

Best Deviled Eggs Ever

I started serving these at catering events when I would put out a large spread of finger foods. Deviled eggs are not something that people often make for themselves although most people have fond memories of an elder relative making them. After so many wonderful compliments and exclamations’ “These are the best deviled eggs I have ever had!” I changed the name to this.

1 dozen large eggs
½ rib celery- minced extremely fine
½ small red onion-minced extremely fine
½ cup fresh herbs, assorted (dill,parsley,cilantro,thyme)-minced extremely fine
2 Tblspn mayo
1 teaspn Dijon mustard
1 Tblspn olive oil
2 shakes Cholula hot sauce
Pinch ground red chili flakes
Pinch salt & pepper

Boil the eggs until hard. I put all the eggs into a small pot, cover with tap water, bring to a low simmer and start my cooking timer for about 8 minutes. Every egg, pot, stove, flame and person is a little different so this method is not fool proof. The best thing to do is add one extra egg than what you need and once the eggs are where you think they are done, take one out and cut it in half. If the yolks are cooked, immediately drain the water and pour the eggs into a large bowl with cold water and ice. Once the eggs have cooled in the water remove each egg, whack it on the counter to break the shell and put it back into the cold water. Do this to all the eggs, then begin peeling.

Using a sharp knife cut each egg in half the long ways. Wipe your knife on a moist towel in-between each egg so that you don’t drag yellow yolk onto the clean whites. Put all the yolks into a small bowl and lay all the whites on a flat baking tray or dish. Using a strainer, push all the yolks through into a medium sized bowl. Begin adding all the other ingredients. Stir with a wooden spoon.

Feel free to make adjustments as you add things, even reducing the spicy items if you wish. These are not meant to be spicy, just really flavorful. If it seems too dry add a bit more olive oil. Once you have a smooth paste, spoon into the corner of a gallon size Ziplocs bag. Twist the bag to compress the filling into a tight corner. Using scissors, cut about ½ an inch off the plastic bag. Then squeeze filling into each egg white, making a little mound above the rim. Garnish with paprika and a sprig of herb, usually dill or parsley. Will keep chilled up to 24 hours.

Finger Sandwiches

Prosciutto-Salted Butter-Pickles

Cucumber-Gravlox-Cream Cheese

Olive Tapenade-Roasted Red Bell Pepper-Dill

Fresh Mozzarella-Ripe Tomato-Basil-Olive Oil

Smoked Ham-Avocado-Dijonaise

Blue Cheese Spread-Grapes-Pecans

Brie-Apples-Honey-Walnuts

These are just a few of the millions of combinations of finger sandwiches out there. The success of these is the quality of the ingredients. Because you make them mostly open face, you can see the items clearly. Also because there are so few ingredients to each one, they all stand out.

Typically you would begin by spreading the softest item on the bread, layering other items that lay flat then finishing with the prettiest item that is not as flat.

Keep well covered with plastic wrap so they don't dry out. Keep in mind items that are best served room temp. Plan your production accordingly.

Most can be made a few hours before you need them.

Chocolate Amaretto Truffles

4 cups (24 oz) Dark bitter or semi sweet chocolate- NOT CHIPS!
2 cups heavy whipping cream
¼ cup Amaretto liqueur

Chop the chocolate bars into pieces and put into a medium mixing bowl.
Heat the cream until simmering. Pour the hot cream over the chocolate pieces. Shake the bowl to settle the cream and begin stirring with a whisk. Whisk slowly until the heat of the cream has melted all of the chocolate and it is a smooth shiny glaze.

Pour the ganache into a container and refrigerate till hard (many hours!)

Using a melon baller or a spoon scoop out some hard ganache and roll it in your palm until it forms a ball.

Place rolled ganache onto a clean paper lined cookie sheet. Place in refrigerator until chilled thoroughly.

Dipping truffles

Melt 2 ½ cups of dark chocolate over a double boiler until it reaches 115 F. Once fully melted remove bowl from heat and begin stirring the chocolate. Using a thermometer stir the chocolate until the temperature drops just below 90F.

Drop one cold truffle into the tempered chocolate at a time. Fish it out with a fork, shake off excess chocolate and place on a new clean cookie sheet lined with parchment paper. Repeat process until all truffles are dipped.

Sprinkle truffles with toasted crushed almonds while still wet and place in a cool part of house or in the fridge until chocolate is fully hardened.

Optional (easy) finishing technique

Cocoa powder
Ground or chopped nuts-toasted
Graham cracker crumbs (or any dry cookie)
Ground chocolate chips
Toasted coconut

Lay toppings on a cookie sheet. Roll the truffles onto the tray when you are done rolling them in your palm.

Shake the tray to coat the truffles on all sides

Using clean cool hands transfer the truffles to a container.

Keep refrigerated for weeks, frozen for months

Gravlax

- 1 teaspoon whole white peppercorns
- 1 teaspoon whole black peppercorns
- 1 teaspoon coriander seeds
- 2 tablespoons sea salt
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- 1 1-pound salmon fillet, skin on
- 1 cup chopped fresh dill, divided

Sauce

- 2 tablespoons honey mustard
- 1 tablespoon distilled white vinegar
- 3 tablespoons grapeseed oil or canola oil
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh dill
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- Mini pumpernickel or brioche toasts
- Dill sprigs

For gravlax:

Heat all peppercorns and coriander seeds in small skillet over medium-high heat until spices are fragrant and seeds jump slightly, shaking skillet frequently, about 2 minutes. Crush spices in mortar with pestle or transfer to work surface, cover with kitchen towel (not terry cloth), and crush with mallet or bottom of heavy pan. Transfer spices to small bowl. Mix in salt and sugar.

Using small sharp knife, poke 12 small holes through skin of salmon. Rub 1/3 of spice mixture over skin. Sprinkle 1/3 cup chopped dill in bottom of 7x7x2-inch or 8x8x2-inch glass baking dish. Place salmon, skin side down, atop dill. Rub remaining spice mixture into top of salmon. Press 2/3 cup chopped dill onto salmon. Cover with plastic wrap, pressing directly onto fish. Place plate or another pan atop plastic. Place heavy cans on plate. Refrigerate 2 to 3 days.

For sauce:

Whisk mustard and vinegar in small bowl to blend. Gradually whisk in oil. Stir in chopped dill and salt. Season with ground black pepper. (Sauce can be made 3 days ahead. Cover and chill.)

Scrape spices and dill off both sides of salmon (some spice mixture will remain). Using knife with long thin blade, thinly slice salmon diagonally at 45-degree angle from top of fillet toward skin. Arrange toasts on platter; top with salmon slices, sauce, and dill sprigs.