



Owner
Carole Parks and
Executive Chef
Laura Rogers

Newsletter

Issue 1 • 2007



494 Plasters Avenue | Atlanta, GA 30324
404.872.1999

New Trends in Appetizers: Fine-tuning flavors for one flawless bite.

Creating the perfect appetizer involves fine-tuning many flavors for one unforgettable bite. Just ask Laura Rogers, Executive Chef for Carole Parks Catering. From upscale hors d'oeuvres to miniature desserts, her menu of appetizers covers the spectrum. Her team is always on the lookout for new trends in small bites, as well as innovative flavors and time saving tips for making irresistible dishes that satisfy every palette.

So what makes appetizers so popular? For starters, they can feed a large crowd. On many menus, appetizer samplers have moved to center stage, and with good reason: They offer patrons an opportunity to socialize and to choose among favorite foods, and they provide more modest price points than one elaborate main course.

They also offer patrons more choices. "Appetizers are more appealing than entrees because people would rather have three small plates as opposed to one big meal," Rogers says. "People are getting away from large buffets and moving toward small plates."

A recent trend that Rogers has seen among appetizers is the fusion of different ethnicities, as she demonstrates with her Asian-barbequed pork spring rolls. For these, she wraps in-house smoked barbequed pork in an Asian spring roll before deep-frying them. "Many chefs are turning to ethnic foods to satisfy people's cravings for hot, spicy and flavorful items," she says. "I am always looking at different regions for new ideas."

Her latest menu of appetizers also includes a beef sate with spicy peanut sauce, as well as spiced pecan sandwiches. With these, she mixes oven-roasted Cajun-spiced pecans and saga bleu cheese for a unique medley of sweet and salty flavors. She has also created a bite-sized lobster corn dog that features fresh lobster meat inside a cornmeal-crusting breading.

When asked if it is difficult to keep her appetizer menu fresh, Rogers says it is all about keeping her eyes and ears open for new ideas. "You have to put clever twists on things, and do new things with old ingredients," she says. "I like to tweak old favorites and change up the presentation." In fact, for a new spin on a chocolate dessert, Rogers recently turned a Twix bar into a mousse. In the end, she says, these small bites are the most important part of a meal. "The first and last course should "wow" people," she says. "The middle course should just fill them up. The dessert should "wow" them again – it should be a piece of art."



Raspberry-Blueberry Tart

1 1/2 c. sifted flour	2 eggs, beaten
1/4 tsp. salt	1 1/2 qt. raspberries (or blueberries)
3/4 c. sugar	1 tsp. cornstarch
1 1/2 tsp. powdered sugar	2 eggs, beaten
1/2 c. butter	1/2 c. heavy cream

Sift flour, salt, 1 1/2 tablespoons sugar and cinnamon together. Beat butter until creamy; combine with flour mixture to make smooth dough. Add 2 beaten eggs; mix well. Chill dough 1-2 hours. Roll out to 1/8 inch thickness or spread with wooden spoon in 8 inch greased layer cake pan. Cover bottom and sides with pastry; crimp decorative edge around top. Bake in hot oven (450 degrees) for 15 minutes. Wash berries; drain. Add remaining sugar. Spread berries in baked shell; save the little raspberry (blueberry) juice which remains in bowl. Return tart to oven and reduce heat to moderate 375 degrees. Bake 10 minutes. Let cool.

Mix 1 teaspoon water and cornstarch; add to eggs and mix; add cream. Cook and stir in top of double boiler over hot water until custard is thickened. Pour over the slightly cooled tart. Let cool. Serves 6.

Time Saving Tips For Creating Your Appetizers:

- > **Plan It Out.** Make anything that you can in advance and put it in the freezer.
- > **Use Those Kitchen Gadgets.** Rogers' latest find is an asparagus peeler from Williams Sonoma.
- > **Have A System.** Store cookbooks and recipe files where you can easily get to them. Keep the ones that you use most often in front.
- > **Make Larger Batches.** When making dishes that freeze well, make larger batches and freeze for a later meal.
- > **Clean Your Kitchen Workspace As You Go.** When you're done there will be little left to clean.
- > **Prep Meat and Fish.** Meat can sit in an oil-based marinade for about 24 hours in the refrigerator, but fish should sit for no more than four to six hours. Place the meat or fish and the marinade in a re-sealable plastic bag, pop it into the refrigerator and flip the bag once or twice during the day – this way, the food will be ready when you are.