

Reprinted with permission from the cookbook *In A Snap!* - by Tammy Algood

Red Pepper Cheese Dip

This creamy dip can be pulled together at the last minute and served with tortilla, corn, or pita chips.

Yield: 1 1/2 cups

- 1 (8-ounce) package cream cheese
- 1 tablespoon milk or half-and-half
- 1/2 cup canned, chopped, roasted sweet red bell peppers
- 1/2 cup crumbled Feta cheese

Place the cream cheese in a glass bowl and microwave on high power for 20 seconds to soften. Add the milk, bell peppers, and Feta cheese. Microwave for 20 to 30 seconds longer and stir to blend. Serve immediately.

STORAGE NOTE: Store leftovers in the refrigerator and use within 5 days. Do not freeze.

Elvis's Peanut Butter and Banana Sandwiches

If you've never been to Graceland, it needs to go on your bucket list. There you will discover that the combination of peanut butter and bananas was the King's favorite. While he liked them fried, I prefer just the freshest white bread you've got and cut in half on the diagonal.

Yield: 2 sandwiches

- 4 slices white bread
- 1/2 cup smooth peanut butter
- 1 banana, peeled and thickly sliced
- Potato chips

Place 2 bread slices on each serving plate. Spread 1 slice on each plate with half of the peanut butter. Gently push half of the banana slices into the peanut butter. Top with the remaining bread slices, cut on the diagonal, and serve with potato chips.

Brunch Butters

There are endless possibilities here, so let your imagination fly! All are right at home served on Old South Buttermilk Biscuits (page 276).

Yield: 1/2 to 3/4 cup

- 1/2 cup unsalted butter, softened

Flavor Options:

For Fruit Butter, add 3 tablespoons fruit jam or jelly.

For Nut Butter, add $\frac{1}{4}$ cup finely chopped toasted walnuts or pecans.

For Syrup Butter, add 3 tablespoons sorghum syrup, honey, or maple syrup.

For Citrus Butter, add 2 teaspoons lemon, lime, or orange juice.

For Citrus-Chile Butter, add 1 tablespoon lime juice, 1 teaspoon lemon juice, 1 teaspoon minced jalapeño peppers, and $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon chopped fresh thyme.

For Herb Butter, add 3 teaspoons mixed chopped fresh herbs (chives, parsley, thyme, oregano, or basil in any combination).

For Lemon Herb Butter, make Herb Butter and add 2 teaspoons lemon juice.

For Tarragon Butter, add 2 tablespoons chopped fresh tarragon, 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley, 1 teaspoon chopped minced chives, 1 minced garlic clove, and $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon white pepper.

For Blue Cheese and Pine Nut Butter, add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup crumbled blue cheese, 2 tablespoons pine nuts, and $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon white pepper.

Place the butter in a small mixing bowl and combine with the flavor option ingredients of your choice. Serve immediately, or cover and chill for later use.

STORAGE NOTE: All flavors of butters can be refrigerated and used within 1 week. Do not freeze.

Time-Saving Tip from Tammy

How do you know if butter has come to room temperature when a recipe calls for that? It's ready when the weight of a dinner knife glides through the unwrapped butter with no resistance.

Watermelon Spritzer

Carbonated water turns any fruit juice mixture into a refreshing spritzer. Keep it on hand and in the fridge for quick summer sippers. You can use already cubed fruit that is on sale in the produce department to make this in a snap!

Yield: 6 servings

4 cups cubed seedless watermelon

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup frozen limeade concentrate

4 cups carbonated water

Lime slices for garnish, if desired

Place the watermelon and limeade in a blender. Cover and process until smooth. Transfer to a serving pitcher and add the carbonated water. Garnish and serve immediately.

NOTE: If you prefer a pulp-free drink, process the watermelon and strain in a fine wire mesh sieve. Then add the limeade and stir. Add the carbonated water and serve.

Ranch Beans

These quick beans are great served with hamburgers or hot dogs from the grill, and you don't have to miss the party getting them ready.

Yield: 6 servings

1 (16-ounce) can baked beans
1 (15.5-ounce) can red kidney beans, drained
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup finely chopped green bell pepper
2 tablespoons ketchup
2 tablespoons sorghum or maple syrup
1 tablespoon light brown sugar
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon dried onions

Place the baked beans, kidney beans, bell pepper, ketchup, sorghum, sugar, mustard, and onions in a glass bowl. Mix well and cover with waxed paper. Microwave on high power for 5 minutes, stirring halfway through. Serve warm.

STORAGE NOTE: Leftovers should be refrigerated and used within 4 days. They can also be frozen but should be used within 1 month.

Mustard-Smeared Fish Fillets

I have been using mustard or mayonnaise to glaze and moisten fish for years. In this case, I like the combination of the two. Use tilapia, catfish, halibut, perch, or orange roughy fillets.

Yield: 4 servings

4 (6-ounce) fish fillets
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup mayonnaise
3 tablespoons yellow mustard
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1 tablespoon horseradish
Cracked black pepper

Preheat the broiler on high, and lightly grease a broiler pan with cooking spray. Arrange the fish with the flat side up on the rack, and broil 6 inches from the heat source for 2 minutes. Meanwhile, in a small mixing bowl, combine the mayonnaise, mustard, juice, and horseradish.

Carefully turn the fish and spoon the sauce mixture evenly on the top. Broil for 4 minutes longer or until the fish flakes easily with a fork. Crack black pepper to taste over the top, and serve immediately.

STORAGE NOTE: Leftovers should be refrigerated and used within 2 days. Do not freeze.

Upside-Down Apple Pie

Warm pie filling oozes over vanilla ice cream while covered in a cookie "crust" and makes this dessert a keeper.

Yield: 4 servings

1 (15-ounce) can apple pie filling
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon pure vanilla extract
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon ground cinnamon
 $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon ground nutmeg
6 shortbread cookies

1 pint vanilla ice cream

In a small saucepan over medium heat, combine the pie filling, extract, cinnamon, and nutmeg. Cook for 4 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Meanwhile, place the shortbread cookies in a heavy-duty zip-top bag and crush with a rolling pin. Scoop ice cream into individual bowls, and generously top with the warm apple mixture. Sprinkle the cookie crumbs on top, and serve immediately.

STORAGE NOTE: Leftover pie filling can be refrigerated and used within 5 days. Gently reheat in the microwave in 20-second intervals. Do not freeze.

Chocolate Bacon

I love a nice mixture of sweet and salty. This recipe is always a hit on the brunch bar, but it can also be served as a dessert or as a great snack. It doesn't take long to prepare, but allowing enough time for the chocolate to set is the key to success.

Yield: 6 servings

6 slices thick bacon

$\frac{1}{2}$ pound chocolate candy coating

Chopped walnuts for garnish

Sea salt for garnish

Place 2 paper towels on a plate and arrange the bacon on top so it is not overlapping. Cover with another paper towel, and microwave on high power for 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ minutes. Remove from the microwave, and set the bacon aside on a baking sheet covered with waxed paper.

Place the candy coating in a glass bowl and cover with waxed paper. Melt on low power (or the defrost setting) for 1 minute. Stir to make sure it is evenly melted. Take a spoon, and doing one strip at a time, evenly cover the bacon slices with the candy coating. Go back with any remaining candy coating and drizzle the tops. Immediately sprinkle half of the tops with the walnuts and the other half with sea salt.

Place the sheet in the refrigerator for 15 minutes to set the chocolate. Serve cold or at room temperature.

STORAGE NOTE: Leftovers should be stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator. Use within 3 days. Do not freeze.