

FAMILY FEATURES

Delighting guests in unexpected ways is the hallmark of exceptional entertaining. With a little creative flair, you can elevate your menu to impress guests with every course.

A savory appetizer is set off beautifully by fresh, sweet grapes in this Grape and Goat Cheese Crostini. Festive, bright and refreshing, grapes are a versatile ingredient that take dishes to the next level, making them ideal for special occasions.

Not only are grapes a smart choice to keep on hand for healthy snacking and everyday eating, the vibrant colors and flavors bring extra life to a basic protein. For a unique twist on a main dish, try dressing up chicken with an elegant addition like fresh grapes, as in these Seared Chicken Breasts with Grapes and Artichokes.

The secret to a winning dessert is presentation, and the vibrant colors of red, green or black grapes lend just the right look to these tasty Mini Pavlovas with Lemon Cream and Grapes. What's more, the juicy sweetness offsets the tartness of the lemon for an explosion of flavor perfection.

Plan your next special occasion with the host of recipes at GrapesfromCalifornia.com.

Grape and Goat Cheese Crostini

Serves: 8

- 2 cups quartered green, black or red California grapes (or a mixture)
- 2 teaspoons lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons honey
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh thyme leaves
- 1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 16 baguette slices, thinly cut on diagonal
- 8 ounces fresh goat cheese

In medium bowl, combine grapes, lemon juice, honey, thyme, salt, pepper and olive oil. Spread each baguette with goat cheese and top with grape mixture.

Nutritional information per serving: 200 calories; 9 g protein; 23 g carbohydrates; 8 g fat (36 percent calories from fat); 4.5 g saturated fat (20 percent calories from saturated fat); 15 mg cholesterol; 340 mg sodium; 1 g fiber.



Excellent Entertaining

Elegant ideas for a meal worth celebrating

**Seared Chicken Breasts with Grapes and Artichokes**

Serves: 4

- 2 boneless, skinless chicken breasts (8 ounces each), butterflied lengthwise into 4 cutlets
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- 2 tablespoons olive oil, divided
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 leek, white part only, halved and thinly sliced
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh oregano
- 1 1/2 cups quartered artichoke hearts, frozen, canned or jarred
- 1/2 cup dry white wine
- 1/2 cup low-sodium chicken stock
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1/2 teaspoon lemon zest
- 2 teaspoons butter
- 3/4 cup green California grapes
- 3/4 cup red California grapes

- 2 tablespoons chopped flat-leaf parsley

Season chicken breasts with salt and pepper, to taste. In saute pan over medium-high heat, heat 1 tablespoon olive oil. Add chicken breasts and sear 3-4 minutes per side. Remove chicken and set aside.

Add remaining olive oil to pan, along with garlic, leek and pinch of salt; cook on medium heat 2-3 minutes to soften leek. Stir in oregano, artichokes, wine, chicken stock, lemon juice, lemon zest and butter. Simmer 2-3 minutes then add chicken back to pan, basting each breast with sauce. Add grapes and simmer 3-5 minutes, or until grapes are just soft and chicken is cooked through.

Stir in fresh parsley and serve.

Nutritional information per serving: 320 calories; 26 g protein; 23 g carbohydrates; 12 g fat (34 percent calories from fat); 3 g saturated fat (8 percent calories from saturated fat); 70 mg cholesterol; 390 mg sodium; 5 g fiber.

A Fresh Approach to Decor

Not only do fresh grapes' lively flavors make for exceptional dishes, their vibrant colors can also enhance your table in other ways. Lend natural beauty to your decor while providing your loved ones with a healthy snack option with these creative ideas:

- Arrange grapes in bowls, on platters or draped from a cake plate for attractive and edible centerpieces.
- Dress snacking grapes up for the occasion by dipping clusters in liquid gelatin. Roll them in sugar, spices and finely chopped nuts to make a "frosted" finger food with a hint of crunch.
- Colorful grapes lend a pretty pop when used as a garnish to decorate serving plates.

Mini Pavlovas with Lemon Cream and Grapes

Serves: 6

- 4 large egg whites
- pinch of salt
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 teaspoons cornstarch
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 2/3 cup heavy whipping cream
- 1/3 cup lemon curd
- 1 1/2 cups halved California grapes
- chopped smoked or tamarind almonds (optional)

Heat oven to 350 F. Line baking sheet with parchment paper. With electric mixer on medium speed, in large bowl, beat egg

whites and salt until firm peaks form. On low speed, add sugar 1 tablespoon at a time until meringue forms stiff peaks. Whisk in cornstarch and vanilla.

Divide meringue into six 4-inch circles on baking sheet. With large spoon, make indentations in middle of each. Place baking sheet in oven and lower temperature to 300 F. Bake 30 minutes then turn off oven and leave baking sheet inside another 30 minutes. To serve, whip cream to soft peaks and stir in lemon curd. Dollop onto meringues and top with grapes. Garnish with almonds, if desired.

Nutritional information per serving: 350 calories; 4 g protein; 58 g carbohydrates; 12 g fat (31 percent calories from fat); 8 g saturated fat (20 percent calories from saturated fat); 55 mg cholesterol; 90 mg sodium.

