



10

TASTIEST APPETIZER/DRINK RECIPES

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Roasted Eggplant & Feta Dip

Makes: 12 servings, about ¼ cup each

Active time: 40 minutes **Total:** 40 minutes

To make ahead: Cover and refrigerate for up to 2 days.

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This roasted eggplant and feta dip gets a kick from a fresh chile pepper and cayenne pepper. There are countless variations on this classic *meze* (appetizer) in Greece. Out-of-season eggplant or eggplant that has been heavily watered often has an abundance of seeds, which make the vegetable bitter. Be sure to taste the dip before you serve it; if it's a touch bitter, you can remedy that with a little sugar. Serve with toasted pita crisps or as a sandwich spread.

- 1 medium eggplant (about 1 pound)
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- ½ cup crumbled feta cheese, preferably Greek
- ½ cup finely chopped red onion
- 1 small red bell pepper, finely chopped
- 1 small chile pepper, such as jalapeño, seeded and minced (optional)
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh basil
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped flat-leaf parsley
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper, or to taste
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- Pinch of sugar (optional)

1. Position oven rack about 6 inches from the heat source; preheat broiler.

2. Line a baking pan with foil. Place eggplant in the pan and poke a few holes all over it to vent steam. Broil the eggplant, turning with tongs every 5 minutes, until the skin is charred and a knife inserted into the dense flesh near the stem goes in easily, 14 to 18 minutes. Transfer to a cutting board until cool enough to handle.

3. Put lemon juice in a medium bowl. Cut the eggplant in half lengthwise and scrape the flesh into the bowl, tossing with the lemon juice to help prevent discoloring. Add oil and stir with a fork until the oil is absorbed. (It should be a little chunky.) Stir in feta, onion, bell pepper, chile pepper (if using), basil, parsley, cayenne and salt. Taste and add sugar if desired.

Per serving: 75 calories; 6 g fat (2 g sat, 4 g mono); 6 mg cholesterol; 4 g carbohydrate; 0 g added sugars; 2 g protein; 2 g fiber; 129 mg sodium; 121 mg potassium.

Nutrition bonus: Vitamin C (18% daily value).

Carbohydrate servings: 0

Exchanges: ½ vegetable, 1 fat

Chile Con Queso

Makes: 4 cups

Active time: 20 minutes **Total:** 20 minutes

To make ahead: Cover and refrigerate for up to 3 days. Slowly reheat on the stove over medium heat or on Medium in the microwave.

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Our healthier version of chile con queso will have ooey-goey-cheese lovers celebrating. Now you can enjoy this Tex-Mex dip without all the fat and calories. We replaced some of the cheese with a low-fat white sauce and used sharp Cheddar plus a splash of beer to boost the flavor. Our version cuts the calories in half and reduces total fat and saturated fat by nearly 60 percent.

- 2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ½ cup pale ale or other light-colored beer
- 1½ cups low-fat milk, divided
- 3 tablespoons cornstarch
- 1¾ cups shredded sharp Cheddar, preferably orange
- 1 10-ounce can diced tomatoes with green chiles (see *Tip*), drained, or 1¼ cups drained petite-diced tomatoes
- 2 tablespoons lime juice
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon chili powder
- Cayenne pepper to taste (optional)
- ¼ cup sliced scallions
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro

1. Heat oil in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add onion and garlic and cook, stirring, until soft and beginning to brown, 4 to 5 minutes. Add beer and cook until reduced slightly, about 1 minute. Add 1 cup milk and bring to a simmer.

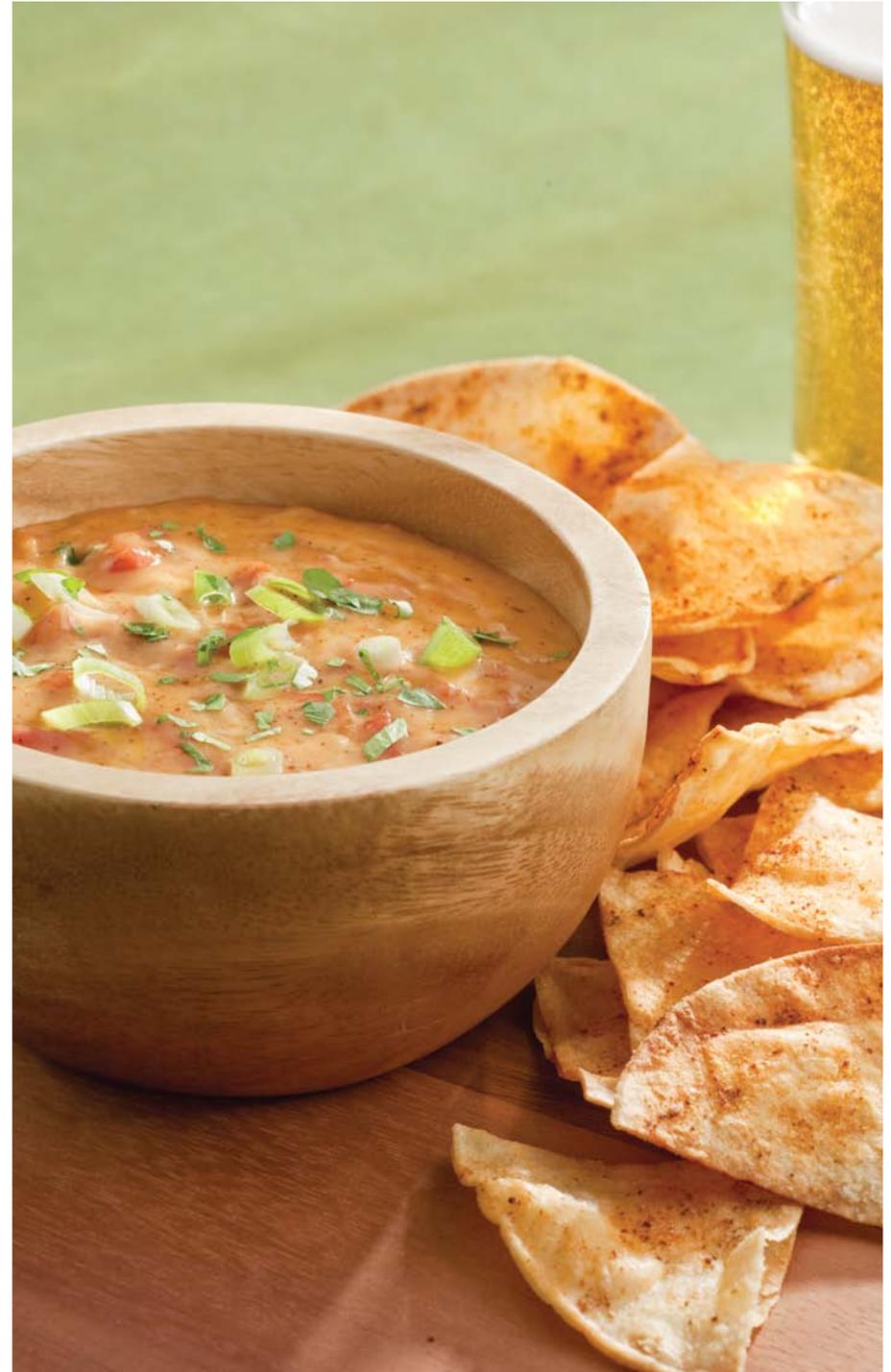
2. Meanwhile, whisk the remaining ½ cup milk and cornstarch in a small bowl. Add to the pan and cook, stirring vigorously, until bubbling and thickened, 1 to 2 minutes. Reduce heat to low, add cheese and cook, stirring, until melted. Stir in drained tomatoes, lime juice, salt, chili powder and cayenne (if using). Serve warm, garnished with scallions and cilantro.

Per ¼-cup serving: 84 calories; 5 g fat (3 g sat, 2 g mono); 14 mg cholesterol; 5 g carbohydrate; 0 g added sugars; 4 g protein; 0 g fiber; 307 mg sodium; 69 mg potassium.

Carbohydrate Servings: 0

Exchanges: ½ high-fat meat

Tip: We like the flavor of Rotel brand diced tomatoes with green chiles the best in this dip. Choose original or mild, depending on your spice preference.





Cucumber-Lemonade Chiller

Makes: 4 servings

Active time: 15 minutes **Total:** 15 minutes

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Pick up rosemary, cucumbers and lemons to concoct this grown-up lemonade that will keep you cool on a hot day.

3 large cucumbers

1 tablespoon chopped fresh rosemary,
plus 4 sprigs for garnish

1 cup water

6 ounces (¾ cup) gin

½ cup lemon juice

3 tablespoons agave syrup (see Tip)

1. Cut 12 thin slices of cucumber for garnish.

2. Peel and chop the rest of the cucumber; transfer to a food processor, add rosemary and puree. Pour the puree through a fine-mesh strainer set over a medium bowl or large measuring cup. Press on the solids to extract all the juice. Add water, gin, lemon juice and agave syrup to the cucumber juice; stir until the agave is dissolved. Divide among 4 ice-filled glasses. Garnish with cucumber slices and rosemary sprigs.

Per serving: 168 calories; 0 g fat (0 g sat, 0 g mono); 0 mg cholesterol; 17 g carbohydrate; 12 g added sugars; 1 g protein; 1 g fiber; 6 mg sodium; 235 mg potassium.

Nutrition bonus: Vitamin C (32% daily value).

Carbohydrate Serving: 1

Exchanges: 1 fruit

Tip: Agave syrup or nectar is the naturally sweet juice extracted from the agave plant. It has a lower glycemic index than table sugar, but is even sweeter. Use it in moderation when substituting for table sugar. Look for it near other sweeteners in natural-foods stores.

Grilled Mussels with Salsa Verde

Makes: 12 servings

Active time: 1¼ hours **Total:** 1¼ hours

To make ahead: Cover and refrigerate salsa verde for up to 1 day. Or prepare through Step 3, cover and refrigerate the salsa and mussels separately. Finish with Steps 4-6 just before serving.

Equipment: Rock salt, coarse salt or foil.

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This is a fun little appetizer of mussels roasted with salsa verde, a bold-flavored Italian sauce made with lots of fresh herbs, garlic and anchovies. We blanch the garlic in this version to give it a more subtle flavor that doesn't overpower the mussels. The bonus in this recipe is that you get leftover mussel broth, which is a delicious base for seafood soups and sauces.

Salsa Verde

- 6 medium cloves garlic, unpeeled
- 1 cup coarsely chopped fresh parsley
- 4 anchovy fillets
- 2 tablespoons capers, rinsed
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh basil or mint or 1 tablespoon chopped fresh tarragon
- 1 tablespoon finely grated lemon zest (see *Tips*)
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt
- Freshly ground pepper to taste

Mussels

- 3 pounds mussels, cleaned (see *Tips*)
- 1 cup dry white wine
- 3 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
- 2 tablespoons butter

1. To prepare salsa verde: Place garlic in a small saucepan and cover with $\frac{1}{2}$ inch of cold water. Bring to a boil over high heat. As soon as the water boils, drain, add $\frac{1}{2}$ inch of water to the pan and bring to a boil again. Drain and rinse under cold water until cool enough to handle. Peel and coarsely chop.

2. Place the garlic, parsley, anchovies, capers, basil (or mint or tarragon) and lemon zest in a food processor or blender. With the motor running, slowly add oil until just blended. The sauce should still have a little texture. Season with salt and pepper; set aside.

3. To prepare mussels: Place mussels in a Dutch oven (or other large pot) along with wine, parsley and butter. Bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat to medium, cover tightly and cook, stirring once or twice, until the mussels open, 4 to 6 minutes. Transfer the mussels to a large bowl with a slotted spoon. (Discard any unopened mussels.) Pour the broth through a fine-mesh sieve and set aside.

4. Preheat grill to medium-high or position a rack in upper third of oven and preheat broiler.

5. Line a baking sheet (one that will fit on your grill, if grilling) with about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch of rock salt, coarse salt or loosely crumpled foil to make a base for the mussels. (This will prevent them from tipping over.) When cool enough to handle, remove the top shell from each mussel. Loosen the meat from the shell with a paring knife or spoon. Place the mussels in their half shells on the prepared baking sheet. Add a scant teaspoon of the reserved broth to each, then top with a generous dollop of salsa verde. (Refrigerate or freeze the remaining mussel broth for another use.)

6. Just before you're ready to serve, place the baking sheet of mussels on the grill (or under the broiler) and grill (or broil) until the salsa begins to bubble and the mussels are heated through, about 5 minutes on the grill, 3 to 5 minutes under the broiler. Serve immediately.

Per serving: 175 calories; 15 g fat (3 g sat, 10 g mono); 16 mg cholesterol; 3 g carbohydrate; 0 g added sugars; 6 g protein; 0 g fiber; 195 mg sodium; 112 mg potassium.

Nutrition bonus: Vitamin C (19% daily value).

Carbohydrate Serving: 0

Exchanges: 1 lean meat, 2½ fat



Tips:

A microplane grater is a great kitchen gadget that seems to be tailor-made for grating citrus zest. It was originally designed to function as a woodworking tool (called a carpenter's rasp). Its razor-sharp edges shave off the zest effortlessly and make it easier to leave the bitter white pith on the fruit. It's the right tool when you want fluffy, very fine citrus zest. Traditional kitchen graters can be used for zesting citrus, too, but they have a tendency to rip and shred the zest, giving a somewhat more clumpy, wet result.

Discard mussels with broken shells or whose shell remains open after you tap it. Hold mussels under running water and use a stiff brush to remove any barnacles; pull off any black fibrous "beards." (Some mussels may not have a beard.) Mussels should be "debearded" no more than 30 minutes before cooking.



Hibiscus-Pomegranate Iced Tea

Makes: 8 servings, about 1 cup each

Active time: 10 minutes **Total:** 2 hours 10 minutes (including 2 hours chilling time)

To make ahead: Refrigerate for up to 1 week.

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This herbal iced tea blends sour, berry-flavored hibiscus tea with sweet pomegranate juice.

- ¼ cup loose hibiscus tea or 12 herbal tea bags that contain hibiscus**
- 4 cups boiling water**
- 1 cup pomegranate juice or nectar**
- 4 cups cold water**
- Lemon wedges for garnish**

1. Steep loose tea (or tea bags) in boiling water for 3 to 5 minutes.

2. Strain the tea (or remove tea bags) and pour into a large pitcher. Stir in pomegranate juice (or nectar) and cold water. Refrigerate until chilled, about 2 hours. Serve over ice with lemon wedges, if desired.

Per serving: 19 calories; 0 g fat (0 g sat, 0 g mono); 0 mg cholesterol; 5 g carbohydrate; 0 g added sugars; 0 g protein; 0 g fiber; 8 mg sodium; 25 mg potassium.

Carbohydrate Servings: 0

Exchanges: Free food



Mini Brie & Apple Quiches

Makes: 30 quiches

Active time: 15 minutes **Total:** 30 minutes

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We love the way Brie and apples taste together in these mini quiches. Mini phyllo cups make it swift and simple to create an elegant appetizer.

- 30 mini phyllo shells (two 1.9-ounce packages; see *Tip*)**
- ½ medium apple, peeled and finely diced**
- 5 large eggs**
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard**
- ¼ teaspoon salt**
Pinch of freshly ground pepper
Pinch of ground nutmeg
- 4 ounces Brie (½ small wheel), cut into 30 squares**

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.

2. Arrange phyllo shells on a large parchment-lined baking sheet. Divide apple among the shells.

3. Whisk eggs, mustard, salt, pepper and nutmeg in a large measuring cup. Pour the egg mixture over the apple (do not overfill the shells). Place a Brie square in each shell.

4. Bake until the egg is set, the Brie is melted and the phyllo is starting to brown around the edges, about 15 minutes. Let cool slightly before serving.

Per quiche: 39 calories; 2 g fat (1 g sat, 1 g mono); 35 mg cholesterol; 3 g carbohydrate; 0 g added sugars; 2 g protein; 0 g fiber; 65 mg sodium; 21 mg potassium.

Carbohydrate Servings: 0

Exchanges: 1 fat

Tip: Mini phyllo shells, or fillo shells, are available in the freezer section near frozen appetizers. They do not need to be defrosted before filling and baking.

Roasted Beet Crostini

Makes: 16 crostini

Active time: 50 minutes **Total:** 1½ hours

To make ahead: Prepare through Step 4, store the beet spread and greens separately in the refrigerator for up to 2 days. Bring to room temperature before assembling.

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The entire beet plant—roots, stems and greens—can be used in this stunning appetizer. The beets are roasted then pureed with goat cheese for a creamy ruby-red spread. The greens and stems are sautéed with olive oil and garlic for the topping.

1 bunch beets with greens attached
(see Tip)

16 ½-inch-thick slices baguette,
preferably whole-grain, cut on
the diagonal

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil,
divided

6 cloves garlic, minced

1 tablespoon sherry vinegar or
red-wine vinegar

2 tablespoons water

¼ teaspoon salt

4 ounces creamy goat cheese

¼ teaspoon freshly ground pepper

1. Preheat oven to 400°F.

2. Trim greens from beets, reserving stems and greens. Place the beets in a baking pan, cover with foil and roast until very tender when pierced with a knife, 45 minutes to 1½ hours, depending on the size of the beets. Uncover and let cool. Reduce oven temperature to 350°.

3. While the beets cool, arrange baguette slices in a single layer on a large baking sheet. Bake, turning the slices over once halfway through, until toasted but not browned, about 14 minutes.

4. Thinly slice the beet green stems and finely chop the leaves; keep stems and leaves separate. Heat 1 tablespoon oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the stems and cook, stirring occasionally, until tender, about 3 minutes. Add the remaining 1 tablespoon oil and garlic and cook, stirring, until fragrant, about 15 seconds. Add the greens, vinegar and water and cook, stirring occasionally, until the greens are tender and the liquid has evaporated, 4 to 5 minutes. Stir in salt and remove from the heat.

5. Peel the cooled beets and cut into 1-inch pieces. Place ¾ cup beet pieces, goat cheese and pepper in a food processor and puree until smooth (reserve the remaining beets for another use).

6. To assemble crostini, spread about 2 teaspoons beet-cheese spread on each slice of toasted baguette and top with sautéed greens.

4. Bake the fish on the upper oven rack until opaque in the center and the breading is golden brown and crisp, about 20 minutes.

Per crostini: 82 calories; 4 g fat (1 g sat, 2 g mono); 3 mg cholesterol; 10 g carbohydrate; 0 g added sugars; 4 g protein; 2 g fiber; 181 mg sodium; 224 mg potassium.

Nutrition bonus: Vitamin A (25% daily value).

Carbohydrate Serving: ½

Exchanges: ½ starch, 1 fat

Tip: Look for bunches of beets with 2 to 3 medium-to-large beets for this recipe.

If you have trouble finding beets with greens still attached, use loose beets plus 3 cups finely chopped chard greens and thinly sliced stems.



Scallop & Shrimp Dumplings

Makes: 36 dumplings, for 12 appetizer servings

Active time: 1 hour **Total:** 1 hour

To make ahead: Prepare filling (Step 1); cover and refrigerate for up to 2 days, or freeze for up to 1 week.

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People along the Yangtze River enjoy dumplings with a variety of fillings, from seafood to red meat, eggs to vegetables. In Wuhan, dumplings may be served at any meal. Crisp, pan-fried dumplings don't have to be loaded with fat. Cooking them in a mix of water and oil makes them crisp on the bottom, tender and juicy inside.

- 8 ounces scallops, minced
- 4 ounces raw shrimp, peeled, deveined and minced
- ½ cup minced scallions
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh ginger
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tablespoons reduced-sodium soy sauce
- 2 teaspoons toasted sesame oil
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- 36 round (gyoza) dumpling wrappers (see Tip)
- 2 tablespoons canola oil, divided
- ¾ cup water, divided
- Ginger-Garlic Dipping Sauce (recipe follows), optional

1. Combine scallops, shrimp, scallions, ginger, garlic, soy sauce, sesame oil and pepper in a large bowl.
2. Organize your work area with a bowl of cold water, your stack of dumpling wrappers and a floured baking sheet to hold filled dumplings.
3. Working with one dumpling wrapper at a time, dip your finger into the water and moisten the edges of the circle. Spoon about 1½ teaspoons of filling into the center. Fold the wrapper over to form a half circle. Pinch the edges together to seal. Repeat with re-

maining wrappers and filling. Cover the wrappers and finished dumplings with moist paper towels to prevent drying.

4. Preheat oven to 200°F.

5. Mix 1 tablespoon canola oil with ¼ cup water in a large nonstick skillet and place over medium heat; bring to a simmer. Carefully arrange one-third of the dumplings in the skillet so they are not touching; cover and cook until the dumplings puff up and are light brown on the bottom, 4 to 5 minutes. Carefully flip the dumplings with tongs and cook for 1 minute more. Transfer the dumplings to a baking sheet and keep warm in the oven.

6. Repeat the procedure with another ¼ cup water, the remaining 1 tablespoon canola oil and half the remaining dumplings. Cook the final batch of dumplings in the remaining ¼ cup water, adjusting the heat as necessary to prevent scorching. (There will be enough oil left in the pan for the final batch.) Serve hot with Ginger-Garlic Dipping Sauce, if desired.

Per dumpling: 42 calories; 1 g fat (0 g sat, 1 g mono); 7 mg cholesterol; 5 g carbohydrate; 0 g added sugars; 2 g protein; 0 g fiber; 123 mg sodium; 32 mg potassium.

Carbohydrate Serving: 0

Exchanges: ½ starch

Ginger-Garlic Dipping Sauce

Makes: ¾ cup

Active Time: 10 minutes **Total:** 40 minutes

To make ahead: Cover and refrigerate for up to 3 days.

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In addition to being a delicious dipping sauce for dumplings, this can be used as a marinade for chicken, pork or tofu.

- ½ cup reduced-sodium soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons rice vinegar
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro
- 1 tablespoon minced ginger
- 2 teaspoons toasted sesame oil



Combine soy sauce, lemon juice, vinegar, garlic, cilantro, ginger and sesame oil in a small bowl. Cover and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes to allow flavors to blend.

Per teaspoon: 5 calories; 0 g fat (0 g sat, 0 g mono); 0 mg cholesterol; 0 g carbohydrate; 0 g added sugars; 0 g protein; 0 g fiber; 119 mg sodium; 9 mg potassium.

Tip: The best dumpling wrappers for this recipe are round “gyoza” wrappers. Look for them in Asian markets. Or substitute square wonton wrappers and use a 3- to 3½-inch round cookie cutter to cut each wrapper into a circle (they need not be perfectly round).

Serrano Ham with Crusty Tomato Bread

Makes: 12 servings

Active time: 30 minutes **Total:** 2½ hours

To make ahead: Cover and refrigerate the roasted tomatoes (Steps 1-2) for up to 3 days. Bring to room temperature before serving.

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For this classic tapas morsel, sweet and garlicky tomato spread is the perfect companion for thin slices of salty, dry-cured Spanish ham. Plum tomatoes are called for because they contain less water and therefore have a more intense flavor when they are slow-roasted.

- 12 plum tomatoes
- 4 tablespoons garlic oil (*see Tips*), divided
- 2 teaspoons dried oregano
- ¾ teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 whole-grain baguette, cut into 24 slices, or 12 pieces whole-grain bread, cut in half
- 6 ounces thinly sliced Serrano ham (about 24 slices)

1. To prepare tomatoes: Preheat oven to 300°F. Coat a large rimmed baking sheet with cooking spray.

2. Cut tomatoes in half lengthwise and place on the prepared baking sheet. Sprinkle each half with some oil, some oregano and salt. Roast for 2 hours. When cool enough to handle, coarsely chop the tomatoes and transfer (with juices) to a serving bowl.

3. To serve tapas: Shortly before serving, preheat oven to 350°F.

4. Place bread on a baking sheet and brush with some of the remaining garlic oil. Bake until slightly crispy, but not hard, 2 to 4 minutes per side. Let cool slightly. To serve, arrange the bread on a large platter with ham and the bowl of tomato mixture for spreading.

Per serving: 152 calories; 7 g fat (1 g sat, 4 g mono); 8 mg cholesterol; 14 g carbohydrate; 1 g added sugars; 9 g protein; 3 g fiber; 484 mg sodium; 220 mg potassium.

Nutrition bonus: Vitamin C (15% daily value).

Carbohydrate servings: 1

Exchanges: 1 starch, ½ lean meat, 1 fat

Tips:

Garlic oil is oil that has been infused with fresh garlic. We like to use it for salad dressings, as dipping oil with crusty bread, in marinades or to simply drizzle over steamed vegetables. Find it at well-stocked supermarkets.





Watermelon Agua Fresca

Makes: about 10 cups

Active time: 15 minutes **Total:** 4¼ hours
(including 4 hours chilling time)

To make ahead: Prepare through Step 1,
cover and refrigerate for up to 2 days.

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This refreshing drink is served by roadside vendors all over Mexico. Not too much fruit, not too much sugar, just a beautiful way to quench your thirst on a summer day.

8 cups cubed seeded watermelon
(about 6 pounds with the rind),
divided

1 cup water, divided

⅓ cup sugar, divided

¼ cup fresh lime juice

1 liter (4 cups) club soda or seltzer
water, well chilled

Lime slices for garnish

1. Combine half the watermelon, half the water and half the sugar in a blender; puree. Pour through a coarse strainer into a large container. Repeat with the remaining watermelon, water and sugar. Stir in lime juice. Refrigerate until well chilled, about 4 hours.

2. To serve, stir in club soda (or seltzer) and garnish with lime.

Per cup: 64 calories; 0 g fat (0 g sat, 0 g mono); 0 mg cholesterol; 16 g carbohydrate; 7 g added sugars; 1 g protein; 1 g fiber; 2 mg sodium; 144 mg potassium.

Nutrition bonus: Vitamin C (30% daily value), Vitamin A (15% dv).

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A recipe checked...

 **Heart Health** has limited saturated fat.

 **Diabetes** is low in calories and meets limits for Carbohydrate Servings.

 **Weight Loss** has reduced calories (and limited saturated fat).

 **Gluten Free** does not contain wheat, rye, barley or oats.
(Many processed foods, such as broths, soy sauce and other condiments, may contain hidden sources of gluten. If a recipe calls for a packaged [e.g., canned] ingredient, we recommend that you carefully read the label to make sure you pick a brand that does not contain a hidden source of gluten. Also, please note that while a recipe may be marked “Gluten Free,” the serving suggestions that accompany it may contain gluten.)