



## CHEF JACQUI CONTINUED...

when you are alone.

Another big part of menu planning is your beverage list. Many people may like non-alcoholic drinks, so it would be wise to prepare some fun drinks for them. If you are really at a loss for menu plans, check out the more popular gourmet magazines, which contain menu plans with all the recipes. They offer some very new and interesting ideas.

You are now half way to your stress free holiday. Nothing is more annoying than trying to get an ingredient for a recipe, and not being able to find it in your local store. Shop early. Highlight foods on your list that have to be ordered.

Regardless of whether you use your grocery items immediately or not, you now have them on hand when you are ready to make that recipe. The same goes for ready-made items; they also fly off the shelves, so shop early for these items also.

Have all your holiday dinnerware and serving pieces unpacked, washed and ready to go when you are. If in reality you don't have time to get out the dishes ready, etc, they have a very nice selection of paper goods in many of the party stores. Not all of us have Colin Cowie on our staff, so make it manageable and simple. Remember you can make it happen with this simple plan of organization. It does not have to be the culinary event of the year, but one in which you can manage and most of all enjoy.

**Fun Idea:** The next time you have friends over for dinner invite them in the kitchen and

I chose this appetizer/hors d'œuvre recipe because it is great to make ahead and freeze

### Crab Cakes with Avocado Wasabi Mayonnaise

(Makes 10 - 2 oz. Cakes)

- 1 lb. Lump crabmeat (canned may be used, drain well)
- 3 tbs. Mayonnaise
- 1 tea Worcestershire Sauce
- 2 tbl. Fresh sage
- 1 egg yoke
- 1 tea fresh lemon juice
- 1 tbl. Dijon mustard
- 3 tbl. Fresh bread crumbs (extra for dredging)
- salt and pepper
- ¼ cup finely chopped scallions
- dash of hot sauce

Gently pick through crabmeat for stray cartilage; gently combine all ingredients in mixing bowl and portion into 2-oz cakes; dredge in breadcrumbs and sauté in mixture of butter and olive oil until lightly browned on all sides. After they are

have an inter-active dinner party, where everyone is given a task in preparing the meal. This is sure to be a memorable event.

Remember to have confidence in your yourself; you don't have to be a chef to think like a chef. The times that will be remembered the most are those spent with family and friends, not the amount of vegetables you made and pies you baked

### WHAT'S IN SEASON

There are 10 varieties of Winter Squash; Acorn, Buttercup, Butternut, Delicata, Hubbard, Kabocha, Pumpkin, Spaghetti, Sweet Dumpling and Turban. All of these squashes are actually harvested in the fall and stored until spring. Winter squash has the amazing ability to keep for months. You can keep squash for up

to a week in a paper bag in the refrigerator or in a cool airy place at about 50°F for several weeks, or for up to three months by hanging them in wire baskets. Never store in plastic bags where they can retain moisture and rot. When purchasing squash inspect it carefully for soft spots, which can be a sign of improper handling. The easiest way to cut through very hard squash is by putting it in the microwave for 30 to 60 seconds at a time until you can feel the hard shell begin to soften, then you can easily cut through it. Never put squash seeds down your disposal because these fibrous seeds do not break down well, and can mean disaster.

Another great vegetable, which is available in the winter months, is fennel. This little used vegetable is worth trying

cooled, place in a freezer container, single layer, and freeze. After defrosting in refrigerator, bake in oven at 375° for 10 minutes. Serve with sauce. (4g of carbs; 127 calories; 8g fat)

### Avocado Wasabi Mayonnaise

(make this just before you event)

- 2 tbs of wasabi paste
- 1 avocado, peeled, seeded and puréed
- 3 tbs. of apple cider vinegar
- pinch of salt, pepper and sugar

Combine all ingredients well and chill. Serve with crab cakes.

**Remember to KEEP IT**  
**N** - nutritious  
**E** - easy  
**A** - appealing  
**T** - tasty

Happy Holidays!  
Chef Jacqui

stores it is sometimes incorrectly called Anise.

### CHEF'S HINTS

When making your mashed potatoes this holiday add a few tablespoons of goat cheese (for less fat) or cream cheese. Mash it in with the butter and warm milk for a new tastier mashed potato.

Always remove dark green patches from potatoes and never store them in the refrigerator as this can alter the starch content by changing it to sugar. Potatoes are best kept in a cool area in a hanging basket.

It is best not to eat the skins on potatoes in any form. The EPA has registered 90 different pesticides for use on potatoes. These toxins and possible pesticide residues may be left even after they are cooked. There are actually very few nutrients in the potato skins. Organic potatoes are always the best alternative if you just love those skins.

If you also like those homemade french-fried potatoes here is a safe way to fry them. Soak your raw cutup potatoes in a hot water bath for about a half-hour before cooking. This method cuts down on the spattering and absorption of oil. It also reduces the acrylamide level in the potatoes, a potential carcinogen, which is released when potatoes are fried.

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