



Family Features

A festive party calls for a lively variety of delectable edibles. These recipes give you some sweet and savory choices that will help spread the holiday cheer.

Scrumptious bites start with simple, flavorful ingredients — golden Calimyrna and dark purple Mission figs from California and Jarlsberg cheese. They also make great house gifts, wrapped in a colorful box or presented on a pretty serving dish.

Sweet, mouthwatering figs are not only packed with great taste, they're full of fiber and essential nutrients, making them as good for you as they are good to eat.

The versatile taste and texture of Jarlsberg cheese is ideal for these appetizers. Jarlsberg's mild, nutty-sweet flavor and buttery creaminess makes it a perfect partner to figs and, along with its excellent melting properties, adaptable to many sweet or savory dishes.

You can combine both ingredients in one easy sure-to-please appetizer: Make a slit in a fig and stuff with a piece of Jarlsberg. Wrap with partially-cooked bacon (it should be a bit limp) and heat at 400°F just until bacon is crispy and cheese begins to melt.

Get more sweet and savory holiday recipes at www.ValleyFig.com and www.JarlsbergUSA.com.

Sweet And Savory Holiday Bites

Fig Cranberry Bars with Caramel Drizzle

CUT INTO 32 BARS

- 1 cup cranberries, fresh or frozen
- 2 tablespoons plus 1/2 cup granulated sugar, divided
- 2 1/3 cups all-purpose flour, divided
- 2 cups old fashioned oats
- 1/2 cup packed light brown sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 cup butter, melted
- 1 1/2 cups chopped Blue Ribbon Orchard Choice or Sun-Maid Figs
- 3/4 cup chopped, toasted walnuts
- 1 cup caramel ice cream topping

In small bowl combine cranberries and 2 tablespoons granulated sugar; set aside.

In medium bowl stir together 2 cups flour, oats, brown sugar, remaining granulated sugar and baking soda. Stir in butter. Reserve 1 cup crumb mixture.

Press remaining crumb mixture in bottom of 13 x 9-inch baking pan. Bake in 350°F oven for 15 minutes.

Stir figs and walnuts into cranberries and sprinkle evenly over crust. Stir together caramel topping and remaining 1/3 cup flour; drizzle over fruits and nuts. Sprinkle with reserved crumb mixture.

Bake for additional 20 minutes or until lightly browned. Cool in pan on wire rack.



Chocolate-Dipped Stuffed Figs

MAKES 15 FIGS

- 15 Blue Ribbon Orchard Choice or Sun-Maid Figs
- 3/4 cup granulated sugar
- 3/4 cup water
- 1/2 cup brandy (or 1/2 cup water mixed with 1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract)
- 15 to 30 small pieces candied ginger, toasted nuts or chocolate
- 5 to 6 ounces semisweet, bittersweet or premium white chocolate, chopped

With sharp knife, cut small slit in bottom of each fig.

In small saucepan, heat sugar and water over medium heat until sugar dissolves. Stir in brandy and figs. Bring to a boil over high heat then reduce heat and simmer 20 minutes. Drain figs, cool and dry thoroughly.

Stuff one or two pieces of ginger, nuts and/or chocolate into each fig.

Place chopped chocolate in 1-cup glass measuring cup or small microwave-safe bowl. Heat on medium/50 percent power until almost melted, stirring after every 1 to 1 1/2 minutes. Remove from oven and stir until melted.

Hold stem of each fig and dip in melted chocolate. Place figs, stems up, on wax paper-lined tray until chocolate sets. Decorate with white chocolate or nuts, as desired.

Store in airtight container in refrigerator.

Savory Jarlsberg Thumbprints with Fig-Pepper Jelly

MAKES 40 COOKIES

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 2 large egg yolks
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 3 cups (12 ounces) shredded Jarlsberg cheese
- 1 cup grated fresh Parmesan cheese
- 1 1/2 cups finely chopped, toasted pecans or unblanched almonds
- 3/4 cup finely chopped, stemmed Sun-Maid Figs
- 1/2 cup hot pepper jelly (red or green)

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Place butter in large bowl. Beat with electric mixer on medium speed until creamy. Beat in egg yolks. On low speed, gradually beat in flour. Stir in Jarlsberg, Parmesan and nuts.

Divide dough into 4 equal portions. Wrap 3 in wax paper or plastic wrap and chill. On work surface, form remaining portion of dough into 10 (1 1/2-inch) balls.

Place balls, 1 1/2 inches apart, on ungreased baking sheet. With thumb or back of wooden spoon, make 1/2-inch indentation in center of each cookie. Bake for 15 to 20 minutes or until light golden brown. If needed, press back of tea-

spoon into cookies to re-form indentations. Remove cookies to wire rack to cool.

Repeat shaping and baking with remaining dough.

To serve, in small bowl, stir together figs and jelly. Fill each cookie with about 1 teaspoon fig-pepper jelly.

Make ahead note: Dough can be prepared 1 to 2 days ahead. Form dough into 1 1/2-inch cylinder, wrap airtight and chill or freeze for longer storage. Baked cookies can be stored unfilled, in airtight container for 2 days or frozen. To re-crisp, place on baking sheet in 350°F oven for 2 to 4 minutes. Cool. Fill with fig-pepper jelly as directed.



Jarlsberg, Ham and Herb Swirls

MAKES ABOUT 26 SWIRLS

- 1 sheet frozen puff pastry (half of 17.3-ounce package), thawed
- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- 2 teaspoons Dijon mustard (optional)
- 3 tablespoons thinly sliced green onion
- 1 tablespoon dried basil or thyme leaves
- 1 cup (4 ounces) finely shredded Jarlsberg cheese
- 4 ounces thinly sliced Black Forest or other lean ham

Unfold pastry onto lightly floured board; cut in half, lengthwise, to form two pieces. Brush beaten egg on entire surface of each piece.

Leaving a 1/2-inch border around each pastry, top with the following, dividing evenly: Dijon mustard, green onion, basil and Jarlsberg. Top each with sliced ham, cutting to fit in a single layer within border.

Starting at the long ends,

carefully roll up each pastry. Gently pinch ends to seal pastry rolls. Wrap each in plastic wrap. Chill rolls, seam side down, for 2 hours or up to 2 days.

To serve, preheat oven to 400°F. Unwrap rolls and cut each roll crosswise into 1/2-inch slices. Place, 1 inch apart, on 2 greased baking sheets.

Bake one sheet at a time for 14 to 16 minutes or until golden. Place on wire rack to cool slightly. Serve warm.



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Friday, December 16
7:40 a.m. Vermillion Chamber (Steve Howe)
8:20 a.m. United Way (Pam Kettering)