

Are You Ready for Some Football?

Written by Debbi Covington

Wednesday, 06 September 2017 05:23



Whether you're heading to your alma mater for a fall football game and tailgate meal, or to the river for a picnic, this menu of make-ahead dishes is sure to be a hit!

Sweet and Spicy nuts can be made early in the week and stored in airtight containers for pregame munching. Delicious Marinated Olives and Cheese, served in small bowls with toothpicks are a terrific accompaniment to pregame cocktails and pair especially well with a dry red wine. The olives and cheese are best if made several days before serving and will keep for a week or two when stored in the refrigerator. (They also make a wonderful addition to a big tossed salad.) While you and your friends nibble, heat up the grill and flavor the air with the enticing aroma of Cider-Brined Pork Tenderloin. Apples and pork are a perennial flavor combination that is especially pleasing in the fall. Lean pork tenderloins receive a flavor boost when they are soaked overnight in an apple cider brine that is flavored with maple syrup, black pepper and sage. The flavor is heightened further when the tenderloins are rubbed with an aromatic mixture of garlic, nutmeg and cinnamon. S'ghetti Salad is a person favorite and a great side dish for tailgating and picnicing. Indoor Smores add a fabulous little bite of something sweet to satisfy your sweet tooth! Go North Carolina State!

(Photography by Susan DeLoach)

Sweet and Spicy Nuts

1 egg white

1 tablespoon water

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1 pound raw whole cashews, whole almonds, walnut halves, and/or pecan halves (about 4 cups)

1/3 cup sugar

2 teaspoons salt

1 1/2 teaspoons ground cumin

1 teaspoon paprika

1 teaspoon ground coriander

1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper

1/4 teaspoon ground ginger

Lightly coat a foil-lined 15x10x1-inch baking sheet with cooking spray. Preheat oven to 300 degrees. In a large bowl, beat egg white and water with a fork until frothy. Add nuts and toss to coat. In a large plastic bag combine the sugar, salt, cumin, paprika, coriander, cayenne pepper and ginger. Add the nut mixture; shaking well to coat. Spread nuts evenly on prepared baking sheet. Bake for 35 to 40 minutes until nuts are toasted and spice mixture is dry; stirring every 10 minutes. Remove from oven. Place baking sheet on a wire rack and cool nuts completely. Store in an airtight bag or container at room temperature up to 5 days. Makes 4 cups. Serves 12.

Marinated Olives and Cheese

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2 teaspoons minced garlic, about 2 large cloves

1 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes

1/2 teaspoon dried oregano

1/2 teaspoon dried basil

1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Zest of 1 lemon (about 2 teaspoons)

1/4 cup sherry vinegar

1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil

2 cups stuffed olives (pimento, jalapeno, garlic, or almond)

1 pound mozzarella or sharp cheddar cheese

Combine first eight ingredients in a small saucepan over medium heat. Add the olives and cook until the mixture is warmed through. Remove from heat and set aside to cool. Cut cheese into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch cubes. When mixture is cool, stir in the cheese. Cover and chill for 8 hours or longer.

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Makes 4 cups.

Cider-Brined Pork Tenderloin

For the brine:

3 cups apple cider or apple juice

2 cups water

1/4 cup coarse sea salt or kosher salt

1/2 cup pure maple syrup

1 tablespoon coarsely ground black pepper

1 teaspoon rubbed dried sage)

Additional ingredients:

2 pork tenderloins, about 1 1/2 pounds

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2 tablespoons olive oil

1 tablespoon minced fresh garlic (about 3 large cloves)

1 teaspoon coarse sea salt or kosher salt

1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg

1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon

Combine the brine ingredients in a 2-gallon zip-top freezer bag, mixing well. Add the pork tenderloins, seal the bag tightly, and refrigerate overnight. Remove the tenderloins from the brine. Discard the brine. Rinse off the tenderloins, pat dry with paper towels, and lay on a large baking sheet. Combine the olive oil, garlic, salt, pepper, nutmeg, and cinnamon in a small bowl. Massage the mixture into the tenderloins. Place tenderloins on a prepared grill and cook over high heat for 20 minutes. Turn the tenderloins and grill for 15 minutes more, or until the internal temperature is 145 degrees. Let the tenderloins rest for 10 minutes before slicing. Serve on Curried Pumpkin Rolls with apple chutney and sliced blue cheese.

Makes 24 small sandwiches.

S'ghetti Salad

1 (16-ounce) package spaghetti, broken in half

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