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Fourth of July Appetizers and Recipes for Easy Desserts

BY **SOO KIM** ON 7/3/21 AT 8:12 AM EDT



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The typical foods featured in [Fourth of July festivities](#) include barbecue dishes and picnic spreads, with finger foods, salads, dips and soups.

Here are some ideas for appetizers and simple desserts for the [Independence Day celebrations](#), courtesy of [USDA SNAP-Ed Connection](#) and its MyPlate Kitchen program which developed a [4th of July summer menu](#).

Appetizers for Fourth of July

Chilled Cantaloupe Soup

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This refreshing starter is great for a day when it's too hot to cook.



Illustrative image of cantaloupe soup.

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Ingredients for 6 servings:

- 1 cantaloupe (peeled, seeded and cubed)
- 2 cups of orange juice
- 1 tablespoon of lime juice (fresh)

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1. Wash hands with soap and warm water.
2. Place cantaloupe and 1/2 cup orange juice in a container of a blender or food processor.
3. Cover with lid and blend until smooth. Transfer to large bowl.
4. Stir in lime juice, cinnamon, and remaining orange juice.
5. Cover, and refrigerate for at least one hour.
6. Serve chilled.

Source: Arizona Nutrition Network, [Champions for Change Recipes](#)

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Any Day's a Picnic Chicken Salad

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Illustrative image of a chicken salad serving.

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Ingredients for 6 servings:

- 2 1/2 cups of chicken breast (cooked, diced)
- 1/2 cup of celery (chopped)
- 1/4 cup of onion (chopped)
- 2/3 tablespoon of pickle relish
- 1/2 cup of mayonnaise (light)

Directions:

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How to use:

- Make chicken salad sandwiches.
- Make a pasta salad by mixing with 2 cups cooked pasta.
- Kids will love this salad served in a tomato or a cucumber boat.

Source: University of Wisconsin, Cooperative Extension Service, A Family Living Program

Black Bean and Rice Salad

This is another easy classic salad for a side dish, starter, or even a big bowl main dish, packing in protein, fiber, and flavor. This can be made ahead of time and keeps well in the fridge.

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Ingredients for 3 servings:

- 1/2 cup of onion (chopped)
- 1/2 cup of bell pepper (green or red, chopped)
- 1 cup of brown rice (or white rice, cooked and cooled)
- 1 can of black beans (15 ounce, drained and rinsed)
- 1/4 cup rice vinegar (or white wine vinegar or lemon juice)
- 1/2 teaspoon of mustard powder (optional)
- 1 clove garlic (chopped, or 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder)
- 1/2 teaspoon of salt
- 1/4 teaspoon of pepper
- 2 tablespoons of vegetable oil

Directions

1. Wash hands with soap and water.
2. In a mixing bowl, stir together onion, red or green pepper, rice and beans.
3. In a jar with a tight fitting lid, add vinegar, dry mustard, garlic, salt, pepper and vegetable oil. Shake until dressing is evenly mixed.
4. Pour dressing over bean mixture and stir to mix evenly. Chill for at least one hour. Serve cold as a side dish or main dish.

Source: Montana State University Extension Service, Montana Extension Nutrition Education Program Website Recipes

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Corn Bread

A classic side dish at any feast. Make this the classic way or try one of the twists below to spice things up.

Illustrative image of corn bread baked and served in a cast iron pan.

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Ingredients

- 1 cup cornmeal
- 1 cup flour (all purpose)

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- 1 cup milk, non-fat

Directions

1. Wash hands with soap and water.
2. Heat oven to 425 degrees. Grease 8- or 9-inch square pan.
3. Measure cornmeal, flour, sugar, and baking powder into a large mixing bowl. Stir to combine ingredients.
4. Crack egg into a small bowl and beat with a fork to combine white and yolk.
5. Add egg, oil, and milk to flour mixture. Mix until ingredients are well blended.
6. Pour batter into prepared pan.
7. Bake 20 to 25 minutes, until firm to touch or wooden pick inserted in the center comes out clean.

Flavor Twists

- Buttermilk Corn Bread: Use only 2 teaspoons baking powder and add 1/4 teaspoon baking soda. Substitute 1 cup buttermilk for skim milk.
- Whole Wheat Corn Bread: Use 1/2 cup all purpose flour and 1/2 cup whole wheat flour.
- Corny Corn Bread: Add 1 cup kernels (fresh, frozen, or canned, well drained) with the milk.
- Cheesy Corn Bread: Add 1/2 cup shredded cheddar cheese with the milk.
- Chili Cheese Corn Bread: Add 1/2 teaspoon chili powder to the flour mixture. Drain one 4-ounce can chopped green chilies. Add chilies and 1/4 cup shredded Monterey jack cheese with the milk.
- Blueberry Corn Bread: Fold 1 cup blueberries (fresh, frozen, or canned, well drained) into the batter.

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Peach Crisp

This dessert is great when peaches are in season and it is easy to prepare.

Illustrative image of a peach cobbler dessert.

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- 4 peaches (4 cups sliced)
- 2 tablespoons of margarine
- 3/4 cup of quick-cooking oats
- 1/2 cup of sugar
- 1/4 cup of flour
- 2 teaspoons of cinnamon

1 teaspoon of lemon juice

Directions

1. Wash hands with soap and water.
2. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F.
3. Slice the peaches.
4. Spread the peach slices on the bottom of the baking pan.
5. Melt the margarine in a saucepan.
6. In a small bowl, mix everything but the peaches. Stir until the mix is well blended.
7. Sprinkle the oat mix on top of the peaches.
8. Bake for 20 minutes.

Notes

Serve the peach crisp either hot or cold. To remove the peach fuzz, you can rub the washed peach gently with a paper towel.

Source: Pennsylvania Nutrition Education Program, Pennsylvania Nutrition

Education Network Website Design

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Fruit Slush

This can be used as a drink or dessert. Keep it in the fridge and pour it over fresh ice when ready to eat.

Illustrative image of watermelon slush with lime and fresh basil leaves.

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- 2 tablespoons of sugar (optional)
- 2 tablespoons of lime juice
- 2 cups of water
- Ice

Directions

1. Wash hands with soap and water.
2. In a blender, puree fruit with sugar and lime juice until smooth.
3. Combine fruit mixture and water in a large pitcher.
4. If desired, pour through a strainer to eliminate pulp.
5. Cover and refrigerate for up to a week.
6. To serve, stir well and pour into tall glasses over ice.

Source: Watermelon Cooler, Food Hero, Oregon State University Cooperative Extension Service.

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A collage of food ideas for the Fourth of July.

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