



## Crab Toast

YIELD  
4 to 6 servings

TOTAL TIME  
10 minutes

This crab toast is our Christmas Eve tradition. It started the first time Ryan and I spent the holiday together. It was just the two of us and we did an all seafood night, starting with this crab toast, then baked stuffed lobsters and plenty of champagne.

- 1 baguette, cut into ¼-inch (6 mm) rounds
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 small clove garlic, grated
- ¼ cup (60 ml) mayonnaise
- Zest of 1 lemon
- Juice of ½ lemon
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh parsley
- 3 basil leaves, cut into chiffonade
- ½ Fresno chile, seeded and minced
- ⅛ teaspoon kosher salt
- Pinch of cracked black pepper
- 8 ounces (225 g) jumbo lump crabmeat, picked for shells

Preheat the oven to 425°F (220°C). Brush the baguette slices with the oil and toast in the oven for 5 to 10 minutes, or until golden brown. Set aside to cool.

In a bowl, mix the garlic, mayonnaise, lemon zest, lemon juice, parsley, basil, and chile together until fully combined. Season with the salt and pepper. Fold in the crab, making sure not to break up too many clumps. Top each toast with crab mixture (or refrigerate the crab and assemble when ready to serve). Serve immediately.

## Water Chestnuts Wrapped in Bacon

YIELD  
4 to 6 servings

TOTAL TIME  
30 minutes

This is Ryan's signature cocktail-hour snack. He used to only make them at Christmas, but I have talked him into making them all year long. I am a ketchup fanatic and the way it caramelizes when baked on the bacon reminds me of the same effect it has on a meatloaf. Be forewarned, you will want to eat these as soon as they come out of the oven, but let them cool for a minute because they are molten hot!

- 8 slices bacon
- One 8-ounce (226 g) can whole water chestnuts
- ¼ cup (60 ml) ketchup
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- ½ teaspoon sambal
- 2 dashes Worcestershire sauce
- Toothpicks

Preheat the oven to 425°F (220°C). Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper.

Cut the bacon slices in half or thirds, depending on the type of bacon you are using. Wrap a piece of bacon around each water chestnut and secure with a toothpick. Mix the ketchup, brown sugar, sambal, and Worcestershire sauce in a bowl. Brush each wrapped water chestnut all over with sauce and place on the prepared baking sheet. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes, until the bacon is crispy and the sauce is deep brown. Let cool for 2 to 3 minutes, then serve warm.

## Pumpkin Hummus

YIELD  
4 to 6 servings

TOTAL TIME  
5 minutes

I'm a fan of just about anything pumpkin. I started making this a few years ago in the fall—the bite that the ginger adds to the hummus makes it taste very autumnal. It is a really pretty addition to any table, with its orange hue set off by hot pink pomegranate seeds and bright green cilantro leaves.

Confession: I have made a version of this by just stirring pumpkin puree into store-bought hummus, so try that if you're in a rush.

- Two 15-ounce (425 g) cans chickpeas, drained and liquid reserved
- One 15-ounce (425 g) can pure pumpkin puree
- ¼ cup (60 ml) tahini
- 1-inch (2.5 cm) piece fresh ginger, minced
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- ¼ cup (60 ml) extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for drizzling
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 2 tablespoons fresh pomegranate seeds
- Fresh cilantro leaves
- Pita chips and crudité, for serving

In a food processor, combine the chickpeas, pumpkin, tahini, ginger, garlic, lemon juice, and cumin. Process until smooth. With the motor running, slowly pour in the oil in a steady stream. Add the salt and pepper and process until very smooth. If the mixture is too thick, add some of the chickpea liquid, about 2 tablespoons at a time, until the desired consistency is reached.

Transfer to a serving dish and drizzle with oil. Garnish with the pomegranate seeds and cilantro leaves. Serve with pita chips and crudités.