

You're Invited

CLASSIC, ELEGANT ENTERTAINING



STEPHANIE BOOTH SHAFRAN
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RIZZOLI
NEW YORK



SPICED BLOODY MARYS

We like to serve Bloody Marys on Christmas morning with an assortment of fun garnishes: skewers of olives and onions, Italian peppers, celery and fennel sticks, green onions, and even pretzel rods.

Makes 10 drinks

6 cups best-quality tomato juice, chilled
3 cups vodka
 $\frac{2}{3}$ cup freshly squeezed lemon juice
1 tablespoon hot sauce, such as Tabasco
1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
1 teaspoon freshly grated lemon zest
1 teaspoon smoked paprika
1 teaspoon celery salt
Freshly ground white pepper to taste

Stir the tomato juice, vodka, lemon juice, hot sauce, Worcestershire sauce, lemon zest, paprika, and celery salt in a large pitcher. Add pepper to taste. Pour over ice and have guests garnish as desired.

CLASSIC CHRISTMAS COOKIES

In our family we decorate these tender, crisp cookies with colored sugar, royal icing, and sprinkles. The cookies make great hostess gifts.

Makes about 4 dozen cookies

2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups unbleached all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, at room temperature
3/4 cup sugar
1 large egg
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

In a medium bowl, whisk the flour, baking powder, and salt to blend. Using an electric mixer, cream the butter and sugar in a large bowl until very light and fluffy. Beat in the egg and vanilla extract. Gradually blend in the flour mixture.

Divide the dough into 4 equal portions. Shape each portion of dough into a ball, then flatten them into disks. Wrap each dough disk in plastic wrap and chill until firm, about 4 hours minimum. (The dough can be made up to 4 days ahead. Keep refrigerated.)

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Line large heavy baking sheets with parchment paper. On a lightly floured work surface, roll out a dough disk $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick. Using cookie cutters, cut out desired shapes. Transfer the cutouts to the prepared baking sheets. Gather and reroll scraps. Repeat with the remaining dough disks.

Bake the cookies in batches until golden on the edges, about 10 minutes. Transfer the cookies to racks to cool. Cool completely before decorating.

On Christmas day, I arrange a buffet of mini brioche sandwiches and chips, so we have sustenance for the fun hours ahead. A spicy Bloody Mary bar with unexpected garnishes—fennel sticks, pretzel rods, and skewered olives—keeps the adults in a jolly mood worthy of Santa himself.