
3 1/6-inch thick slices large bologna
2 1/8-inch thick slices Cheddar cheese

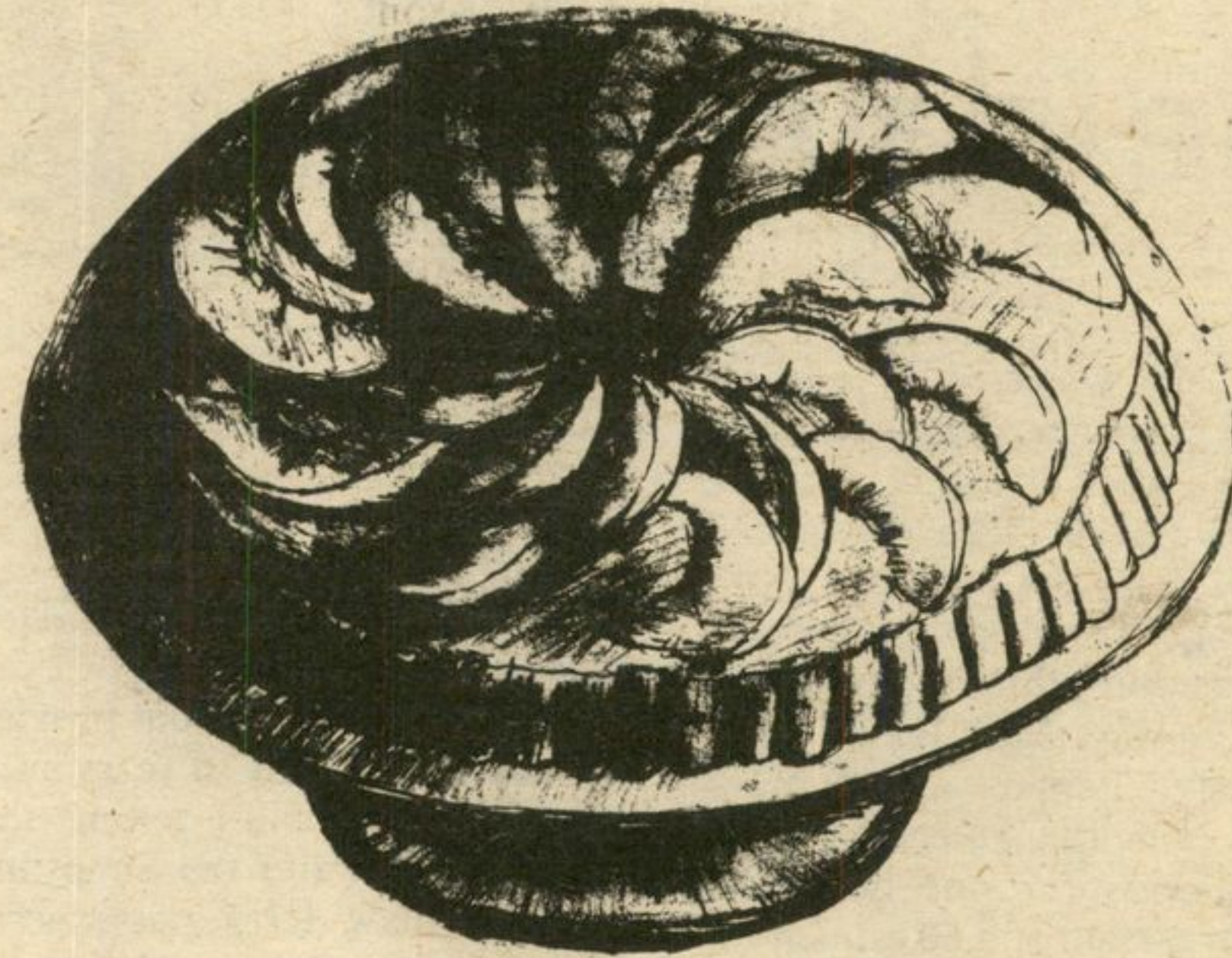
Blend together first 4 ingredients. Alternate slices of bologna with Cheddar cheese, putting cream cheese mixture between slices; chill.

When cheese is firm, cut into strips, wedges, or cubes. Stick each with a wooden pick.

Bologna Triangles

Sandwich 3 slices of bologna or any other cold cut in round shapes, using spicy cream cheese filling or finely chopped hard-cooked egg mixed with mayonnaise and pickle.

Wrap in waxed paper and chill.



Cut into pie-shaped wedges. Secure each wedge with a pick, and if you like, spear a pickled onion on the end of the pick.

Note: Buy bologna on sale by the piece and freeze. Thaw before slicing.

Balls and Pastes:

Peanut butter balls:

Mix peanut butter with one third by volume grated raw carrot, add ketchup to taste. Blend well, chill and form into small balls.

Liver Paste

1/4 pound butter or margarine
1-4 ounce can mushroom pieces, minced
1 jar (3 1/2 ounces) strained liver baby food
1 tablespoon Cognac or brandy or minced onion

Melt butter; add mushrooms; simmer 15 minutes. Remove from heat; blend in liver, then Cognac. Spoon mixture into an attractive small crock or bowl.

Cover; refrigerator overnight. Before serving sprinkle parsley or chives over the surface of paste.

Place crock on large platter surrounded with crackers and/or bread rounds. Makes 35 to 50 canapés.

Ham and Cheese Ball

500mL minced ham, (2 cups)
1-250 g package of cream cheese (your favorite in-store brand) (1-8 oz.)
50 mL mayonnaise (1/4 cup)
30 mL parsley, chopped (2 tbsp.)

5 mL minced onion (1 tsp.)
1 mL dry mustard (1/4 tsp.)
1 mL tabasco (1/4 cup)
75 mL Dill Pickles, finely chopped (1/3 cup)

Mix cheese and mayonnaise until smooth. Combine the remaining ingredients. Cover and chill for 2 hours.

Form into two small or one large ball. Roll in nuts or fresh parsley.

This can be made ahead and frozen.

Serve with crackers or on small slices of french bread.

Yield: 8 servings.

Canapé bases: Slice small rolls for round bases. Cut any bread into squares, strips or triangles; dry in slow oven to a delicate gold. Spread with any seasoned or plain butter to prevent topping from soaking in.

Or bake:

Cream Cheese Pastry Bases

3/4 cup sifted enriched flour
1/8 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup butter
2-3 ounce packages cream cheese
1 tablespoon cold water

Mix and sift flour and salt. Cut in butter and cheese with 2 knives or pastry blender. Stir in water and chill thoroughly.

Roll very thin and cut into rounds or sticks. Bake in very hot oven (450°F.) until lightly browned, about 6 minutes. Spread with any desired canapé fillings. Makes about 60 to 70 canapé bases.

Dip: Any fresh vegetable platter is enhanced by a bowl of Zesty Egg Dip.

Zesty Egg Dip
4 hard-cooked eggs, minced
3 slices crisp bacon, crumbled
1 teaspoon minced onion
1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
1 teaspoon horseradish
Mayonnaise, enough to give nice spreading consistency

Mix ingredients thoroughly; heap into bowl and chill before serving.

Many a good reputation has been made on hot snacks. If your guests like the kitchen best, have them join in.

Appetite Tempters

Small bread rounds
Salad dressing
Sliced dill pickles
1 smokey pasteurized process cheese food link, sliced

Spread each round of bread with salad dressing. Cover with a slice of pickle, then with a slice of cheese food.

Place under low broiler heat until the cheese food is melted.

Waffled Teasers

Place a very thin slice of Swiss cheese or ham or both between thinly sliced buttered bread. Spread lightly with horseradish mustard.

Make sandwiches very small. Toast in waffle iron.

More: Cut a package of bacon into thirds. Use one piece at a time to wrap...pearl onions, gherkins, chunk pickles, and drained fruit pieces including olives and prunes... Fasten with toothpicks. Bake at 400°, 12 to 15 minutes. Replace pick if necessary.

If coffee and dessert appeals to you, try Mary's Fruit Flan — a first-prize winner at the Russell Fair.

Fruit Flan

1/2 c. white sugar
3 tbsp. oil
2 tbsp. water
1/2 c. flour
1 tsp. baking powder

Mix in order given. Pour into 10" flan pan. Bake 20 min. at 325 to 350°. Let cool. Remove and place on serving plate. Filling: Prepare one 3 oz. instant vanilla pudding mix. For extra taste, use half milk and half yogurt. Pour into flan shape. Top with an array of well-drained fruit, attractively arranged. Finish with the following glaze, including melted jelly, as long as the fruit is sealed over.

Glaze:
30 ml corn starch
50 ml cold water
250 ml fruit syrup

Heat, stirring until slightly thick. Should be clear. Pour over. Mary serves eight or more at a cost of approx. \$1.50. Total time involved, 40 min. (first time takes a little longer).

Note: I have over 1,000 recipes of this type in my files. Send self-addressed, stamped envelope with your request or phone 445-5635.

Next Month: A party sandwich loaf; remember the children, sandwiches; a casserole; cookies; and another Dessert for a crowd.

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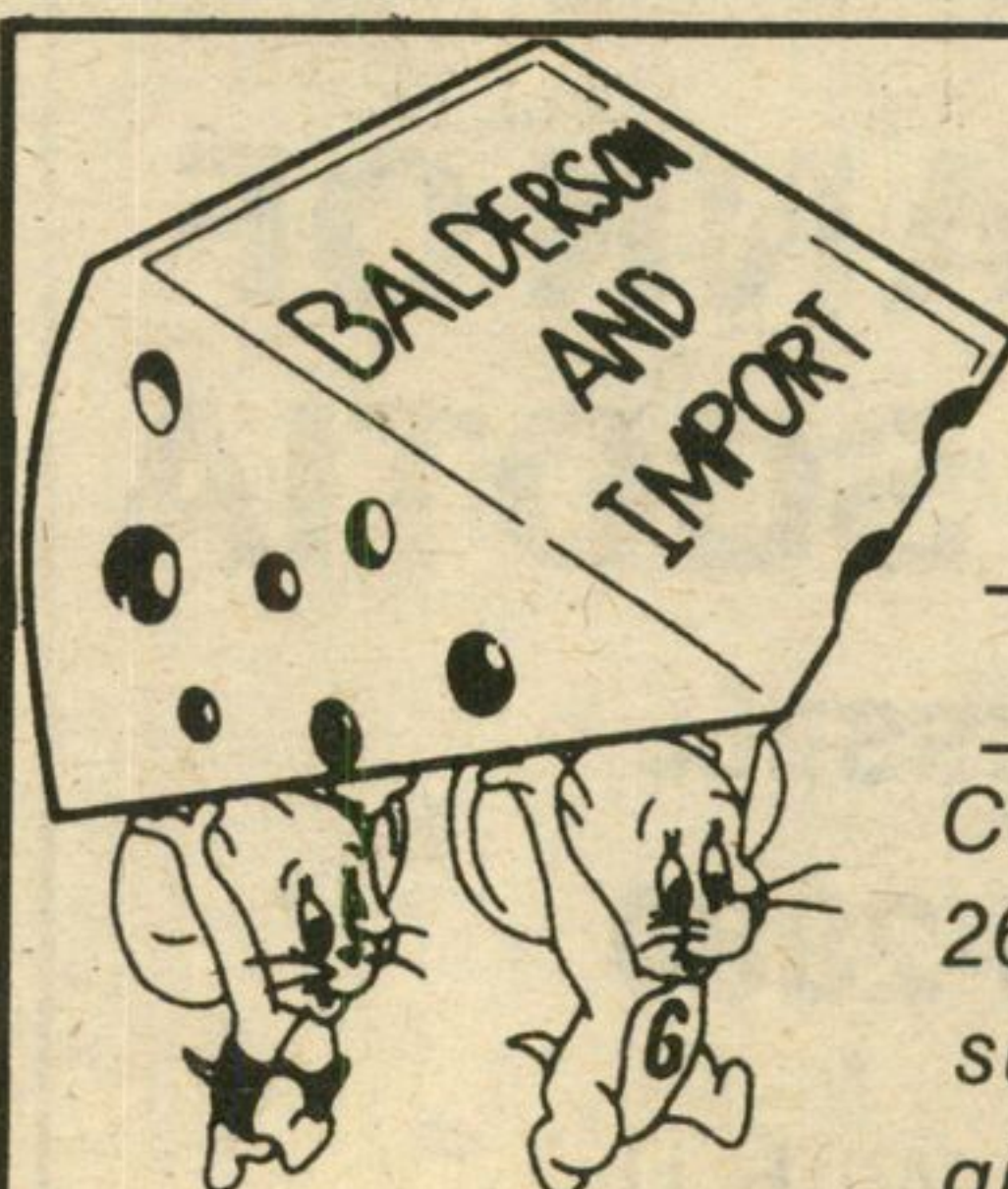
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