

# LLI Proudly Presents Tiny Foods #3

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Your parents may have taught you to never play with your food, but in this class, I encourage it. Well-crafted finger foods beat cheese and crackers or veggies and dip any day. In a world where bigger is better, I think tiny is terrific. I have taken big ideas and shrunk them down into bite-size portions that are fun and easy to make and best of all simply scrumptious to eat.

Food and cooking don't have to be stuffy or fussy. Throwing a party should be exactly that – a party! It should be easy and fun to put together, with a minimal amount of stress. I hope this class inspires you to get into the kitchen and get the party started, because there's not much that can compare to a get-together filled with great food, good music, perhaps some booze, and of course, good friends. Once your guests see a table covered with an array of plates and platters filled with all sorts of tiny food dishes, they will know they are in for an extra special treat. Enjoy!

*Chef Cal*

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## **CHEF CAL'S RECIPES FOR TINY FOODS**

### **MINI HONEY FRUIT COMPOTE CUPS**

This is a delicious dessert on a warm evening. Serve it in mini glass bowls. It shows off all the cool colors of the fruit. This should fill 12 small glass bowls, 4 oz. each.

2 cups diced fresh pineapple or canned pineapple tidbits  
1 cup diced honeydew and or cantaloupe melon  
1 cup diced mango  
2 tbsp. chopped fresh basil  
2 tbsp. lime juice, fresh please  
4 tbsp. honey  
1 tbsp. chopped fresh mint  
¼ cup finely chopped red bell pepper  
¼ tsp ginger  
1 tbsp. sesame seeds, optional, either white or black

Mix the lime juice, ginger and honey together. Then mix all the ingredients except sesame seeds in a large mixing bowl. Toss the fruit with the honey and juice mixture. Refrigerate a couple of hours or overnight. Remove from the refrigerator, mix and toss well. Divide mixture among the 12 small glass dishes, sprinkle with sesame seeds and serve.

### **MINITURE HAM BISCUITS WITH MASCARPONE & RED PEPPER JELLY**

1 box frozen Puff Pastry Sheets  
½ - ¾ pound sliced Virginia Country Ham, about 10 slices, broken up in small pieces  
1 container Mascarpone Cheese  
1 Jar Pepper Jelly  
Freshly grated Parmesan Cheese

Defrost the Puff Pastry, then using a 1½ to 2 inch cookie cutter, cut out rounds of the dough and place on a parchment lined baking sheet. Sprinkle with a little grated Parmesan cheese and bake in a pre-heated 375-degree oven for 15 to 18 minutes, or until golden brown on top. Remove from oven, transfer to a cooking rack and allow the biscuits to cool prior to splitting them in half.

Meanwhile, mix about 1/3 of the Mascarpone cheese with 1-2 tablespoons of the Pepper jelly, depending on how spicy you want it to be.

Spoon a little of the mascarpone pepper jelly on each half of the split biscuits; place a few slices of the country ham on each bottom half and then add the top half of the biscuit. If needed, skewer with a toothpick.

*Recipe adapted from Patrick O'Connell, Little Inn at Washington*

## **WHITE BEAN AND SAGE CROSTINI**

3 tbsp. olive oil  
1 small onion, finely chopped  
2 garlic cloves, finely chopped  
4 sage leaves, finely chopped  
1 15 ½ oz. can cannelloni beans, drained  
2 tbsp. water  
Salt and black pepper – to taste  
1 seeded ripe tomato, diced  
Extra olive oil for drizzling  
20 slices toasted crostini

Heat oil in a saucepan; add onion, garlic, and sage and cook over low heat until soft, about 5 minutes. Add beans, water, and salt and pepper to taste. Cook for about 10 minutes. Mash the beans with a wooden spoon to make a rough puree. Spread bean puree on crostini. Top each crostini with a little tomato dice and a drizzle of olive oil. Serve warm or at room temperature. (Note: Can make topping up to 3 days in advance. Cover and refrigerate, return to room temperature before serving. You can top the crostini up to 1 hour before serving.)

## **MINI ROQUEFORT-APPLE-WALNUT TARTS:**

3½ ounces Roquefort or Blue Cheese, at room temperature  
4 tps. heavy (whipping) cream  
½ cup finely chopped green apple, unpeeled  
¼ cup (about 1 ounce) finely chopped walnuts  
30 (two – 2.1 ounce packages) frozen pre-baked mini Phyllo dough shells  
30 walnut halves (for garnish)

In a food processor or using a large bowl with a fork, mix the cheese and cream until light and fluffy. Add the apple and chopped walnuts and mix until combined. (May cover and refrigerate for up to 1 day).

Divide the cheese mixture evenly among the Phyllo dough shells. If desired, top each with a walnut half. May cover and refrigerate for up to several hours; bring to room temperature prior to serving. Makes 30

### **HONEY FLAVORED RICOTTA CHEESE WITH DICED BEETS:**

Whole ricotta (size depends on how many you want to make)  
Honey – preferably a wildflower or clover honey  
1 – 2 cans sliced beets, diced

Mix the ricotta and the honey together. For the class I used a large size ricotta and several tablespoons of honey together. Rinse the beets under fresh water, drain and pat dry with paper towels. Now dice the beets into a small dice, place in a separate container and drizzle with a good quality of balsamic vinegar. Note: For this demonstration, I used a Chocolate Balsamic Vinegar. Refrigerate the cheese and beets until ready to serve. Spoon the cheese into small containers and then top with some of the diced beets. Enjoy

### **MINI BACON, LETTUCE AND TOMATO SANDWICHES:**

1 Package bacon, cooked  
5 to 7 nice oval plum tomatoes  
1 head lettuce  
Package mini rolls  
Mayonnaise or dressing of your choice  
Salt and Pepper

Cook bacon till crisp, drain on paper towels and set aside. Slice the tomatoes into rounds and place on a sheet pan lined with paper towels. This will absorb the excess water from the tomatoes. Just prior to using, sprinkle the tomato slices with a little salt and pepper. I usually use a pair of scissors to cut out pieces of lettuce the size of the rolls, putting them on a paper plate until I assemble the sandwiches.

To assemble, slice rolls in half. Place a teaspoon of the dressing on both the top and bottom half of the rolls, then place the lettuce on followed by a round of tomato and finally with a piece of bacon cut to fit the roll. Place the top of the roll on and secure everything with a toothpick.

## **CHERRY HERRING BROWNIES:**

I just made this recipe up. I used a box mix (dark fudge, family size Brownie Mix) and followed the directions and made the mix. I did add ¼ cup of the liquor “Cherry Herring” to the mix. I lined a Pyrex baking pan, 8 x 11, with parchment paper and then baked the brownies as directed; however I did add 6 minutes to the cooking time so they would not be too moist. When finished cooking, a toothpick inserted in the center came out clean, I removed them from the oven and put them on a cooling rack. After about ½ hour I removed them from the pan and continued to cool them on a wire rack till fully cooled. I then transferred them to a serving plate and wrapped in plastic wrap. This morning I sliced them into 1¼ x 1¼ - inch squares, using an electric knife and a clear plastic ruler. This should give you almost 40 squares. I placed them on a serving platter, wrapped them in plastic wrap and placed them in the refrigerator. Just prior to serving them, I placed a red cherry with stem onto each square. Note: I drained the jar of cherries and then added some Cherry Herring to marinate them in prior to placing the cherries on the brownies.

## **MINI BAGEL BITES WITH CHREAM CHEESE, TOMATO AND BASIL:**

1 bag of mini bagels, sliced  
1 container of soft cream cheese  
1 large container of basil leaves  
5 – 8 nice oval plum tomatoes, figure enough for the number of bagels

On the day of serving, smear the bagel bottoms with the cream cheese, top with a slice of tomato which has been sprinkled with salt and pepper, then top that with a nice fresh basil leaf. You can either spread more cream cheese on the top portion of the bagel or use a toothpick to hold the two sides together. Enjoy!

## **POTATO SALAD IN WONTON CUPS:**

One package of wonton skins usually found in the Asian food section of the produce dept.  
Your favorite salad, either potato, mac & cheese, tuna, crab, or even lobster  
Non-stick food spray  
Paprika for garnish

This was a fun thing to make. Baked wonton cups are a great party trick. Fill them with your favorite salads for a fun tiny food. Here is how I made them.

To make the cups preheat the oven to 350-degrees. Coat a nonstick mini muffin tin with cooking spray. Nestle 1 wonton wrapper into each muffin cup and lightly spray each wrapper. Bake for 6 to 8 minutes, or until the cup is crisp and light golden brown; however watch them

as they bake quickly. Cool and then store the cups in an air tight container until ready to use. I made the cups two days in advance. When ready to serve, just use a small ice cream scoop and scoop your salad into the cups. I found that if I left the cups in the mini muffin holder, it was easier to fill and serve them. Enjoy!

## **CAESAR SALAD IN SMALL CHINESE TAKE-OUT CONTAINERS:**

1 or 2 Packages Romaine Hearts from Wegmans (3 Romaines per package)  
Container freshly ground Parmesan Cheese  
1-2 bottles of Cardini's Original Caesar Salad Dressing  
1 large or 2 small red onions, sliced very thinly  
Salad croutons

Place one Romaine head on your cutting board, slice through the head from just above the root end through to the top, twice, turning the head  $\frac{1}{2}$  turn after the first slice. Now turn the head sideways and slice into  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch cuts, thus creating the cut greens. Slice almost to the root end, about 1 inch from the end. Keep the sliced greens in a large serving bowl, and when you have enough, stop. If not using right away, place the sliced greens into a large zip close plastic bag along with a piece of paper towel to absorb any moisture.

Meanwhile, peel and thinly slice the red onion. If you have a mandolin, then use that. Note: It is easier to slice the onion if you cut it in half from the root end to the top, lay flat and then slice. Take the sliced onion and soak in a bowl of cold water for 15 to 30 minutes, changing the water once. This will get rid of the bitter taste of the onion. If not using right away, store in a zip plastic bag in the refrigerator.

To assemble, place the greens in a very large serving bowl and toss to separate the greens. Add the sliced onion, as much as you think you want, and then toss the salad again. Now start adding the dressing, just enough to coat the greens when tossed but not so much that the greens are soaked in dressing. Start with one bottle, and if needed, add some from the second bottle. If you cannot find Cardini's dressing then use Ken's Caesar, the regular, not the lite.

Once the salad is dressed, add some of the parmesan cheese and croutons and toss again. Now here's the fun part, serve the salad in tiny red Chinese take-out containers. This is a neat way to serve salad when entertaining a large group. You can use either tiny/small containers, or larger containers, depending on the occasion and the presentation you want to make. Once the containers are filled, stack them up on a serving tray with a bowl of forks next to it.

## **LEMON TARTS:**

Store bought tart shells or prebaked phyllo shells  
Lemon curd filling, either store bought or home made  
Fruit for topping

Fill the little tart shells with some of the lemon curd filling. Top with a few blueberries, or a fresh raspberry, or a slice of strawberry, or a mandarin orange slice or a fresh slice of kiwi. That's all there is to it.

## **Mini Italian Sausage Bundles:**

1 Pound Italian Sausage	1 bunch green onions, diced
1 tbsp. olive oil	1 Clove garlic, small, minced
2/3 Cup Parmesan cheese, grated	2 packages frozen spinach, thawed
15 ounces Ricotta Cheese	¼ tsp. oregano
¼ tsp. nutmeg, fresh, grated	Salt & Pepper to taste
1 package Won-Ton wrappers	1 Jar Basil Tomato Sauce

Take sausage out of casings and cook with onion in oil over medium heat until browned. Add garlic and cook one minute longer. Let cool, then combine rest of ingredients except won ton wrappers and sauce. Mix in food processor till completely combined into a fine dice like consistency. Using mini muffin pans spray them with non-stick spray and place a Won-ton wrapper in each cup, pressing it down to fill the cup. Do only a few at a time. Fill each cup with a tablespoon of the sausage mixture. Fold over the Won-ton tops to seal the bundle. When you have filled the tray, spray all the tops with the butter flavored oil spray. Bake in a 350-degree oven for approximately 18 to 24 minutes or until the tops of the mini bundles are browned. Remove and cool in pan a few minutes, then remove and cool completely on a wire rack. To serve, place some of the Sausage & Basil tomato Sauce in a small bowl and serve with the mini bundles. This recipe makes approximately 50 bundles.

Note: Bundles can be made and then frozen ahead of time and then just reheated in oven. Place cooked and cooled bundles on a cookie sheet and freeze. Once frozen, place them into a freezer bag and seal. Thaw in refrigerator day prior to day of desired consumption. Place on lightly oiled cookie sheet and reheat. You can substitute chicken, artichoke hearts or just chopped veggies for the sausage, if desired.

## **THAI STIR-FRY SHRIMP IN ENDIVE CUPS**

½ pound medium – medium/large shrimp, raw, shelled and deveined  
2 whole small green onions, minced – white and green  
2 tbsp. finely minced ginger  
4 large heads Belgian endive – leaves separated to form cups  
2 tbsp. flavorless cooking oil

### **Wok Sauce:**

2 tbsp. fresh cilantro springs  
2 tbsp. oyster sauce  
2 tbsp. dry sherry  
1 tbsp. dark sesame oil  
2 tsp. hot sauce or Asian Chile Sauce  
½ tsp. sugar  
½ tsp. cornstarch

Cut the shrimp crosswise into rounds, about three or four per shrimp depending on size, refrigerate until needed, covered. Combine the green onions and the ginger and refrigerate. Cut ends of endive, separate leaves and refrigerate. In a small jar, add all the sauce ingredients, shake well and refrigerate.

At serving time, place a wok or sauté pan over high heat until hot. Add the cooking oil and roll it around the sides of the wok. When the oil just begins to smoke, add the shrimp. Stir-fry the shrimp. As soon as the shrimp turn white (about 45 seconds), add the green onions and ginger. Shake the sauce several times then add it to the stir-fry. Stir and toss until the sauce glazes the shrimp and they have all turned pink in color. Slide the stir-fry onto a serving platter and surround the shrimp with the endive cups and serve at once.

## **SWEET RED BELL PEPPER SOUP WITH SAMBUCA CREAM**

½ cup olive oil	1 cup chopped onion
1 tbsp. Dried Fennel Seed	¼ tsp dried thyme
½ Bay leaf, crushed	½ tsp minced garlic
1tbsp. chopped fresh basil	2tbsp.minced jalapeno pepper
¼ cup all- purpose flour	5 cups chicken stock
½ cup peeled, seeded tomatoes	1 tsp tomato paste
6 large Red Peppers cut into chunks	½ to 1 cup heavy cream



Pinch sugar  
Generous splash of Sambuca

Salt & Pepper to taste  
Sambuca Cream – recipe follows

In a 4-qt heavy bottomed saucepan, heat the ½ cup oil over medium heat, add the onion, fennel seed, thyme, bay leaf, garlic, basil and jalapeno pepper. Reduce heat to low and cook until the onion is translucent, about 10 minutes. Add the flour and cook, stirring constantly, for 10 minutes. In a separate pot, bring the chicken stock to a boil. Carefully pour the stock over the vegetables, stirring to incorporate. Add the tomato and tomato paste. Meanwhile, place a large skillet lightly coated with olive oil over high heat. Sauté the bell pepper chunks until the skin is blistered and lightly charred. Add the peppers to the soup and stir. Stir occasionally to make sure nothing sticks to the bottom of the pot, for 20 to 25 minutes. Remove the soup from the heat and puree in small batches in either a blender or food processor fitted with a steel blade. Strain the soup and return it to the saucepan, bringing to a simmer. Add ½ cup or more of cream. Add the Sambuca, salt and pepper just prior to serving. If the soup is too spicy, add more cream.

To serve, place soup in mini bowls or in shot glasses with a dollop of Sambuca Cream. The soup can be made up to 2 days in advance and slowly reheated. Don't add the Sambuca until you are ready to serve.

**Sambuca Cream:**

1 cup heavy cream	½ tsp fresh lemon juice
¼ tsp grated lemon zest	3 tbsp. Sambuca
Pinch of sugar	

In the bowl of an electric mixer, whip the cream until soft peaks form. Add the lemon juice and zest, Sambuca and sugar. Continue whipping until the cream is almost stiff. Keep refrigerated until serving time.

## **CHEF'S SHREDDED BUFFALO CHICKEN SLIDERS**

**Ingredients:**

4 boneless/skinless chicken breasts  
2/3 cup Frank's or other Hot Sauce  
1 cup butter, melted  
16 slider rolls, or 25 mini slider rolls  
Ranch and/or Blue Cheese Dressing

Wash and pat dry chicken. Place chicken into crock pot that has been sprayed with non-stick cooking spray.

Melt the butter and mix with the hot sauce. Whisk to incorporate; pour this sauce over the chicken.

Cover the crock pot and cook for 8 hours on a low setting or 4 hours on a high setting.

When done cooking, turn off the crock pot and remove the chicken breasts. Shred each with two forks, and then return the shredded chicken to the crock pot. Stir everything together to ensure that all the shredded chicken is covered in sauce. When ready to serve, spoon some of the shredded chicken on to a mini or slider roll add some dressing, and serve.

## **SIMPLE MINI CRÈME BRULEE**

Crème Brulee is another classic dessert, so when you serve it in the mini ceramic ramekins, it makes it even more special. You will need 12 of the 3 oz. ramekins to make this recipe. Make sure the ramekins are suitable for baking.

Preheat oven to 325-degrees.

Warm together:

1 cup heavy cream  
1 cup half and half  
2 tbsp. sugar  
1 tsp vanilla

Whisk together:

3 egg yolks  
1 whole egg  
¼ cup sugar  
pinch of salt

Some cinnamon sugar or nutmeg is needed for topping or about a cup of fresh sliced strawberries or raspberries, both are optional.

Warm cream, half and half, sugar and vanilla in a saucepan over medium heat just until steam rises. DO NOT BOIL.

In a mixing bowl, whisk together the yolks, the whole egg, ¼ cup of the sugar and a pinch of salt. Combine both mixtures and divide among the 12 ramekins. Arrange the ramekins in a large baking dish filled with a ¼ inch of hot water. Carefully transfer the baking dish to the oven. Bake custards 20-30 minutes or until just set. The centers will jiggle slightly with a touch of the finger. Do not overcook.

Remove ramekins from dish and let cool. Wrap with plastic wrap. Chill until completely cold, or overnight. Remove any moisture from the surface with a paper towel and sprinkle with the cinnamon sugar or nutmeg before serving or you can add some fresh fruit to the top and serve.

## **CHOCOLATE FANTASY**

Purchase a devil's food chocolate cake or bake a chocolate cake from any cake mix in a 9 x 13 pan. You will not use all the 9 x 13 cake.

1 can sweetened condensed milk  
1 jar of caramel Sundae sauce  
1 bag of toffee chips or pieces  
¼ cup pecans, finely chopped – optional  
1 8 oz. container of whipped topping  
Maraschino cherries for garnish  
You will need 12 small glass bowls, about 4 oz. each.

In a mixing bowl, mix together the sweetened condensed milk with the caramel sauce, set aside.

Cut the cake into 2" squares, about 1" thick, just large enough to fit into the bottom of the 12 small glass dishes.

Poke four holes with a handle of a wooden spoon into the cake. Pour about two tablespoons of the caramel sauce over the cake, letting it go down over the sides and into the holes. Sprinkle some of the toffee chips on top and some pecan pieces, if you are using. Follow this with a generous helping of the whipped topping and then a few more of the toffee pieces and finally, a cherry for garnish.

## **MINI BAKED MAC AND CHEESE BITES**

1 pound small elbow pasta	3 tbsp. melted butter
1 small onion, minced	2 cloves garlic, minced
¼ cup all-purpose flour	2½ cups whole milk
¼ tsp. cayenne pepper	Salt and freshly ground black pepper
2 cups grated white cheddar	2 cups grated yellow cheddar

Preheat the oven to 375-degrees. Grease two mini-muffin pans with nonstick cooking spray. Bring a large pot of water to the boil. Add the elbow pasta and cook according to the package instructions, about 7 – 9 minutes. Drain.

In a large pot, melt the butter over medium heat. Add the onion and sauté until translucent, 4 to 5 minutes. Add the garlic and cook until fragrant, 1 additional minute. Sprinkle the flour into the pot and stir to combine. Cook for 2 minutes, stirring constantly. Add the milk and whisk well to combine. Bring the mixture to a simmer over medium-low heat, stirring occasionally.

Season the sauce with the cayenne pepper, salt and black pepper. Remove the pot from the heat and stir in the white cheddar and 1½ cups of the yellow cheddar. Stir until the mixture is melted.

Now stir in the cooked pasta and mix well until it is evenly coated with the sauce. Scoop 1½ to 2 tablespoons of the mac-and-cheese mixture into each cavity of the prepared pans. Sprinkle a few pieces of the yellow cheddar on top of each mac-and-cheese bite and then transfer the pans to the oven. Bake until the cheese is melted and the bites become golden, 17 to 20 minutes. Let the bites cool for 15 minutes before unmolding and serving. Serve hot or at room temperature. Store any leftovers in an airtight container in the refrigerator.

## **JALAPENO CHEDDAR CORN STICKS**

2/3 cup yellow corn meal  
¼ cup all-purpose flour  
¾ tsp. baking powder  
½ tsp. granulated sugar  
1/8 tsp. baking soda  
¼ tsp. salt  
1 egg, lightly beaten  
½ cup whole milk  
¼ cup plus 1 tbsp. honey, plus extra for drizzling  
2 tbsp. unsalted butter, melted  
2 large Jalapenos, seeded and diced  
½ cup grated mild cheddar cheese

Preheat the oven to 375-degrees. Coat the inside of a mini corn stick pan or a mini muffin tin with cooking spray.

In a large bowl, combine cornmeal, flour, baking powder, sugar, baking soda, and salt. In another large bowl, whisk together egg, milk, honey and butter. Add the dry mixture to the wet mixture, stirring until well combined and no lumps remain. Gently fold jalapenos and cheese into the batter. Fill each mini corn or muffin mold about two-thirds full.

Bake for 7 to 9 minutes if using a mini corn stick tin or 20 to 25 minutes if using a mini muffin tin, until golden brown. Pop corn cakes out of pan and drizzle with extra honey and serve warm.

## MINI SHEPHERD'S PIES

Pies:

2 sheets store-bought frozen puff pastry, thawed

About 1½ cups mashed potato - store-bought or homemade

Savory filling:

3 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil, divided

½ pound ground lamb or ground beef

2 tbsp. minced tarragon

2 tbsp. thinly sliced chives

1 tbsp. cumin

½ tbsp. garlic powder

Salt and pepper, to taste

1 shallot, diced

1 carrot, peeled and diced

1 ear of corn, kernels removed from cob, about ½ cup total, or equal amount of can corn

½ cup frozen peas, thawed

Pre-heat the oven to 425-degrees; using a 2-inch circle cutter, punch 24 rounds out of puff pastry sheets. Coat a mini muffin tin with nonstick cooking spray and gently press the rounds into the molds. Prick the bottoms of the puff pastry cups with a fork to prevent them from rising. Freeze until ready to use. Prepare mashed potatoes.

Warm 1 tbsp. of the oil in a skillet over medium-high heat, add lamb and or beef and cook until browned, about 3 minutes. Stir in tarragon, chives, cumin and garlic powder. Season with salt and pepper and remove from heat. Pour mixture into a medium bowl. Place skillet back over heat and add remaining oil. Sauté shallots and carrots for 2 minutes; add corn and continue to sauté for 5 minutes. Return meat mixture to pan and stir together. Fold in peas and season with salt and pepper.

Scoop a small amount of the filling into each puff pastry cup. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes, or until pastry shells are golden brown. Let cool slightly before removing pies from muffin tins. Scoop mashed potatoes into a piping bag fitted with a star tip and pipe a dollop onto the top of each little pie. Season with pepper and serve.