**PALATINE LIBRARY – EASY HOLIDAY APPETIZERS**

**November 8, 2023**

**Shrimp Cocktail Phyllo Cups**

**Pieces 15**

**Ingredients**:

~1 pound (20 pieces) cooked shrimp (26-30 count size) – small dice

4 stalks celery – small dice – reserve celery leaves for garnish

3 TBS red onion – small dice

2 tsp lemon zest + 2 TBS lemon juice

2 TBS olive oil

1/3 cup cocktail sauce

15 frozen mini phyllo shells

Salt/Pepper

**Preparation**:

Prebake phyllo shells on a parchment lined baking sheet at 375 for 5 minutes until browned. Set aside to cool.

Stir together shrimp, diced celery, red onion, lemon zest and juice, olive oil and cocktail sauce and season with salt and pepper. Refrigerate for 1 hour to chill. Divide shrimp salad among the phyllo shells. Garnish with celery leaves.

*NOTES: Can also use crab meat – swap cocktail sauce for mayonnaise.*

**Leek Jam and Fontina Crescents**

**Makes 8 servings**

**Ingredients**:

1 medium leek – dark green top removed and discarded

2 TBS balsamic vinegar

2 tsp honey

Salt/Pepper to taste

1 (8oz) block fontina cheese – cut into ¼ inch thick slices

1 package crescent rolls

**Preparation**:

Cut the leek in ½ leaving the root intact. Run under cold water to wash out any dirt in-between layers. Slice into ½ moon strips. Melt 1 TBS butter in medium skillet over medium heat. Add leeks and sauté with 1 tsp of salt until leeks begin to brown – about 10 minutes. Add vinegar and honey and cook stirring constantly until vinegar-mixture clings to leek pieces. Remove from heat.

Separate crescents into 8 triangles. Spread with leek jam and place 1 piece of fontina cheese at end. Roll into crescents and place on baking sheet. Bake at 375F for 9-12 minutes. Serve warm or at room temperature.

*NOTES: Can easily be transformed into a dip – Substitute fontina cheese with brie round. Remove top rind of brie wheel to expose soft cheese - spread jam on top of brie – bake at 400 for 25-30 minutes or until cheese is melted and gooey - serve with Puff Pastry “Crackers” (see recipe below)*

**Chorizo and Cream Cheese Stuffed Dates**

Pieces 16

Ingredients:

16 dried and pitted dates

8 oz Mexican chorizo

1 shallot – small dice

4 oz cream cheese

1 small bunch cilantro

Preparation:

Preheat the oven to 400F degrees.

In a small skillet, sauté shallot and chorizo. Once chorizo is cooked through, fold in cream cheese to melt. Remove from heat, add in chopped cilantro and stir to combine. Set aside to cool.

Using a small paring knife, cut a small opening in the top of the date to create a “pocket”. Spoon 1 TBS of chorizo mixture into date. Place stuffed dates in a baking dish and bake for 20-30 minutes until browned on top.

*NOTES: Can substitute ground Italian sausage for chorizo if desired.*

**Mixed Nuts with Crispy Herbs and Garlic**

**Makes 4 cups**

Ingredients:

4 cups raw mixed nuts

Extra Virgin Olive Oil – for frying

6 garlic cloves – thinly sliced

6 rosemary springs – stemmed

½ cup lightly packed sage leaves – lightly chopped

Salt/Pepper to taste

Preparation:

Preheat oven to 350. Spread the nuts on a rimmed baking sheet and toast for 8-10 minutes until fragrant and golden. Let cool.

In a large skillet, heat ¼ inch of olive oil until shimmering. Add the garlic and cook over moderate heat stiffing until golden and crisp. Transfer to a paper-towel lined plate to drain.

Add the rosemary and sage into the skillet and cook until the sizzling slows, and the herbs and cook until they are crisp – about 30 seconds. Transfer to paper towel to drain.

Pour off all but 2 TBS of the garlic-herb oil and add toasted nuts. Cook over moderate heat until the nuts are warm and coated in the oil. Remove to mixing bowl, add garlic and herbs. Stir to combine. Serve warm or at room temperature.

*NOTES:*

* *Mixed nuts can be stored in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 5 days.*
* *Can substitute mixed olives for nuts. Skip nut toast, create herb/garlic oil and stir into olives. Cover and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes.*

**Puff Pastry “Crackers”**

Pieces 16

Ingredients:

1 sheet puff pastry

All-purpose flour – for dusting

Preparation:

Preheat oven to 400. Roll out the puff pastry into a 10-inch square (1/8 inch thick). Cut into 16 squares. Place on an unlined baking sheet and top with a second baking sheet to press the dough down. Bake (with the top baking sheet in place) for 25-30 minutes or until browned.