

Henry's

Guacamole

Henry is the official guacamole taster in our house, so I mix up my best attempt, but then he lets me know what to add more of—and the answer is nearly always a little more lime juice.



ingredients

- Avocados
- Tomatoes
- Onion
- Jalepeno
- Cilantro (I know cilantro is a total love-it-or-hate-it thing...we're Team Love It.)
- Sea salt
- Lime juice

instructions

1. Halve and scoop out the avocado flesh, sprinkle with sea salt and lime, and mash together with a fork, leaving it chunky.
2. Add rough-chopped tomatoes, finely-chopped onions, jalapeño (ribs and seeds removed) and cilantro.
3. Mix together and taste by dipping a tortilla chip—most chips are pretty salty, so it's important to factor that in as you're tasting to adjust seasoning.

Mexican Street Corn Dip

One summer my sister-in-law Emily and I took it as a personal challenge to see how often and in how many iterations we could eat some version of Mexican Street Corn.

The verdict: infinity, and this iteration is our favorite.



ingredients

- One block cream cheese, softened
- Grilled or broiled corn, cut off the cobs
- Feta or cotija cheese
- Lime juice
- Cayenne powder
- Mayo
- Green onion
- Red onion
- Cilantro
- Shredded cheese —cheddar or mozzarella or a Mexican blend

instructions

1. In a mixing bowl, combine mayo, lime juice, feta, and cayenne.
2. Add corn, green onion and red onion, and cilantro, and mix thoroughly.
3. Add softened cream cheese and combine.
4. Pour into a skillet or baking dish, cover with shredded cheese.
5. Bake at 350 until cheese is golden and dip is bubbling.
6. Top with a little more fresh cilantro, and serve with tortilla chips.

French Onion Dip

This dip makes a very frequent appearance around our table, especially in the summertime. When I'm in a hurry, I just serve it as is, but if I have a little more time, I spread it in a cast iron skillet and cover it with a layer of bread crumbs mixed with shredded cheese and warm it in the oven till the edges are bubbly. As a nod to Ci Siamo's truly legendary Onion Torta, sometimes I add a drizzle of balsamic glaze, too.



ingredients

- Onions
- Cream cheese
- Mayo or sour cream, or a mix of both
- Salt and pepper
- Cayenne powder
- Bread crumbs

instructions

1. Set out one block of cream cheese to soften, and then slice two onions and pan fry them in a few tablespoons of butter.
2. Let the onions cool, and then add them to cream cheese and mayo/sour cream.
3. Add salt, pepper, and cayenne to taste, and then refrigerate for a few hours—it gets better with a little time.
4. Serve with kettle chips or crackers.

Chutney

Cheese Dip

I often make this as a cheese ball, which kind of has a retro-fancy vibe, but sometimes I make it just as a dip, which is especially great when you're making it last minute and don't have enough time to chill the ball. I love these flavors in any shape, and I always make this on Thanksgiving Day—a plate of this cheese with crackers and apple slices, along with the dates, make delicious little snacks before the big meal.



ingredients

- Cream cheese
- Sharp cheddar cheese
- Curry powder
- Chutney (Major Grey's or mango)
- Hot sauce or cayenne
- Green onions
- Chopped peanuts
- Raisins

instructions

1. Soften one block of cream cheese, and grate one cup (half a block) of sharp cheddar cheese—these are the only two non-negotiables.
2. Add curry powder, 2 tablespoons of chutney, 3 dashes of hot sauce (I'm currently going through a Crystal hot sauce phase).
3. Add cayenne instead of hot sauce if you prefer, along with the curry powder.
4. Mix and then stir in sliced green onions, chopped peanuts, and raisins.
5. Chill and serve with crackers—I think it's perfect with Triscuits—and apple slices...preferably honey crisp, of course.

Bacon wrapped dates

You've heard me talk about bacon-wrapped dates one thousand times, at minimum. I'll give you just a tiny handful of reasons why these are an absolute go-to in our house:

1. You can always have bacon in the fridge or freezer and dates in the pantry, so that you're ready to make them anytime.
2. They're easy—slice the bacon, wrap the dates, bake. Of course you can stuff them—with goat cheese or blue cheese, almonds or pecans. You can add a dipping sauce—rich, spicy piquillo pepper sauce like at Avec in Chicago, or balsamic reduction or a maple-dijon vinaigrette—all good but definitely not necessary. These are perfectly lovely just on their own.
3. They're gluten-free and dairy-free, so if the rest of what you're serving is bread and cheese (which, let's be honest, is nearly always what I'm serving), these are a welcome option for GF/DF eaters.

ingredients

- Whole package Bacon
- Dates



instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 350, and line a rimmed sheet pan (these from Great Jones are my favorite, both for baking and for happy hour snack trays--the bright colors make me so happy.)
2. Slice the bacon down the center, so that now you have strips that are half as long.
3. Roll each date in a slice, and place seam side down on the foil-covered baking pan.
4. Bake for 20-25 minutes, or until the bacon is crisped.
5. Transfer to a paper towel to drain, and then serve with toothpicks.