

Sweet and Spicy Apples and Sausage Pizza

Ingredients:

1 whole wheat pizza crust
1 ½ Gala apples
½ Hillshire Farm turkey smoked sausage (approx. 7 oz.)
1 tbsp. butter
4 tsp. brown sugar
1 tbsp. olive oil
3 tbsp. maple syrup
1 tsp. cinnamon
dash of cayenne pepper
additional cinnamon to taste

Directions:

Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Sprinkle flour on a cookie sheet and roll the wheat dough onto the sheet. Roll dough out to desired thickness. Melt butter, and brush it over pizza dough. Sprinkle a dash of cinnamon and 1 teaspoon of the brown sugar onto dough. Cut apples and sausage into thin slices, about ¼ inch thick. In medium saucepan, heat olive oil, maple syrup, cayenne pepper and remaining cinnamon and brown sugar. Cook on medium heat for five minutes, stirring mixture so that the apples and sausage are evenly coated. With a spoon, spread apples and sausage onto the pizza dough. Evenly spread the syrup mixture remaining in the pan onto the dough; save any excess for dipping sauce. Bake pizza in oven for 13-15 minutes or until golden brown. Serve warm.



seven +

For kids seven years and older, try Bananagrams. Similar to speed Scrabble, the goal of the game is to create as many connecting words as possible with the tile letters. With banana-related terms like “peel” and “split” that cue players to a certain action, this game is sure to keep food on the brain.

ten +

For kids 10 years and older, try Imaginiff. In this game, it’s not about how well you know the other players, but how well you know the other players’ opinions about each other. With cards like “Imagine if _____ was an ice cream flavor, which of these would he/she be?” the players who have the most popular answer get a point. You thought you were an ice cream sundae but everyone else thought you were rainbow sherbet? They get a point (and you get to imagine yourself as sherbet).

eighteen +

For adults, try Partini. This game combines humming song tunes, miming clues, describing something by what it’s not and it provides a sure-fire entertaining time with friends and family. With six different variations included, players can find their favorite or try them all. Perfect for a large pizza party group.



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Brunch in Style

From start to finish, a brunch to impress

Don't stress! In the next few pages, we will show you how to host a stylish and memorable brunch that will leave guests wondering how much you paid the party planner. Our guide will help you with everything from three weeks before right up to the big day.

By Jennifer Koppelman and Ashley Cirilli

Theme & Decor

The first thing you need to do when planning out your party is to set the right tone. Choosing a theme might be easy if you are planning a brunch for celebrations such as Easter, Mother's Day or a wedding shower. Remember those bad holiday sweaters from the '80s? Avoid your party looking like one by avoiding bunny overload with decor at an Easter brunch, and the same goes for other holidays and their stereotypical associations. And please, steer clear from going overboard on decorations like balloons and streamers. For a Mother's Day brunch, invite guests to bring pictures of their mothers. Place a picture frame at each place setting where your guests can put their photos. You can find 4-by-6 frames and inexpensive acrylic, which won't compete with other elements of decor at the table, at your local craft store. You can use this same idea for a bridal shower. Tell each guest to bring a picture of herself all dressed up (maybe even as a bride!) from when she was a little girl. The photos at both events are sure to be the perfect conversation pieces.



3 Weeks Before

Don't get caught waiting to the last minute. Here are some tips for planning ahead.



Invitations

After choosing your theme, you should decide whether or not you're sending invitations, what kind of invitations to send and who to include. When addressing envelopes, include the guest's title (Mrs., Dr., etc.) and first and last name. Add "and guest" if guests are allowed to bring a friend or date. If kids are welcome, make sure to address the envelope to the family. To save money, you might think about making your own invitations at home or sending messages through social networking websites. However, be careful when sending invitations through e-mail and social networking sites. Make sure everyone's e-mail is correct, and if using social networking sites, make sure that the guest you're inviting checks his or her messages regularly. It depends on your budget, taste and the occasion, but remember that snail mail invitations always feel more formal, official and special.





Table Arrangements

Roses and baby's breath scream frou-frou, stuffy brunching if not done right. Fruit centerpieces in pretty vases and bowls make a statement without breaking the bank. Lemons, green apples and oranges work well. Also, branch out with vases of tall grass and bamboo for a more modern feel. Let your guests take home their own mini-arrangements by having a tiny (3-4 inch tall) vase in front of each place setting with the same flowers from the larger arrangements, just cut down to fit the vase. Create interest by filling clear vases with flowers and another element like stones and marbles. Also, you can be original by putting fresh flowers in things such as empty wine bottles, water pitchers and sand pails for your arrangements.

Tip: When in doubt, keep it subtle. Utilize the theme in creative ways like the menu and the music. A good way to keep things chic is to do a color theme. Think outside of the brunch box of pastels, and go for unusual pairings, such as chocolate brown and coral, lime green and lavender and turquoise and mint green. Find inspiration for your party color palette at betterbrunch.com/brunchinstyle.



Menu

This is also the time to choose your menu. Make sure that you are able to find all the ingredients you need, and surely your family wouldn't mind you testing out the recipes you haven't made before (so there are no last minute disasters).



Decorations

If you plan on ordering flower arrangements, then talk about your order with your local florist three or four weeks ahead of time. For larger parties, the florist will likely need more than three weeks. Before picking your florist, ask around and maybe order an arrangement before to see if it is what you're looking for. Your florist might also have some great ideas for color trends and creative table-scaping ideas. Give your florist pictures of the dinnerware that you are using and of the rooms where you will be hosting your get-together. This will help the florist choose the formality of the arrangement as well as the feel. Will it be glamorous or casual? Bohemian or city-chic?

The Menu

With brunch, it's hard to go wrong with the limitless possibilities from salty to sweet or health-conscious to the ever-comforting classics. Finding the perfect menu for your own party can be overwhelming, so we've done the work for you. Here are some recipes that are sure to please the crowd.

Ingredients:

1 cup walnuts chopped
1 pkg. Ramen Noodles, uncooked
4 tbsp. unsalted butter
1 bunch of broccoli, chopped
1 head romaine lettuce
4 green onions
1 cup sweet and sour dressing
1 15 oz. can of mandarin oranges

Sweet and Sour Dressing

1 cup vegetable oil
1 cup sugar
½ cup wine vinegar
3 tsp. soy sauce

Directions:

Chop Ramen Noodles. Brown walnuts and noodles in butter and cool on paper towels. Combine noodles and walnuts with broccoli, romaine and onions. Pour sweet and sour dressing over salad and toss to coat well. Drain can of oranges and place on top of salad.

Spring Salad



Blueberry Buckle with White Chocolate Drizzle

Ingredients:

Coffee Cake

2 cups blueberries (fresh preferred but frozen works also)
2 cups flour
¾ cup sugar
2 ½ tsp. salt
¼ cups butter
¾ cup milk
1 egg

Topping

½ cup sugar
⅓ cup flour
½ tsp. cinnamon
¼ cup butter
1 cup white chocolate chips

Directions:

Blend together coffee cake ingredients and add drained blueberries. Combine topping ingredients in a bowl and mix together. Using two butter knives, criss-cross and cut the butter into small crumbles. Put coffee cake mixture in a 9-by-13 greased pan and add topping. Bake for 45 minutes at 375 degrees. Melt white chocolate in the microwave for 1 minute or until melted, stirring every 20 seconds. Drizzle white chocolate on top of coffee cake.

Ingredients:

- 8 frozen hash brown patties
- 7 eggs
- 1 diced green bell pepper
- 2 cups milk
- 1 lb. cubed, fully cooked ham
- 1 tsp. salt
- 3 cups grated sharp cheddar cheese



Directions:

Place hash brown patties in a single layer in a 13-by-9-inch baking dish. Add pepper, ham and half of the cheese. Beat eggs with milk and salt. Pour egg mixture on top and sprinkle with the other half of cheese. Bake for one hour at 350 degrees.

Classic Brunch Bake

Berry Bruschetta

Ingredients:

- 1 cups diced strawberries
- ½ cup of raspberries
- ½ cup blackberries

- 1 French baguette
- butter
- cinnamon sugar
- ¼cup raspberry jam

Directions:

Combine berries together in a mixing bowl and mix well. Cut bread into ¼-inch-thick slices and place on cookie sheet. Bake at 375 degrees for 10 minutes or until lightly brown. Lightly spread butter onto bread slices and sprinkle with cinnamon sugar. Heat jam in the microwave for 30 seconds until melted and stir. Drizzle over fruit.



Don't Forget

The Week of:

Your freezer is your best friend. Both the Classic Brunch Bake and the Sausage Bites can be made ahead of time and frozen then baked on the day of the event.

The best thing you can do for yourself the week before your event is to set everything up as if it were the very next day and tell the kids not to touch. This way, all you will have to do the night before is confirm your outfit and take a bubble bath.

The Day:

It is likely you will be up early making sure everything is just how you like it or opening the front door for the florist to bring in his or her creations. It's best to have a small, protein-packed breakfast so you will not be a famished hostess who cannot get away from the buffet table or the hors d'oeuvres.

Tip: You can light candles for an atmosphere bonus, but stay away from scented ones that will take away or even ruin the smell coming from the oven!



Ingredients:

- 2 pkgs. crescent dinner rolls
- 1pkg. cream cheese
- 1 can (4 oz.) chopped mushrooms
- 2 chopped green onions
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 large egg (beaten)
- 2 tbsp. poppy seeds



Directions:

Lay out crescent roll dough. Mix together cream cheese, mushrooms, onions and salt. Spread mixture over the dough, roll it up like a jelly roll and slice into 1-inch pieces. Brush mushroom puffs with the beaten egg and sprinkle with poppy seeds. Bake for 10 minutes at 375 degrees.

Savory Mushroom Puffs

Asparagus Sandwiches

Ingredients:

- 3 loaves focaccia bread
- 1 can asparagus
- 24 oz. pkgs. of cream cheese

- 1 pkg. dry "Good Seasoning" brand garlic and herb salad dressing
- 1 stick butter
- 2 cans parmesan cheese

Directions:

Mix asparagus, cream cheese and seasoning. Spread mixture on rye bread and make sandwiches. Melt butter and dip sandwiches first in butter, then in parmesan cheese. Repeat. Place sandwiches on a cookie sheet and bake at 425 degrees until crisp.



Directions:

Combine all ingredients well. Grease mini-muffin tins and fill $\frac{2}{3}$ full. Bake in a preheated 375 degree oven for 20 minutes. Serve at room temperature.



Ingredients:

- 3 eggs
- 1 lb. cottage cheese
- 3 tbsp. sour cream
- 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup Bisquick
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup melted butter
- $\frac{1}{2}$ can chopped green chilies
- Approx. 1 cup cooked sausage

Sausage Mini Quiche



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Beverage Bouquet

Floral ingredients add flavor and style to brunch's classic cocktails

We want to take your senses on a tour of the flower garden. Chamomile adds a soothing twist on a not-so-classic punch recipe, while hints of violet add color and complexity to your mid-morning bubbly. Lastly, lavender and mint play magically with the sweetness of hot chocolate that both adults and children will surely enjoy.

By Claire Hanan

Violet Champagne

Ingredients:

4 oz. creme de violette or
violet simple syrup
1 bottle champagne
4 tbsp. lemon juice

Violet simple syrup:

1 cup sugar
1 cup water
1 cup violet buds

Directions:

Combine simple syrup and champagne. Garnish with curled lemon peel. Serve in champagne flute.



Chamomile Grapefruit Punch

Ingredients:

1 cup sugar or sweetener
4 cups club soda
2 cups chamomile-infused white rum
½ cup lemon juice
2 cups grapefruit juice
Ice
Grapefruit slices
Lime slices

Directions:

Dissolve 4 sugar cubes in 1 ounce of club soda (this generally involves stirring to help the process). After sugar cubes are dissolved, add chamomile infused white rum, lemon juice and grapefruit juice one at a time and stir as needed.

Add ice and stir the punch until it is chilled. Strain punch into a glass (or make extra and strain into a punch bowl). Top with 2 ounces club soda and garnish with grapefruit slices to serve.

*Chamomile-infused white rum is made by adding 4 bar spoons of chamomile tea to one bottle of rum. Let the concoction sit for 1 hour and 45 minutes. Strain out the tea.



Lavender Mint Hot Chocolate

Because lavender is quite fragrant, adjust amount according to preference. For a creamier hot chocolate, a one-to-one ratio of dark to milk chocolate can be used.

Ingredients:

Hot chocolate:
2 cups whole milk
3 oz. dark chocolate
1 oz. milk chocolate
¼ tsp. lavender buds
4 sprigs of mint

Whipped cream:
½ cup cold heavy whipping cream
¼ tsp. vanilla extract or seeds from ¼ of a whole vanilla bean pod
½ tbsp. granulated white sugar

Directions:

For whipped cream, place cold cream, vanilla and sugar into a cold mixing bowl. Beat the mixture with a whisk or mixer until stiff peaks form. Refrigerate until ready for use.

For hot chocolate, heat milk and lavender over medium heat, whisking occasionally until the milk begins to simmer. Remove from heat and let lavender steep for 5 minutes. Strain lavender and return milk to saucepan.

Over medium heat, add chocolate and mix until chocolate is melted and incorporated. Whisk milk mixture for 10-20 seconds until frothy.

Pour into mugs or bowls and serve with a dollop of whipped cream and a sprig of mint.



Perfecting Eggs Benedict

Conquer this dish with tips from an expert

Ever wonder what it takes to make those delectable dishes chefs perfect in the kitchen? Chef Trey Quinlan, executive chef at Bleu Restaurant and Wine Bar in Columbia, Mo., shares his tips and tricks for making eggs Benedict at home that look and taste like you got them from the bistro downtown.

By Valeria Turturro

Q: What are some of Bleu's spins on eggs Benedict?

A: We have the Farm House Eggs Benedict. Instead of an English muffin, it's served on a buttermilk biscuit with fried Virginia ham. We also have Smoked Salmon Lox Benedict that is cured salmon, a poached egg and herbed hollandaise sauce served on Jewish rye bread. Still another variation is something that's like a Philly cheese steak - flank steak with the hollandaise sauce that's like the cheese sauce. You can add cayenne pepper to the sauce and some caramelized onions.

Q: Any tricks of the trade for making hollandaise sauce?

A: If you place the eggs in a blender or food processor and gradually add super hot melted butter, it's almost fool-proof. If it starts to separate and get oily and messy, add lemon juice, or something else acidic, and slowly add more oil or melted butter. Whisk it quickly, and the acid helps the oils bind together again.

Q: What is your favorite brunch dish?

A: Biscuits and gravy. It's so simple and filling and such a comfort food. All you need is a glass of milk and you're good to go.

Q: Why do you think brunch is so popular?

A: I think it's that brunch usually consists of comfort foods, and brunch is usually breakfast eaten on your day-off at a later time. There's never any rush to get to a brunch event like there is trying to catch McDonald's breakfast before 10 a.m.



Smoked Salmon Lox Benedict

Ingredients:

½ pounds butter
6 egg yolks
½ tsp. fine sea salt
¼ tsp. white pepper
½ tsp. Tabasco sauce
1 lemon
1 tsp. of chopped dill
1 tsp. of chopped parsley
1 tsp. of chopped tarragon
6 slices of rye bread, toasted and halved
9 oz. thinly sliced smoked salmon (lox)
12 poached eggs

Directions:

Place the egg yolks in a mixing bowl over a double boiler. Whip the mixture continuously until the mixture is thick enough to leave a trail across the surface. Place egg yolks in small stand mixer with whip attachment; slowly add the melted butter and the remaining ingredients. Put 2 rye bread halves on each plate and top equally with salmon. Place an egg on each half, spoon sauce equally over portions and garnish with chopped herbs.

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