

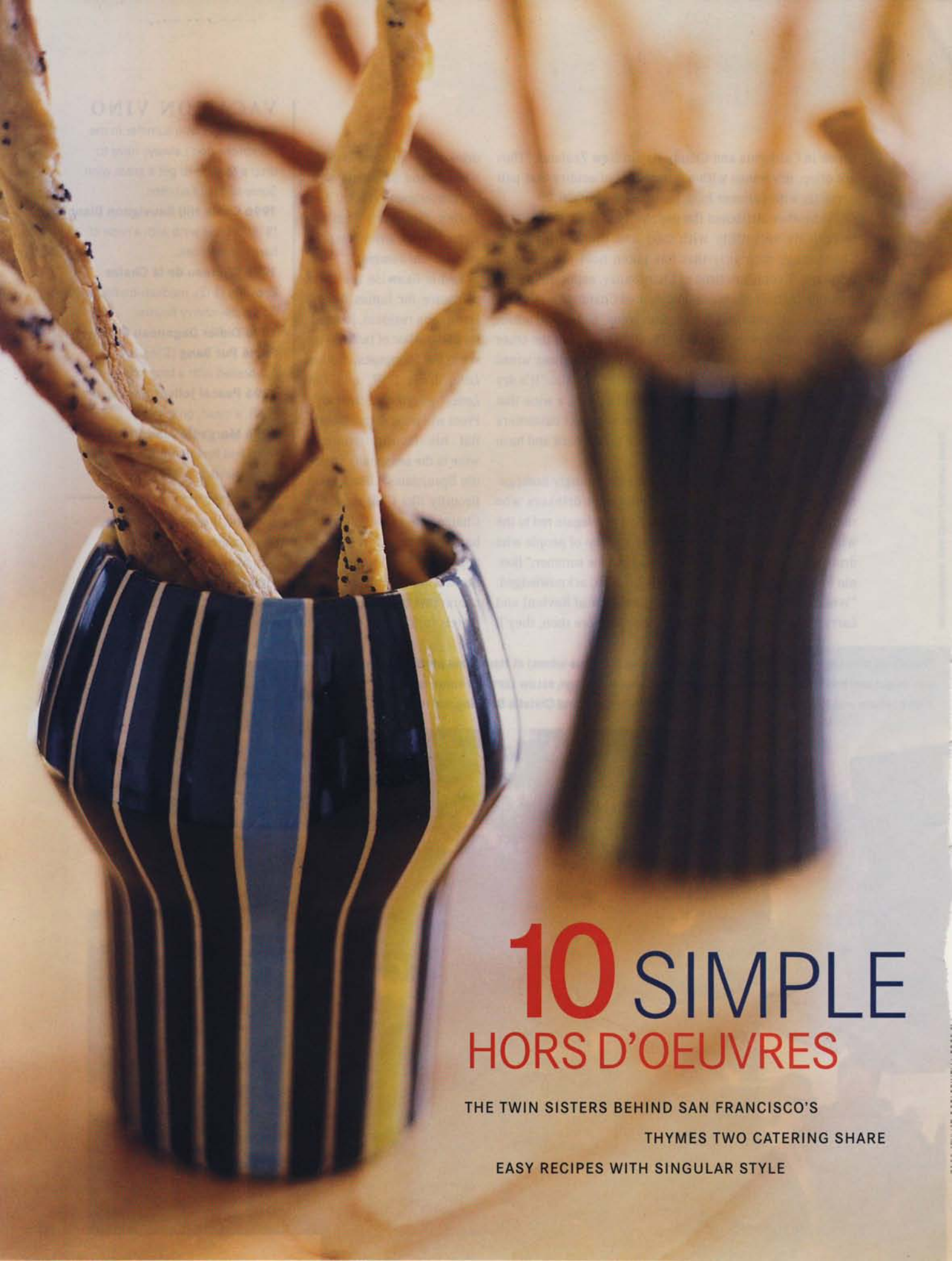
Photographs by Simon Watson



FOOD & WINE

June 1998

summer parties



10 SIMPLE HORS D'OEUVRES

THE TWIN SISTERS BEHIND SAN FRANCISCO'S

THYMES TWO CATERING SHARE

EASY RECIPES WITH SINGULAR STYLE



The best caterers know that no two parties should be exactly alike. Fortunately for Mary Barber and Sara Corpening, the identical twins who are partners behind Thymes Two Catering in San Francisco's Pacific Heights, they have each other to count on for inspiration. The 28-year-old sisters have been working with food side-by-side since they were girls in High Point, North Carolina, and their mother would sit them down on the kitchen floor to separate eggs. Now they cook for a fast-moving, close-knit crowd in which the same 10 couples roam from party to party, and their challenge is to make each event unique.

Having trained together at cooking schools and restaurant kitchens in New York and California, the twins now have piles of recipes to draw on and a few unusual strategies. One is to organize parties around specific drinks—margaritas, say, or martinis. Asked to plan a cocktail party at the home of designers Vasilios Kiniris and Wendy Nishimura-Kiniris (who sell everything from dinnerware to decorative lighting at their Fillmore Street shop, Zinc Details), the sisters chose Pineapple Cosmopolitans as their jumping-off point. This drink makes a great match for most hors d'oeuvres, which tend to be salty or spicy. Its slightly sweet fruitiness cuts the heat in the Paprika Chips and the Goat Cheese Quesadillas and mutes the saltiness in the Blue Cheese Straws and the Oniony Cheese Puffs. And, of course, the drink is delicious on its own. —Jane Sigal



Paprika Chips

MAKES ABOUT 5 DOZEN

These spiced pita chips are good with all kinds of dips.

- ½ teaspoon hot or sweet paprika
- ½ teaspoon ground fennel seeds
- ½ teaspoon onion powder
- ¼ teaspoon cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 4 pocket pitas, each split into 2 rounds
- ¼ cup vegetable oil

Preheat the oven to 350°. In a small bowl, combine the paprika, fennel seeds, onion powder, cinnamon and salt. Brush the rough sides of the pita rounds with the oil and sprinkle with the spice mixture. Stack the rounds and cut them into 8 wedges. Unstack and arrange the wedges on 2 large rimmed baking sheets, spiced side up, and bake on the upper and middle racks of the oven for about 9 minutes, or until crisp and golden. Switch the baking sheets halfway through for even toasting.

MAKE AHEAD The chips can be stored in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 2 days.

Roasted Pepper, Almond and Cilantro Pesto

The pesto dip goes well with Paprika Chips or simple baguette toasts.

MAKES ABOUT 2 CUPS

One 12-ounce jar roasted red peppers, drained


- ½ cup cilantro leaves
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 1 tablespoon sherry vinegar
- 2 teaspoons fresh lemon juice
- 1½ teaspoons minced garlic
- 1¼ teaspoons kosher salt

RECIPES

- 1 Paprika Chips
- 2 Roasted Pepper, Almond and Cilantro Pesto
- 3 Shrimp with Rice Vinegar Dipping Sauce
- 4 Roast Beef Grissini with Remoulade
- 5 Crab and Pea Salad in Celery Ribs
- 6 Blue Cheese Straws
- 7 Lamb Skewers with Grainy Mustard Dipping Sauce
- 8 Oniony Cheese Puffs
- 9 Raita with Crispy Radishes
- 10 Goat Cheese Quesadillas



TOP LEFT: Drinks and conversation. ABOVE LEFT: Roasted Pepper, Almond and Cilantro Pesto served with slices of lime and Paprika Chips. ABOVE RIGHT: Sleek glass vases from Vasilios Kiniris and Wendy Nishimura-Kiniris's shop, Zinc Details.



Pineapple Cosmopolitans

8 SERVINGS

These Cosmopolitans are pretty and pink, with a hit of fresh pineapple.

- 2 cups (1 pound) coarsely chopped ripe pineapple
- 2 cups vodka
- 1 cup cranberry juice
- 1 tablespoon fresh lime juice
- 3 cups crushed ice

Lime slices, for garnish

1. In a large jar, combine the pineapple and vodka. Cover and let stand at room temperature until the vodka is well flavored with pineapple, about 3 days.
2. Strain the vodka through a fine sieve into a pitcher. Add the cranberry and lime juices and the crushed ice and stir well. Strain into chilled martini glasses and serve garnished with lime slices.



- ½ teaspoon hot or sweet paprika
- ½ teaspoon chili powder
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 cup coarsely ground blanched almonds (4 ounces)

In a food processor or blender, combine the peppers with the cilantro, tomato paste, vinegar, lemon juice, garlic, salt, paprika, chili powder and cayenne and pulse until the peppers and cilantro are finely chopped. Scrape down the side of the bowl and process until smooth. Add the almonds and pulse until combined. Transfer the pesto to a bowl and serve. **MAKE AHEAD** The pesto can be refrigerated for up to 2 days.

Shrimp with Rice Vinegar Dipping Sauce

MAKES 2 DOZEN

To boost the shrimp flavor, shell and devein the shrimp after boiling them.

- ½ cup rice vinegar
- ½ cup water

One 4-inch piece of lemongrass, inner white bulb only, cut into strips

One 1-inch piece of fresh ginger, peeled and cut into matchsticks

- 1 tablespoon fresh lime juice
- 1 teaspoon finely grated lime zest
- ¼ teaspoon crushed red pepper

Pinch of kosher salt

Pinch of sugar

- 24 medium shrimp (about ¾ pound), shelled but with tails left intact, then deveined

1. In a small nonreactive saucepan, combine all of the ingredients except the shrimp and bring to a boil. Transfer to a bowl and let cool, then refrigerate until chilled or for up to 1 day.

2. Prepare an ice water bath. Cook the shrimp in a medium saucepan of boiling salted water, stirring occasionally, until pink, about 2 minutes. Drain the shrimp and plunge into the ice bath; drain again and pat dry. Transfer the shrimp to a platter and serve with the dipping sauce.



Roast Beef Grissini with Remoulade

MAKES 2 DOZEN

Roast beef goes well with the strong flavors of the arugula and the remoulade.

REMOULADE SAUCE

- ½ cup mayonnaise
- 1 hard-cooked egg, finely chopped
- 2 tablespoons minced gherkins
- 1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1 tablespoon drained finely chopped capers
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped flat-leaf parsley
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped dill
- 2 teaspoons finely chopped chives
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic

Freshly ground pepper

GRISSINI

- 2 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- ½ pound thinly sliced rare roast beef, cut into twenty-four 6-by-1½-inch strips

Salt and freshly ground pepper

- 24 arugula leaves, stemmed
- 8 to 10 grissini (about ½ inch thick) or breadsticks, broken into 4-inch lengths

1. **MAKE THE REMOULADE:** In a bowl, combine all of the ingredients and refrigerate until chilled or for up to 1 day.

TOP LEFT: Breadsticks and wooden picks for scooping and spearing. ABOVE LEFT: Roast beef and arugula wrapped around grissini, ready for dipping in a gutsy remoulade sauce. Host Vasilios Kiniris, TOP RIGHT, goes for a poached shrimp, OPPOSITE.

Be prepared for guests who want to eat the garnishes,
whether they're pebbles or peppercorns.



party tactics

1. **Count eight hors d'oeuvres per person per hour** when you're not serving a meal.
2. **Balance the menu:** offer hot kebabs alongside room-temperature dips, rich cheese straws next to low-fat poached shrimp, spicy quesadillas beside delicate crab salad.
3. **Provide at least one vegetarian offering.**
4. **Consider your kitchen equipment.** If you have only a standard range, don't limit yourself to stovetop dishes—serve a combination of stovetop, baked, raw, room-temperature and cold foods.
5. **Choose a few make-ahead dishes** so there's less to do on the day of the party.
6. **Stay away from dips** if you're worried about staining your carpet.
7. **Decorate platters with whole spices** or colorful dried bean compositions. But don't be surprised when some guests think the garnishes are edible, whether they're Scotch bonnet chiles, peppercorns or flowers. People have even been known to eat decorative pebbles.



2. MAKE THE GRISSINI: In a small saucepan, cook the garlic in the oil over moderate heat until golden. Using a slotted spoon, discard the garlic slices; let the garlic oil cool completely.

3. Spread the roast beef strips on a work surface and lightly brush them with the garlic oil; sprinkle with salt and pepper and cover each beef strip with an arugula leaf slightly larger than the strip. Roll 1 beef strip tightly around 1 end of each breadstick. Arrange on a platter and serve with the remoulade sauce.

MAKE AHEAD The assembled grissini can be refrigerated for up to 1 hour.

Crab and Pea Salad in Celery Ribs

MAKES ABOUT 5 DOZEN

Another way to serve this spring salad is to spoon it onto challah toasts.

- 8 wide celery ribs, trimmed**
- ¼ cup cream cheese (2 ounces), softened**

- 2 tablespoons mayonnaise**
- 1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice**
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped basil**
- 2 teaspoons finely chopped tarragon**
- 2 teaspoons finely chopped flat-leaf parsley**
- ½ teaspoon finely grated lemon zest**
- ½ pound lump crabmeat, picked over and well drained**
- ½ cup frozen baby peas, thawed**
- ¼ cup finely chopped fennel bulb, plus fennel fronds, for garnish**
- 3 tablespoons finely chopped red onion**

Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper

Peel the celery ribs so they sit flat, then cut them on the diagonal into 1-inch lengths. In a medium bowl, combine the softened cream cheese with the mayonnaise, lemon juice, basil, tarragon, parsley and lemon zest. Add the crabmeat, peas, fennel bulb and onion and stir gently until just combined. Season with salt and pepper. Spoon 1 teaspoon of the crab salad onto each piece of celery and garnish with a bit of fennel frond.

MAKE AHEAD The crab salad can be refrigerated for up to 1 day.



THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Goat Cheese Quesadillas with olive salsa. Lamb Skewers with Grainy Mustard Dipping Sauce. Crab and Pea Salad in Celery Ribs. OPPOSITE: After the work is done, relaxing with guests and enjoying the party.



Blue Cheese Straws

MAKES 2 DOZEN

It takes a light touch to roll this delicate dough thin enough to make the straws. An alternative is to make coins: shape the dough into a 1-inch-thick log, roll in poppy seeds and chill, then slice ¼ inch thick and bake for 15 minutes, or until crisp.

4½ ounces Maytag or other sharp blue cheese (½ cup packed)

¼ cup plus 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour

3 tablespoons cornstarch

2½ tablespoons unsalted butter, softened

⅛ teaspoon kosher salt

⅛ teaspoon freshly ground pepper

¾ teaspoon poppy seeds

1. In a food processor, combine the blue cheese, flour, cornstarch, butter, salt and pepper and pulse until the dough just comes together. Transfer the dough to a sheet of plastic wrap and shape it into a 4-inch disk; wrap and refrigerate until firm, about 1 hour, or for up to 1 day.

2. Preheat the oven to 375°. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. On a well floured surface, roll out the dough to a 12-by-6-inch rectangle about ⅛ inch thick. Sprinkle the poppy seeds over the dough and press lightly to help them adhere. Cut the dough into 6-by-½-inch strips and transfer them to the baking sheet; twist the ends in opposite directions to make spirals. Bake the cheese straws for about 15 minutes, or until crisp and brown. Let the straws cool on the baking sheet before serving.

MAKE AHEAD The cheese straws can be frozen for up to 1 month; reheat in a 350° oven.

Lamb Skewers with Grainy Mustard Dipping Sauce

MAKES 30

Here the lamb is marinated and sautéed, then served warm with a piquant sauce.

¼ cup vegetable oil

¼ cup finely chopped onion

2 tablespoons red wine

2 tablespoons rosemary leaves

2 garlic cloves, smashed

1 tablespoon Dijon mustard

¾ pound boneless trimmed lamb loin, halved lengthwise

¼ cup whole-grain mustard

3 tablespoons crème fraîche or heavy cream

1½ teaspoons honey

Cayenne pepper

Freshly ground black pepper

1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil

Salt

1. In a blender or mini-processor, combine the vegetable oil, onion, wine, rosemary, garlic and Dijon mustard and blend until smooth. Transfer the marinade to a resealable plastic bag, add the lamb and refrigerate overnight.

2. In a small bowl, combine the whole-grain mustard, crème fraîche, honey and a pinch each of cayenne and black pepper; whisk until smooth.

3. Remove the lamb from the bag and scrape off the marinade. Heat the olive oil in a skillet. Season the lamb with salt and black pepper, add it to the skillet and cook over high heat until browned, about 3 minutes on each side for medium rare. Transfer the lamb to a cutting board, cover with foil and let stand for 10 minutes.

4. Thinly slice the lamb, fold the pieces and spear them on wooden picks. Transfer to a platter and serve immediately with the mustard dipping sauce.

Oniony Cheese Puffs

MAKES ABOUT 30

To make these easy hors d'oeuvres, bread cubes are dipped into a savory cheese mixture, then baked until golden.

1 stick (4 ounces) unsalted butter, softened

⅓ cup finely chopped onion

Salt and freshly ground pepper

4 ounces cream cheese, softened

⅓ cup packed grated Jarlsberg cheese (2 ounces)

3 tablespoons dehydrated minced onions

3 tablespoons chopped chives

2 large egg whites

¾ pound challah, crusts removed, bread cut into ¾-inch cubes

1. Preheat the oven to 350°. Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper. In a

small skillet, melt 1 tablespoon of the butter. Add the chopped onion, season with salt and pepper and cook over moderate heat until softened but not browned, about 4 minutes.

2. In a medium saucepan, combine the cream cheese, Jarlsberg and dehydrated onions. Set the pan over simmering water and stir until melted. Remove the cheese mixture from the heat and stir in the remaining 7 tablespoons of butter along with the chives and sautéed onion.

3. Beat the egg whites until they hold stiff peaks. Stir one-quarter of the egg whites into the warm cheese mixture, then fold in the remaining whites. Dip the bread cubes into the cheese mixture, a few at a time, coating them thoroughly.

4. Transfer the cubes to the prepared baking sheet. Bake for 15 minutes, or until the puffs are golden. Serve hot.

MAKE AHEAD The cheese puffs can be prepared through Step 3 and frozen for up to 1 week.

Raita with Crispy Radishes

MAKES 1½ CUPS

Radish roses make a pretty accompaniment to this cucumber-yogurt dip, but flat breads and other vegetables work too.

¾ cup plain whole-milk yogurt

½ cup finely chopped seeded cucumber

¼ cup sour cream

¼ cup finely shredded mint leaves

3 tablespoons finely chopped red onion

1½ teaspoons rice vinegar

1 teaspoon fresh lime juice

1 teaspoon finely chopped jalapeño

½ teaspoon minced fresh ginger

½ teaspoon finely grated lime zest

½ teaspoon kosher salt

24 radishes, stems trimmed

1. Combine all of the ingredients except the radishes in a medium bowl and refrigerate for up to 3 hours.

2. Cut a deep X in the root end of each radish. Transfer the radishes to a bowl of ice water and refrigerate until they open up, at least 1 hour. Drain the radishes and serve with the raita.

continued on p. 128

Goat Cheese Quesadillas

MAKES 2 DOZEN

Guests will appreciate the extra work it takes to make these quesadillas bite-size. The salsa is also good as a quick, light sauce for pasta.

SALSA

3 large plum tomatoes, seeded and finely chopped

$\frac{1}{8}$ **teaspoon kosher salt**

$\frac{1}{3}$ **cup Calamata olives (2 ounces), pitted and finely chopped**

1 tablespoon finely chopped flat-leaf parsley

1 tablespoon finely chopped red onion

1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar

2 teaspoons fresh lime juice

1 teaspoon hot sauce

$\frac{1}{2}$ **teaspoon minced garlic**

$\frac{1}{4}$ **teaspoon dried oregano**

QUESADILLAS

Eight 6-inch flour tortillas

4 ounces goat cheese, softened

4 small scallions, thinly sliced

Freshly ground pepper

2 tablespoons vegetable oil

Kosher salt

1. MAKE THE SALSA: In a strainer set in the sink, toss the tomatoes with the salt and let drain for 10 minutes. Transfer the tomatoes to a bowl and add the olives, parsley, onion, vinegar, lime juice, hot sauce, garlic and oregano. Mix well.

2. MAKE THE QUESADILLAS: Cut the tortillas into 4-inch rounds, using a small saucer as a template. Spread the tortillas with the goat cheese and sprinkle with the scallions and pepper; sandwich to make 4 quesadillas.

3. In a large skillet, heat the vegetable oil. Add the quesadillas and cook over moderately high heat until golden and crisp, about 1 minute per side. Transfer the quesadillas to a cutting board and cut each one into 6 wedges. Sprinkle with salt and top each wedge with 1 teaspoon of the salsa. Serve immediately, passing the remaining salsa separately.

MAKE AHEAD The quesadillas can be prepared through Step 2 and refrigerated for up to 1 day. ■

PEACH CROUSTADE, continued

Preheat the oven to 400°. Bake the frozen Buttery Pastry tart shell for 12 minutes, or until the pastry is dry. Spread the peach preserves in the shell and arrange the peaches on top. Scatter the almonds around the peaches. Dot with the butter and sprinkle with the sugar. Bake the croustade in the center of the oven for about 40 minutes, or until the pastry is nicely browned and the preserves are bubbling. Transfer to a rack to cool. Unmold, cut into wedges and serve.

Fig Croustade

MAKES ONE 10½-INCH CROUSTADE

Buttery Pastry (recipe follows)

1 cup black fig preserves

16 ripe black figs, halved crosswise

1 tablespoon unsalted butter, cut into small pieces

1 tablespoon sugar

Preheat the oven to 400°. Bake the frozen Buttery Pastry tart shell for 12 minutes, or until the pastry is dry. Spread the fig preserves over the bottom of the shell. Arrange the figs in the shell, cut side up. Dot with the butter and sprinkle with the sugar. Bake the croustade in the center of the oven for about 40 minutes, or until the pastry is nicely browned and the preserves are bubbling. Transfer to a rack to cool. Unmold, cut into wedges and serve.

Buttery Pastry

MAKES ONE 10½-INCH TART SHELL

This simple, flaky pastry comes from cookbook author Lydie Marshall.

1 cup all-purpose flour

1 stick (4 ounces) unsalted butter

1 tablespoon sugar

Salt

2 to 3 tablespoons cold water

1. In a food processor, combine the flour, butter, sugar and a pinch of salt. Pulse until the mixture resembles coarse meal and transfer to a bowl. Add 2 tablespoons of the cold water and toss gently with a fork; add up to 1 more tablespoon of water if the dough seems

dry. Gather the dough into a ball and flatten slightly. Wrap in wax paper and refrigerate for at least 1 hour.

2. On a lightly floured surface, roll out the dough to a 12-inch round. Fit the dough into a 10½-inch fluted tart pan with a removable bottom. Trim the edge and prick the bottom. Freeze the shell for at least 30 minutes before baking.

MAKE AHEAD The frozen shell can be wrapped in plastic and kept in the freezer for up to 1 month.

Annie Romana's Clafoutis

8 TO 10 SERVINGS

Annie makes her clafoutis using small local plums, but you can use other fruits, such as cherries, the traditional choice, or peaches. Cherries should be pitted, small plums halved and pitted, and peaches halved, pitted and thinly sliced.

1 tablespoon unsalted butter

1 pound fresh fruit, such as Mirabelle plums, halved and pitted, or cherries, pitted

$\frac{1}{3}$ **cup all-purpose flour**

2 tablespoons cornstarch

Salt

$\frac{1}{4}$ **cup plus 1 tablespoon sugar**

3 large eggs, lightly beaten

$\frac{3}{4}$ **cup whole milk**

$\frac{1}{2}$ **cup heavy cream or half-and-half**

1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

1. Preheat the oven to 400°. Use the butter to coat a shallow 2-quart glass or ceramic baking dish. Arrange the fruit in the dish, cut side up.

2. In a small bowl, stir together the flour, cornstarch and a pinch of salt. In a medium bowl, whisk $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the sugar with the eggs, milk, cream and vanilla until smooth. Whisk in the dry ingredients until smooth. Pour the batter evenly over the fruit and bake for about 30 minutes, or until set and beginning to brown around the edge. Remove from the oven.

3. Preheat the broiler. Sprinkle the clafoutis with the remaining 1 tablespoon of sugar. Broil the clafoutis as close to the heat as possible for about 1 minute, or until the sugar is golden and caramelized; serve immediately. ■