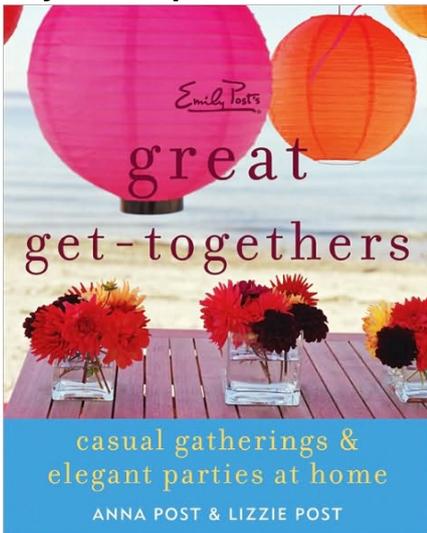


## Easy -to-Prepare Hors d'Oeuvres



### **Crostini with:**

Goat Cheese and Olive Tapenade  
Cream Cheese and Chutney  
Blue Cheese and Toasted Walnuts  
Prosciutto and Fresh Figs  
Butter, Radishes, and Sea Salt  
Avocado and Cilantro with Lime  
Ham and Honey Mustard Butter

### **Dips:**

Hummus with Endive Spears and Pita Toasts  
Greek Yogurt with Celery and Cucumber Spears  
Blue Cheese with Hearts of Romaine

### **Pineapple Skewers with Chile and Lime**

*This festive hors d'oeuvre is inspired by street food in Mexico, where vendors sell all kinds of fruit and vegetables on sticks seasoned with chili and lime. Light, colorful, and intriguingly flavored with sweet, salty, tart, cool, and hot—sure to get partygoers' attention. Makes 18 to 20 skewers, serving 8 to 10*

1 medium pineapple  
¼ cup unblended medium-hot powdered red chili  
¼ cup kosher salt  
3 limes, cut into 6 wedges each  
20 (8-inch) thin bamboo skewers

1. Cut the top and bottom off the pineapple. Then cut in half crosswise. Stand each half up on the cut end and carefully cut off the skin in strips, working from top to bottom. Remove any remaining “eyes” (the little brown divots) with the point of a paring knife. Quarter each piece lengthwise into 4 wedges and remove the tough core from the edge of each wedge. Then slice the quarters crosswise into ½-inch fan-shaped pieces.

2. Skewer the pineapple, sprinkling a few of the skewers with the powdered chili and salt as you go. Place the skewers on a platter. Scatter the lime wedges around the pineapple. Place the extra salt and chili in little ramekins and place on the platter.

3. Provide a tall glass for the spent skewers and a little plate for the used lime. Note: You may provide little salt spoons for the chili and salt or instruct guests to sprinkle. Provide plenty of cocktail napkins!

### **Post Family Favorite Marinade**

*This works well with chicken, pork, shrimp, or lamb kebabs. Makes enough for 2 pounds of meat or shrimp.*

2 pounds of meat or shrimp  
Juice of 2 lemons  
1 garlic clove, mashed to a pulp  
¼ cup olive oil  
2 tablespoons grated onion  
3 teaspoons salt (or less)  
1 teaspoon ground chili peppers (or to taste!)  
2 teaspoons curry powder  
1 teaspoon ground coriander  
1 teaspoon powdered ginger

Combine all ingredients. Store in a glass bottle in the fridge for up to a week.

### **Little Chocolate Spice Cakes**

*These little cakes are as much fun to make as they are to eat—and they look terrific. They don't require plates or utensils, and as such are a perfect end to a holiday cocktail party. The spice notes and bittersweet chocolate also pair well with many red wines, particularly reds with high fruit and low tannins. The recipe can be doubled easily.*

Makes 24, serves 12 (2 each)

1 cup unbleached all-purpose flour  
1 teaspoon baking powder  
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon  
¼ teaspoon ground cloves  
¼ teaspoon finely ground black pepper  
Pinch of salt  
¾ cup cold water  
5 ounces (1¼ sticks) unsalted butter  
½ cup unsweetened cocoa powder  
2 ounces semisweet chocolate chips  
⅓ cup bourbon or whiskey  
1½ teaspoons instant coffee (we use instant espresso)  
1 cup sugar  
1 egg, lightly beaten

Glaze

4 ounces unsweetened chocolate  
4 ounces semisweet chocolate  
4 tablespoons (½ stick) unsalted butter

1. Preheat the oven to 325°F. Spray 2 mini-muffin pans (approximately 1½-inch diameter, 12 in each pan) with nonstick cooking spray. Sift together the flour, baking powder, spices, and salt. Set aside.

2. In a heavy-bottomed saucepan, combine the water, butter, cocoa powder, chocolate chips, bourbon or whiskey, and coffee, and set over medium heat. Stir until the butter and chocolate have just melted. Transfer to a large bowl and whisk in the sugar. Cool to room temperature and whisk in the egg. Fold in the dry ingredients and mix gently until no lumps remain.

3. Fill each muffin cup two thirds full. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Allow to cool and pop each one out, using a paring knife to gently loosen if necessary.

To Glaze:

1. In a double boiler, melt together the unsweetened chocolate, semisweet chocolate, and butter. Stir until just combined and cool for a few minutes.

2. Dip the top of each cake in the glaze, then place on a cooling rack until the chocolate sets. The idea is to have a nice glossy top, without chocolate on the sides, so your guests don't end up with chocolate all over their fingers!

**Left wanting more?**

Check out Anna's and Lizzie's book, *Great Get-Togethers*.