

SPINACH & ARTICHOKE SPREAD

1 block cream cheese
2-cup bag Italian shredded cheese
1 cup Mexican shredded cheese
1 pkg. Knorr vegetable mix
Garlic to taste, finely chopped
1 cup mayonnaise
1 cup sour cream
1 small jar artichoke hearts, chopped
3 cups fresh spinach, chopped

Place all ingredients in a large microwave-safe bowl. Mix well. Cook on high 2 minutes. Stir well. Cook 5 minutes more at 50 percent power. Serve with tortilla chips, crackers and bread. Also great in an omelet.

Sandra Moore
Reno

STRAWBERRY DIP

1 large jar Marshmallow Fluff
2 6-oz. pkgs. Philadelphia Cream Cheese
½ tsp. strawberry flavoring
1 drop red food coloring

Mix together. Refrigerate and serve with fresh strawberries. Makes 4 servings.

Shyla Johnson
Allegheny-Clarion Valley High School

STUFFED DATES

25 dried and pitted dates
4 oz. crumbled blue cheese

Cut a small slit into each date and widen with fingers and stuff with ½ tsp. blue cheese.

Jean R. Stroup
East Brady

SWEDISH NUTS

1 pound pecans (or mixture of nuts including walnuts, almonds and peanuts)

2 egg whites
1 cup sugar
Dash of salt
½ cup margarine

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Use large baking pan with sides, like a jelly-roll pan. Beat eggs until frothy; add salt, then sugar, 1 Tbsp. at a time, until stiff peaks form. Fold all nuts into egg meringue mixture. Place butter in baking pan; melt. Spread coated nuts over butter and mix carefully. Bake for 30 minutes, stirring every 10 minutes, until all are lightly browned and butter is absorbed. Cool on waxed paper.

Holly M. Miller
Oil City

Finalist

STUFFED MUSHROOMS

20 medium mushrooms, cleaned and rinsed
2 Tbsp. chopped onions, finely chopped
2 Tbsp. finely chopped red bell pepper
3 Tbsp. butter
½ cup bread crumbs
½ tsp. dried basil leaves

Remove stems from mushrooms. Finely chop ¼ cup stems. Cook and stir chopped stems, onion and pepper in butter in skillet over medium heat until tender. Remove from heat and stir in bread crumbs and basil. Spoon crumb mixture in mushrooms, place on baking sheet. Bake at 400 degrees for 15 minutes or until hot.

Phyllis Agnello
Knox

SWEET & SOUR DRESSING

½ cup canola oil
2/3 cup cider vinegar
1 cup sugar or Splenda
1 tsp. salt
1 tsp. celery seed

Put all ingredients in a jar and shake well until sugar is dissolved. Refrigerate any leftovers.

Charlene Ekis
Franklin

SWEET-N-SPICY BACON CHICKEN BITES

1¼ pounds boneless, skinless chicken breasts (about 4 breast halves)
1-pound pkg. sliced bacon
2/3 cup firmly packed brown sugar
2 Tbsp. chili powder

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Cut chicken breasts into 1-inch cubes. Stir together brown sugar and chili powder. Cut each bacon slice into fourths. Wrap each chicken cube with bacon strip piece and secure with a toothpick. Dip into brown sugar mixture. Spray large cookie sheet with non-stick cooking spray and place bites on sheet. Bake for 30-35 minutes or until bacon is crisp.

Diana Kunselman
Rimersburg

TABASCO PICKLES

1 gallon processed dill pickles, drained
White sugar
Tabasco sauce
Garlic

Slice pickles and layer in gallon jar. Cover each layer with white sugar and shake on Tabasco sauce. Cut up about 3 small pieces of fresh garlic and put some on each layer. Continue this in layers until all pickles are sliced using 1 small bottle of red Tabasco sauce and enough white sugar to cover each layer. Put lid back on glass gallon jar. Turn over and put in shallow dish in refrigerator. Everyday for 7 days, turn the gallon jar. When they are ready to eat, they are sweet and hot.

Mary M. Miller
Franklin

TACO DIP

8-oz. block cream cheese
Taco sauce
Hamburger mixed with taco seasoning
Shredded lettuce
Tomatoes
Olives
Onions
Shredded cheese (any kind)

Layer the above ingredients in the order they appear. Serve with taco chips

Tanner Guth
North Clarion High School

VEGAN SPICY MIXED NUTS

1½ tsp. Ener-G Egg Replacer
2 Tbsp. warm water
1 pound roasted, salted mixed nuts
1/3 cup evaporated sugar cane
2 tsp. coarse salt
1½ tsp. cayenne pepper

Preheat oven to 250 degrees. Whisk egg replacer and water until foamy. Add nuts and coat them. Drain with strainer for 1 minute. Wipe out bowl and mix salt, sugar and cayenne. Add nuts and mix until nuts are coated. Spread nuts out in single layer on pan. Bake 40 minutes; stir with spatula and reduce heat to 200 degrees. Bake another 30 minutes or until dry. Cool to room temperature. Store for up to a week in airtight container.

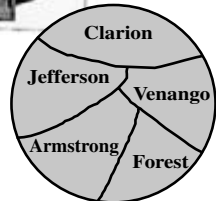
Ashley Kaltenbach
Keystone High School

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Editor’s Note: The recipes featured in the 2009 Creative Cookbook are published as they were submitted to the newspaper.

Readers are advised to pay close attention to all recipes to ensure canning and other food preparation efforts are adequate and safe.