

Think **Outside** the Lunchbox

FAMILY FEATURES

Eating the same thing every day can make lunch seem so “blah.” Now’s the perfect time to break out of the lunch rut and add some excitement to your meals.

Thinking outside the traditional lunchbox is easy with the right ingredients. Perk up your noontime noshing with fresh, seasonal ingredients coupled with kitchen pantry classics, like California Ripe Olives, which add a unique flavor and bold, distinctive color to any dish.

California farmers grow more than 95 percent of the ripe olives consumed in the United States. From planting, pruning, harvesting and processing, they make sure that the highest quality olives come from their farms to your table – one can at a time.

Adding olives to any lunch can help bring California sunshine to each and every bite. Try some of these portable and packable recipes to add excitement to lunch on-the-go and find more at calolive.org.

Greek Salad in Jars

Courtesy of Simply Recipes
Makes: 4 salads

Salad Dressing:

- 3 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 1/4 teaspoon salt, plus additional, to taste (optional)
- pinch of black pepper, plus additional, to taste (optional)
- 1/4 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1 teaspoon honey
- 5 tablespoons olive oil
- 4 pint-size canning jars with lids

Salads:

- 1/4 medium red onion, thinly sliced
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1/2 large English cucumber, sliced
- 1 yellow or orange bell pepper, cut into 1/2-inch pieces
- 3/4 cup California black ripe olives
- 1/2 cup (4 ounces) crumbled feta cheese
- 4 small handfuls fresh baby spinach or other dark, leafy greens
- 4 pita bread rounds, halved (optional)

To prepare dressing: In small bowl, whisk together vinegar, salt, pepper, oregano and honey.

Gradually whisk in oil. Taste. Add additional salt and pepper, if desired.

Divide dressing between four pint jars.

To assemble salads: Divide onion between four jars. Divide tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, olives and feta cheese between jars. Pack remaining space with spinach, compressing leaves slightly.

Secure lids and refrigerate up to two days.

To serve: Empty salads into bowls and toss with dressing. Serve with pita bread.

Note: Store and transport salads upright so dressing stays on bottom.



Deliciously Different

Smoked California Ripe Olives can produce a crave-worthy culinary surprise and become one of your favorite flavor discoveries. There are a few easy ways to make your own smoked olives, including preparing them on the grill with these quick steps:

1. Soak wood chips in water for 30 minutes. Drain well.
2. Pierce a foil pan several times with a small, sharp knife and spread wood chips in a single layer in the pan. Set directly on hot coals or metal bars on a gas grill. Close the lid and set heat to high only under the pan of chips.
3. When chips are smoking, place drained California Ripe Olives in a grill basket on grill with the burners off. Close the lid and smoke for 30 minutes.



Black and White Pizza

Makes: 1 pizza

- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil, plus additional for pizza crust
- 1 cup onion, quartered and thinly sliced
- 2 tablespoons roasted garlic, minced
- 4 ounces small baby bella mushrooms, chopped flour
- 1 package prepared pizza dough
- 1 cup prepared Alfredo sauce
- 1 cup smoked mozzarella cheese, shredded
- 4 ounces fresh mozzarella cheese, torn into 1/2-inch pieces
- 1 small boneless, skinless chicken breast, cooked and thinly sliced
- 2 tablespoons fresh rosemary, chopped
- 1 can (6 ounces) extra-large California Black Ripe Olives, drained and cut in wedges
- freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano

Heat oven to 450 F and line large baking sheet with parchment paper.

In large skillet over medium heat, heat 1 tablespoon oil. Add onion, garlic and mushrooms, and cook, stirring frequently, 10 minutes, or until onions are soft. Reserve.

Roll pizza dough into thin oval on lightly floured surface. Transfer to prepared baking sheet and brush lightly with olive oil then spread evenly with Alfredo sauce.

Top with mushroom mixture, cheeses, chicken and rosemary. Sprinkle olives over pizza.

Bake 10-15 minutes, or until cheese is melted and lightly browned around edges.

Serve with Parmigiano-Reggiano.



Maple Olive Cheesecake Bites

Makes: 16-20 mini cheesecakes

- Nonstick cooking spray
- 1/2 cup graham cracker crumbs
- 2 tablespoons butter, melted
- 3 tablespoons sugar, divided
- 6 ounces cream cheese, room temperature
- 3 tablespoons pure maple syrup
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 egg
- 1/4 cup coarsely chopped California Ripe Olives

Heat oven to 325 F and coat 16-20-cup mini muffin tin with nonstick cooking spray.

In small bowl, stir together graham cracker crumbs, butter and 1 tablespoon sugar. Place equal amounts into each mini muffin cup then press firmly into bottom of each cup. Working with one cup at a time, press small piece of plastic wrap onto surface and press crust firmly into mini muffin cups.

In large bowl of electric mixer, beat cream cheese, maple syrup and remaining sugar until smooth; beat in flour and vanilla on low speed. Add egg and beat until just combined; stir in olives.

Spoon equal amounts into each cup.

Bake 20-25 minutes, or until filling feels set.

Let cool completely then run small, thin knife around edge of each to remove from pan.