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OLÉ! *Spanish Tapas*

Serve up these bite-size treats at your next party.

written by **Tanja Kern** photographed by **Mandy Oliver**

First Glance

Popular in Spanish bars and restaurants, tapas are small, bite-size appetizers that go with wine or cocktails. They've become a hit here in the United States over the past decade because they're easy to put together and full of flavor. Since it's summer, the last thing you want to do is slave over a hot stove, so a tapas party is a good choice for a casual soirée. The laid-back atmosphere encourages guests to linger, and the sweet sangria is bound to jumpstart some fun conversations.

In the Details

The great thing about tapas is that you don't have to plan an elaborate table setting to create a big impact. Drape your table in a bold hue, such as

the red Hand-Block Paisley Tablecloth from Williams-Sonoma (williams-sonoma.com). Matching cloth napkins add an elegant touch. Have plenty of glasses and ice on hand for your homemade sangria. Small appetizer plates—saucers will work in a pinch—are large enough to accommodate these treats. Encourage your guests to eat cocktail party-style with appetizer picks or (gasp!) their fingers.

What to Wear

Flaunt those sexy gams in one of this season's flirty miniskirts. (Tapas' small sizes are instant swimsuit-worthy.) Patent leather and cork heels add some extra height while you mingle.



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Sips

Take the edge off the heat with red- or white-wine sangria. This refreshing wine punch, which originated in Spain and Portugal, combines wine, fruit, natural sweeteners like honey or orange juice and a splash of brandy, Champagne or triple sec. Sangria is all about experimenting with a basic bottle of wine and your favorite fruits.

Music

Turn up the heat with rhythmic flamenco music or chill with some classical guitar.



Recipes

RED WINE SANGRIA

- 1 bottle chilled dry red wine
- 1/4 cup brandy
- 2 cups club soda or ginger ale
- 1 peach, cubed
- 1 apple, cubed
- 3 oranges (two juiced, one halved and thinly sliced)
- 1/3 cup sugar
- Ice cubes

Cut fruit into small cubes. In large pitcher, combine orange juice, brandy and sugar; stir well. Add wine and fruit pieces. Chill overnight. Before serving, add club soda or ginger ale. Fill glasses with ice and serve sangria immediately.

Yield: 4

WHITE WINE SANGRIA

- 1 bottle chilled dry white wine (avoid oaky-flavored chardonnays)
- 1 cup seedless green grapes
- 1 kiwi, peeled and sliced
- 1/4 honeydew melon, seeded and cut in 1-inch cubes
- 1 lime, sliced and seeded
- 2 cups seedless watermelon, scooped into 1-inch balls
- 3 ounces Cointreau
- 3 ounces brandy
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 cup white cranberry juice

Combine fruits and sprinkle with sugar. Stir to combine. Add brandy and Cointreau; let stand an hour. Pour mixture into large pitcher; stir in white wine and cranberry juice. Serve immediately in glasses over ice.

Yield: 4

GOAT CHEESE AND HONEY CANAPÉ

(reprinted courtesy of *Tapas* by Penelope Casas)

- 3 ounces fresh goat cheese
- 12 crackers or Melba toast rounds
- 4 piquillo or pimiento peppers, sliced in 1/2-inch-wide strips
- 1 tablespoon honey

Spread goat cheese on crackers. Top with strips of piquillo or pimiento peppers and drizzle with honey. Serve on platter.

Yield: 12



CHORIZO-FILLED DATES IN BACON

- 1 chorizo sausage
- 12 pitted dried dates
- 3 slices bacon, cut crosswise into quarters
- Toothpicks

Cut off the ends of the chorizo and slice it crosswise into three equal pieces. Cut each of these lengthwise again to create 12 pieces. Insert each piece of chorizo into a date and close the date around it (if the chorizo pieces are too large, cut them to size). Wrap a piece of bacon around each date. Secure with a toothpick. Place wrapped dates in a skillet and sauté each side until bacon is golden. Drain on paper towels before serving.

Yield: 12

SHRIMP IN GARLIC SAUCE

(reprinted courtesy of *Tapas* by Penelope Casas)

- 1/2 pound small fresh shrimp, shelled
- Kosher or sea salt
- 6 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 3 cloves garlic, peeled and coarsely chopped
- 1 medium-hot dried red chili pepper, stem and seeds removed, cut in two pieces
- 1/2 teaspoon sweet paprika
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh parsley
- 1 loaf fresh crusty bread

Rinse and dry the shrimp; sprinkle with salt. Let stand at room temperature for 10 minutes. Meanwhile, heat oil in four ramekins or one shallow 8-inch earthenware casserole dish. Add garlic and chili pepper; when the garlic begins to turn golden, add the shrimp. Cook over medium-high heat, stirring, for two minutes. Sprinkle with paprika, parsley and salt. Serve immediately in the cooking dish, and provide bread for dunking in garlic sauce.

Yield: 4

FURTHER READING:

Check out *Tapas* by Penelope Casas (rereleased in February 2007 by Alfred A. Knopf). It features 50 new recipes for these classic Spanish appetizers.

