

# our 10 best party starters

Spread the love for your favorite seafood, from crab to salmon, with these crowd-pleasing appetizers

THESE SALTY SNACKS ARE GREAT WITH BEER AND TART COCKTAILS, SUCH AS MARGARITAS

## Tapenade Twists

**PREP:** 8 minutes  
**COOK:** 15 minutes

- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 cup pitted kalamata olives
- 1 tablespoon fresh rosemary
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh basil
- 1 teaspoon chopped anchovies or  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon anchovy paste
- $\frac{1}{2}$  (17.3-ounce) package frozen puff pastry, thawed

**1.** Process first 5 ingredients in a food processor until smooth. Unfold pastry sheet onto a lightly floured surface. Roll into a 12- x 10-inch rectangle.

**2.** Spread olive mixture onto lengthwise half of rectangle to within 1 inch of long edge; fold pastry over filling. Roll gently with a rolling pin; pinch edges to seal. Cut crosswise into  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch strips. Twist strips; place on a greased baking sheet.

**3.** Bake at 400° for 15 minutes. Place onto wire racks to cool. Makes about 1 $\frac{1}{2}$  dozen.

## Hot Crab and Shrimp Dip

**PREP:** 5 minutes  
**COOK:** 20 minutes

- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup mayonnaise
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoons whole-grain mustard
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon garlic powder
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon lemon-pepper seasoning
- $\frac{1}{2}$  pound lump crabmeat
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup chopped cooked shrimp (about  $\frac{1}{4}$  pound)
- $\frac{1}{3}$  cup shredded smoked cheese
- $\frac{1}{3}$  cup sliced almonds, toasted

Combine first 4 ingredients in a small bowl. Stir in crab, shrimp, and cheese. Spoon mixture into a 3-cup baking dish. Bake at 375° for 15 to 20 minutes or until bubbly. Sprinkle with almonds. Makes 3 cups. >

THIS HEARTY SPREAD NEEDS STURDY DIPPERS, SUCH AS CROSTINI OR STONE-GROUND CRACKERS

## Cod, Artichoke, and White Bean Dip

**PREP:** 5 minutes

*For extra flavor, grill or smoke the fish.*

- 1 large garlic clove, coarsely chopped
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh rosemary
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 (14-ounce) can artichoke hearts, rinsed and drained
- 1 (15-ounce) can white or navy beans, rinsed and drained
- 1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 1/2 teaspoons lemon zest
- 3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 1/2 pound cod or other mild white fish, cooked

Salt, to taste

Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Garnish: fresh lemon slices, fresh rosemary sprigs

Process garlic and 1 teaspoon rosemary in a food processor until finely chopped.

Add olive oil and next 5 ingredients; process until smooth, stopping to scrape down sides.

Add cod, salt, and black pepper; pulse just until well blended. Garnish, if desired. Makes 2 cups.

GREAT USE FOR LEFTOVER FISH

FOR SINGLE SERVINGS, SPOON DIP ONTO STEAMED ARTICHOKE LEAVES

## Curried Coconut Shrimp Balls

**PREP:** 10 minutes

**COOK:** 5 minutes

**CHILL:** 1 hour

- 1 cup flaked coconut
- 1 teaspoon curry powder
- 2 (8-ounce) packages cream cheese, softened
- 12 ounces cooked shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 2 green onions, coarsely chopped

**1.** Combine coconut and curry powder on a baking sheet. Bake at 325° for 5 to 7 minutes or until golden; set aside.

**2.** Process cream cheese, shrimp, and onions in a food processor until blended. Chill 1 hour.

**3.** Shape shrimp mixture into 1-inch balls, and roll in toasted coconut mixture. Makes 4 dozen.

USE DISPOSABLE BAMBOO SPOONS AND MAKE CLEANUP A SNAP; PACK OF 25 FOR \$9.49, WEBSTRAURANT STORE.COM

MAKE AHEAD AND WARM IN OVEN

CRAB CAKE MIXTURE CAN BE MADE SEVERAL HOURS AHEAD. AFTER THEY'RE COOKED, KEEP THEM WARM IN A 200° OVEN FOR UP TO AN HOUR

## Bite-size Wasabi Crab Cakes

**PREP:** 12 minutes

**COOK:** 12 minutes

**OTHER:** 30 minutes

- 1/2 cup thinly sliced green onions
- 1/4 cup minced shallots
- 1/4 cup mayonnaise
- 1 1/2 tablespoons wasabi paste
- 2 teaspoons seasoned rice vinegar
- 3/4 teaspoon lemon zest
- 1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon tamari or soy sauce
- 1 pound fresh jumbo lump crabmeat, drained and picked
- 1 large egg, lightly beaten
- 1 1/2 cups panko (Japanese breadcrumbs), divided
- 4 tablespoons canola oil

**1.** Combine first 8 ingredients in a bowl. Gently fold crabmeat into mayonnaise mixture. Cover and chill 30 minutes or several hours.

**2.** Stir egg and 1/3 cup panko into crabmeat mixture. Shape mixture into 20 (1 1/2-inch) patties. Dredge in remaining panko.

**3.** Cook crab cakes, in batches, in hot oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat 2 minutes on each side or until golden. Serve with Ginger Aioli. Makes 20 crab cakes.

### Ginger Aioli

- 1/2 cup mayonnaise
  - 1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh cilantro
  - 2 tablespoons minced fresh ginger
  - 1/2 teaspoon rice vinegar
- Combine all ingredients in a small bowl. Makes 1/2 cup.

## Scallop-Spinach Spread

**PREP:** 7 minutes

**COOK:** 23 minutes

- 12 ounces bay or sea scallops
- 1 1/2 teaspoons seafood seasoning, divided
- 2 teaspoons butter
- 1 (8-ounce) package cream cheese, softened
- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 1/2 cup shredded Swiss or white Cheddar cheese
- 1 (10-ounce) package frozen chopped spinach, thawed and squeezed dry

Seafood seasoning (optional)

**1.** Sprinkle scallops with 3/4 teaspoon seafood seasoning. Melt butter in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat; sauté scallops 3 minutes or until opaque. Remove scallops with a slotted spoon. Finely chop when cool enough to handle.

**2.** Beat cream cheese and sour cream at medium speed with an electric mixer until creamy.

Add cheese, remaining 3/4 teaspoon seafood seasoning, and spinach. Beat at low speed just until blended. Stir in scallops.

**3.** Spoon mixture into a lightly greased 4-cup baking dish. Sprinkle with seafood seasoning, if desired. Bake at 375° for 20 minutes or until bubbly. Makes 3 1/2 cups. >





## Smoked Salmon and Clam Spread

**PREP:** 4 minutes  
**COOK:** 8 minutes  
**CHILL:** 1 hour

- 1 tablespoon butter
- 2 tablespoons minced shallots
- 1/2 cup chopped pecans, plus more for garnish
- 8 ounces cream cheese, softened
- 1/2 cup ricotta cheese
- 1/2 teaspoon paprika
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 1 1/2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
- 8 ounces hot-smoked salmon, flaked
- 1 (3.66-ounce) can smoked clams, drained

**1.** Melt butter in a small skillet over medium heat; add shallots, and sauté 2 to 4 minutes or until tender. Remove shallots. Add pecans to the same skillet, and cook over medium-low heat 3 to 4 minutes or until lightly browned. Remove from heat.

**2.** Beat cream cheese, shallots, ricotta, and next 3 ingredients at medium speed with an electric mixer about 2 minutes or until smooth. Stir in salmon and clams. Spoon salmon mixture into serving bowl. Cover and chill at least 1 hour. Sprinkle with pecans before serving. Makes 2 1/2 cups.



**FOOD EDITOR JULIA RUTLAND SAYS**

“HOT SMOKED SALMON HAS A LONG SHELF LIFE, SO KEEP SOME ON HAND FOR IMPROMPTU SNACKS”



## Crab, Mango, and Cashew Dip

**PREP:** 10 minutes  
**COOK:** 3 minutes

Fresh lump crab is the gold standard, but can be quite pricey. Alternatives include refrigerated, pasteurized cans or shelf-stable cans and pouches; these versions have smaller pieces, so if using, finely chop the peppers and mangoes so they don't overpower the crab.

- 1/2 cup chopped orange bell pepper
- 2 teaspoons vegetable oil
- 4 cups chopped ripe mangoes, divided (about 3 large)
- 1/4 cup chopped green onions
- 1/4 cup ricotta cheese
- 1 teaspoon lemon zest
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 pound lump crabmeat, flaked
- 1/3 cup chopped roasted cashew nuts

Pinch of cayenne pepper

**1.** Sauté bell pepper in hot oil 2 to 3 minutes or until crisp-tender.

**2.** Process sautéed bell pepper, 2 cups chopped mango, and next 4 ingredients in a food processor until smooth, stopping to scrape down sides.

**3.** Combine pureed mango mixture, green onions, remaining diced mango, and crab. Sprinkle with cashews and cayenne pepper. Makes 3 cups.



## Smoked Salmon and Fingerling Potatoes

**PREP:** 9 minutes  
**COOK:** 20 minutes

- 12 fingerling potatoes (about 1 pound), halved lengthwise
- 1 1/2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 4 ounces thinly sliced smoked salmon
- 1/2 cup crème fraîche or sour cream
- 1 tablespoon caviar or capers
- Cracked black pepper, to taste

**1.** Toss potatoes in olive oil on a rimmed baking sheet. Bake at 425° for 20 minutes or until golden brown and tender. Let cool.

**2.** Arrange pieces of smoked salmon on potatoes; top each with a dollop of crème fraîche and sprinkling of caviar and pepper. Makes 2 dozen.

SOAK WOODEN SKEWERS IN WATER AT LEAST 30 MINUTES BEFORE GRILLING TO PREVENT CHARRING

USE SUSTAINABLE CAVIAR—SEE THE GIFT GUIDE, PAGE 22, FOR OUR FAVORITES

JULIA'S FAVORITE!

## Peppered Pancetta-Wrapped Shrimp

You can substitute prosciutto for the pancetta in this recipe. Assemble the skewers early, and cook the shrimp just as guests arrive.

**PREP:** 11 minutes  
**COOK:** 4 minutes

- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 3/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon minced garlic
- 1/8 teaspoon freshly ground white pepper
- Kosher salt, to taste

- 12 large shrimp, peeled and deveined if desired
- 12 thin slices pancetta (about 8 ounces)
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley

**1.** Combine first 5 ingredients in a bowl. Add shrimp, tossing to coat. Wrap each shrimp with 1 slice pancetta. Thread shrimp onto small skewers.

**2.** Grill shrimp, covered with grill lid, over medium-high heat (400°) for 2 minutes on each side or until pancetta is crisp and brown. Sprinkle with parsley. Makes 1 dozen. 🍴

**Entertaining tip!** Offer a mix of hot and cold appetizers so you can replenish cold apps while the hot ones are baking.