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Rains County

Seasons of Taste Recipes

Our first Seasons of Taste Traveling Cooking School was a great success. It was held in Canton to approximately 65 participants. The County Extension Agents presented a wealth of information on their respective holiday recipes, table décor, and other tips. While all the recipes sampled were great, I would like to share a couple with you I thought you might enjoy. They are both wonderful appetizers that I absolutely fell in love with! These recipes were demonstrated by Dee Lee Smith – CEA-FCS Van Zandt County. Please try them, you won't be disappointed.

Tortellini Tapas with Spicy Ranch Dip

1 – 9 oz. package of refrigerated cheese-filled tortellini
1 – 16 oz. bottle ranch-style dressing with peppercorns, divided*
2 – large eggs
2 cups fine, dry breadcrumbs
¾ cup mild chunky salsa
¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro
2 cups oil

Directions:

- 1) Cook tortellini according to package directions, drain and cool.
- 2) Whisk together 1 cup dressing and eggs in a large bowl until blended.
- 3) Add tortellini; let stand 10 minutes. Drain and dredge in breadcrumbs.
- 4) Place on baking sheet; cover and chill at least 1 hour.
- 5) For dip, stir together remaining dressing, salsa, and chopped cilantro; cover and chill.
- 6) Pour oil into Dutch oven; heat to 375 degrees. Fry tortellini, in batches, until golden on both sides. Drain on paper towels.
- 7) Serve with dip.

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Cream Cheese Stuffed Olive Bites

1 – 4.5 oz. jar green olives with pimentos, drained
4 ounces cream cheese, softened
1/2 cup toasted pecans or almonds, finely chopped

Directions:

- 1) Place olives in colander and rinse. Pat dry.
- 2) Form a rounded teaspoon of cream cheese into a small ball and transfer to a parchment –lined baking sheet. Repeat with remaining cream cheese, making 24 balls. Chill for 30 minutes or until firm.
- 3) Make indentation in each ball. Place olive into the indentation and mold the cheese around the olive. Roll into the shape of a ball with the olive completely encased the cheese.
- 4) Place toasted pecans or almonds in a small bowl. Roll olive balls to coat.
- 5) Keep covered in the refrigerator until ready to serve. Serve cold.

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