

Tapas Night

Written by Debbi Covington
Tuesday, 19 August 2008 07:59

Chorizo Empanadillas □
Lime-Drizzled Shrimp □
White Bean & Gorgonzola □
Bruschetta



Tapas are small and savory mouthfuls served with wine, beer or sherry. Tapas can be as simple as small plates of cheeses, olives, anchovies and chorizo slices passed around with pre-dinner drinks or they can make up a whole colorful meal of small dishes. Most food historians agree that tapas got its start when the Spanish King Alfonso the 10th issued a decree that all Spanish taverns must serve a bit of food or tapa with each glass of wine. Derived from the Spanish verb *tapar*, to cover, a tapa is a bite to accompany drinks, customarily eaten while standing up. During King Alfonso's days, a savory treat such as bread or cheese was placed over the top of every glass of wine sold to keep out the flies and dust between sips. The centuries-long Spanish tapas trend continues today in the United States. Many restaurants offer small plates. A full array of these tasty miniature morsels can make a dinner in themselves. Whatever your choice of recipes, tapas are for sharing and lingering over with a glass of wine. Eating tapas goes and-in-hand with hospitality, friendship and lots of conversation. Enjoy the experience!

(p.s. Please join me at 17-19 Market at Habersham on the first Friday of every month from 6:00 until 8:00 p.m. for our monthly Tapas Night.)

Chorizo Empanadillas

4-1/2 ounces chorizo sausage, outer casing removed
All-purpose flour
1 sheet frozen puff pastry, thawed
1 egg, beaten
Paprika

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Cut the chorizo into 1/2-inch small dice. On a lightly floured counter, roll out the puff pastry. Using a round 3-1/2-inch cookie cutter, cut into 12 circles. Put 1 teaspoon of chopped chorizo onto each of the pastry circles. Dampen the edges of the pastry with a little water, then fold in half to completely cover the chorizo. Using the prongs of a fork, press against the edges to seal. Make a small slit in the side of each pastry with a sharp knife. Place the pastries on a lightly greased baking sheet and brush each with a little beaten egg. Bake for 10-15 minutes or until golden brown. Dust with paprika before serving. Serves 6.

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Lime-Drizzled Shrimp

4 limes
12 raw jumbo shrimp, peeled and deveined
3 tablespoons Spanish olive oil
2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
Splash of sherry
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
4 tablespoons Italian parsley, chopped

Grate the rind and squeeze the juice from 2 of the limes. Cut the remaining 2 limes into wedges and set aside. Heat olive oil in a large skillet. Add the garlic and cook for 30 seconds. Add the shrimp and cook for about 5 minutes or until they turn pink. Add the lime rind, juice and splash of sherry and toss to coat. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Transfer to serving plates and sprinkle with parsley. Serve with reserved lime wedges for squeezing over the hot shrimp. Serves 6.

White Bean and Gorgonzola Bruschetta

1 clove garlic, sliced
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
1 cups white beans, with liquid
1/2 teaspoon chopped rosemary
1/4 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
Sea salt, to taste
Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
1/4 cup Gorgonzola cheese, crumbled
Ciabatta or Italian bread, sliced and toasted

In a medium saucepan, saute the garlic in olive oil until golden brown, about 2 minutes. Toss in beans and seasonings and coarsely mash. (If mixture is too dry, add a bit of olive oil or water.) Remove from heat and stir in cheese. Spread on toasted bread slices. Serves 6.

The writer owns Catering by Debbi Covington and is the author of the cookbook, Dining Under the Carolina Moon. Debbi's website address is www.cateringbydebbicovington.com. She may be reached at 525-0350 or by email at covingtoncats@embarqmail.com.