

Show 37: A Cool Meal for a Hot Night

Steamed Pea Pods with Lemon Grass

One generous handful of pea pods per guest

1 Handfull of fresh lemon grass or 3 t. dried

Water

Start the water boiling. Add the lemon grass.

Clean pods in cold running water, snipping off any stems.

Using a steamer add the pods; cover the boiling water. Cook for only a few minutes to retain the crispy texture and vibrant green color.

Can be served hot or cold.

Strawberry Smoothie

1 Generous qt. ripe, fresh strawberries, rinsed & hulled

1/3 cup dry white wine

3 T. honey

¼ t. ground allspice

1 Cup plain yogurt

¼ cup sour cream

4 t. balsamic vinegar

mint for presentation

Puree the berries in a food processor or blender until smooth.

Pour the puree into a large pitcher or bowl and add the wine, honey & allspice. Wisk in the yogurt and sour cream. Chill for a least 6 hours or as long as overnight.

Prior to serving, chill the soup bowls, ... or pour into paper cups and wander among friends, toss when finished.

Pesto Pasta With Artichokes & Sundried Tomatoes

One generous spoonful of pesto for each guest

1 jar of sundried tomatoes packed in oil, drained

1 can of artichoke hearts packed in water, drained

1 ½ dried pasta such as campenelle or small shells

Prepare pasta according to package directions.

Add the pesto, tomatoes & artichokes to the pasta. Toss, serve & enjoy!

Pesto Sauce

This uncooked sauce originated in Genoa, where it is still prized.

4 cups tightly packed fresh basil leaves
1 cup olive oil
2 cloves garlic, crushed
6 sprigs parsley
1 cup pine nuts
½ cup fresh grated Parmesan or Romano cheese
Salt & freshly ground black pepper to taste

Place the basil in a food blender, not a processor. Add the oil, garlic, parsley, salt pepper and nuts. Blend until all are chopped very fine, but not smooth.

Remove from the blender and stir in the grated cheese.

Use pronto. If you want to keep it in the refrigerator or freezer, float some oil on top to prevent it from turning black.

Use on chicken, pasta, or your choice!

Makes about 2 cups

Pesto-Crusted Chicken Breasts

½ Skinless chicken breast, (bone in) for each guest
Prepared pesto sauce

Preheat oven to 425. Place chicken on large rimmed baking sheet. Coat all of chicken with pesto mixture and bake thoroughly for 30 minutes. Transfer chicken to platter. Tent with foil.

Options: ½ cup walnuts, 1 t. grated lemon peel 2T. lemon juice. Combine this with the pesto for more of a texture to your chicken.

Chocolate-Orange Truffle Cake

When guests taste this light, flavorful cake, they'll think you've inherited a secret recipe. No need to tell them this chocolate-orange gem started with a mix!

1 package Betty Crocker SuperMoist chocolate fudge cake mix
1 1/3 cups water
½ cup vegetable oil
1 T grated orange peel (clean well!) (usually from 1 orange)
3 eggs

powdered sugar for dusting, just prior to serving,

1. Preheat oven to 350 Grease or lightly spray with cooking spray the bundt pan
2. Beat cake mix, water, oil, orange peel and eggs in large bowl on low speed 1 minute, scraping bowl constantly (do not overbeat!); or stir 2 minutes by hand. Pour into pan,
3. Bake 25 to 30 minutes testing with toothpick inserted and comes out clean. Cool completely before removing from pan. Cool 1 hour on wire rack.
4. Dust with powdered sugar and let the party begin.