**Cheese Straw Tomato Tartlets**

**Crust**

* 2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
* 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
* 1/4 to 1/2 tsp. dried crushed red pepper
* 3/4 cup cold butter, cut into pieces
* 1 1/2 cups (6 oz.) shredded extra-sharp white Cheddar cheese
* 1/2 to 3/4 cup ice-cold water

**Filling**

* 2 pt. red and yellow cherry or grape tomatoes, cut in half lengthwise
* 3 garlic cloves, finely chopped
* 2 tablespoons chopped fresh basil
* 1 tablespoon chopped fresh oregano
* 1 tablespoon chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
* 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
* 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
* 1 teaspoon kosher salt
* 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
* Crumbled feta or shaved Parmesan cheese

1. Prepare Crust: Pulse first 3 ingredients in a food processor 3 or 4 times or until combined. Add butter, and pulse 5 or 6 times or until crumbly. Stir in cheese. With processor running, gradually add 1/2 cup ice-cold water, and process until dough forms a ball and pulls away from sides of bowl, adding more water, 1 Tbsp. at a time, if necessary.
2. Divide dough in half; place each half on a large piece of plastic wrap. Shape each into a flat disk. Wrap in plastic wrap, and chill 2 to 24 hours.
3. Prepare Filling: Toss together tomatoes and next 8 ingredients; let stand 1 to 1 1/2 hours.
4. Preheat oven to 400°. Roll 1 dough disk to 1/4-inch thickness on a lightly floured surface. Cut into 12 rounds using a 2 1/2-inch round cutter, rerolling dough as needed; press into cups of a lightly greased 12-cup miniature muffin pan. (Dough will come slightly up sides.) Repeat procedure with remaining dough disk and another muffin pan. Divide tomato mixture among cups.
5. Bake at 400° for 40 to 45 minutes or until golden. Remove from pans. Cool completely on a wire rack (about 15 minutes). Sprinkle with cheese. Makes about 2 dozen.

**Fresh Apple Cake**

* 1 1/2 cups chopped pecans
* 1/2 cup butter, melted
* 2 cups sugar
* 2 large eggs
* 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
* 2 cups all-purpose flour
* 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
* 1 teaspoon baking soda
* 1 teaspoon salt
* 2 1/2 pounds Granny Smith apples (about 4 large), peeled and cut into 1/4-inch-thick wedges
* Browned-Butter Frosting

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Bake pecans in a single layer in a shallow pan 5 to 7 minutes or until lightly toasted and fragrant, stirring halfway through.
2. Stir together butter and next 3 ingredients in a large bowl until blended.
3. Combine flour and next 3 ingredients; add to butter mixture, stirring until blended. Stir in apples and 1 cup pecans. (Batter will be very thick, similar to a cookie dough.) Spread batter into a lightly greased 13- x 9-inch pan.
4. Bake at 350° for 45 minutes or until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool completely in pan on a wire rack (about 45 minutes). Spread your choice of frosting over top of cake; sprinkle with remaining 1/2 cup pecans.

Makes 12 – 15 servings.

**Browned-Butter Frosting**

* 1 cup butter
* 1 (16-oz.) package powdered sugar
* 1/4 cup milk
* 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1. Cook butter in a small heavy saucepan over medium heat, stirring constantly, 6 to 8 minutes or until butter begins to turn golden brown. Remove pan from heat immediately, and pour butter into a small bowl. Cover and chill 1 hour or until butter is cool and begins to solidify.
2. Beat butter at medium speed with an electric mixer until fluffy; gradually add powdered sugar alternately with milk, beginning and ending with powdered sugar. Beat mixture at low speed until well blended after each addition. Stir in vanilla. Makes about 3 ½ cups.

**Lime-Raspberry Bites**

* 1 (8-oz.) container soft light cream cheese
* 1/2 cup powdered sugar
* 1 teaspoon lime zest
* 1 tablespoon fresh lime juice
* 2 (2.1-oz.) packages frozen mini-phyllo pastry shells, thawed
* 28  fresh raspberries
* 1 teaspoon powdered sugar

1. Stir together light cream cheese, 1/2 cup powdered sugar, and next 2 ingredients in a small bowl. Spoon cream cheese mixture evenly into pastry shells. Top each with 1 raspberry. Dust evenly with 1 tsp. powdered sugar just before serving. Yield: 28 tartlets.
2. Orange-Raspberry Bites: Substitute equal amounts orange rind and orange juice for lime rind and lime juice. Prepare recipe as directed.

### Caramelized Pear Cannoli with Praline Sauce

* 3 firm ripe pears, cut into 1-inch cubes
* 2 tablespoons granulated sugar
* 1 tablespoon butter, melted
* Parchment paper
* 1/2 cup chopped pecans
* 1 (8-oz.) package mascarpone cheese
* 1 teaspoon lemon zest
* 1/2 cup heavy cream
* 2 tablespoons powdered sugar
* 8 (5-inch-long) cannoli shells
* [Praline Sauce](http://www.myrecipes.com/recipe/praline-sauce-50400000116198/)
* [Garnish: Paper-Thin Pears](http://www.myrecipes.com/recipe/paper-thin-pears-50400000116210/)

1. Preheat oven to 400°. Toss together first 3 ingredients. Spread in a single layer on a parchment paper-lined 15- x 10-inch jelly-roll pan. Bake 30 to 35 minutes or until lightly browned and tender. Reduce oven temperature to 350°. Let pears cool 20 minutes.
2. Meanwhile, bake pecans at 350° in a single layer in a shallow pan 6 to 8 minutes or until toasted and fragrant, stirring halfway through.
3. Stir together pears, mascarpone, and lemon zest. Beat cream and powdered sugar at high speed with an electric mixer until soft peaks form. Fold whipped cream mixture into pear mixture.
4. Spoon pear mixture into a zip-top plastic freezer bag; snip 1 corner of bag to make a 1-inch hole. Pipe pear mixture into cannoli shells. Place in a 13- x 9-inch pan. Cover and chill 2 hours before serving. Serve cannoli with warm Praline Sauce, and sprinkle with toasted pecans. Garnish, if desired. Makes 8 servings.

Note: Get Caramelized Pear Cannoli made, stuffed, and in the fridge 2 days ahead.

**Praline Sauce**

* 1 cup firmly packed brown sugar
* 1/2 cup half-and-half
* 1/2 cup butter
* 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

1. Bring first 3 ingredients to a boil in a small saucepan over medium heat, stirring constantly. Cook, stirring constantly, 1 minute. Remove from heat, and stir in vanilla; cool slightly (about 10 minutes). Serve warm. Makes about 2 cups.

Note: Make 3 days ahead; cover, chill, then reheat over low heat.

**Next-Day Pickled Shrimp**

* 3 pounds peeled, jumbo cooked shrimp with tails
* 1 small red onion, sliced
* 1 medium-size yellow bell pepper, sliced
* 4 fresh bay leaves
* 1 cup canola oil
* 1 cup white balsamic vinegar
* 3 tablespoons sugar
* 1 tablespoon lemon zest
* 3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
* 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
* 1 tablespoon hot sauce
* 1 teaspoon kosher salt
* 2 garlic cloves, pressed
* 1 teaspoon dried crushed red pepper

1. Layer first 4 ingredients in an airtight container. Whisk together oil and next 9 ingredients; pour over shrimp mixture. Cover and chill 8 to 24 hours, stirring occasionally. Serve with a slotted spoon. Makes 12 to 15 appetizer servings.

**One-Pot Pasta with Tomato-Basil Sauce**

* 12 ounces casarecce or fusilli pasta or farfalle
* 1 (28-oz.) can diced tomatoes
* 2 cups chicken broth
* 1/2 medium-size yellow onion, sliced
* 4 garlic cloves, sliced
* 1 teaspoon dried oregano
* 1/3 cup firmly packed fresh basil leaves
* 1 teaspoon kosher salt
* 1 tablespoon olive oil
* 1/4 teaspoon dried crushed red pepper
* 1 (6-oz.) package baby spinach (optional)
* Freshly grated Parmesan cheese

1. Place first 9 ingredients and, if desired, dried crushed red pepper in a Dutch oven in order of ingredient list. Cover and bring to a boil over medium-high heat (about 12 to 15 minutes). Reduce heat to medium-low, and cook, covered, 10 to 12 minutes or until pasta is slightly al dente, stirring at 5-minute intervals.
2. Remove from heat, and stir in spinach if desired. Cover and let stand 10 minutes. Stir just before serving. Serve with Parmesan cheese. Makes 6 servings.
3. Shrimp Pasta Pot: Prepare recipe as directed, stirring in 1 lb. peeled large, raw shrimp, deveined, with spinach in Step 2.

**Scalloped Carrots**

* 1/4  cup butter
* 2   pounds carrots, peeled and sliced
* 1   onion, chopped
* 1  10 3/4 ounce can cream of celery soup
* 8   ounces sharp Cheddar cheese, grated
* 2/3  cup sour cream
* 1/3  cup milk
* 1  sleeve round buttery crackers, crushed
* 1   tablespoon butter, melted

**1.** Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Lightly grease a 13-x-9-x-2-inch dish; set aside.

**2.** Melt butter in a large skillet over medium heat. Add carrots and onion. Cook, stirring constantly, for approximately 15 minutes.

**3.** Add soup, cheese, sour cream, and milk, stirring to combine. Spoon into prepared baking dish.

**4.** In a mixing bowl, combine crushed crackers and melted butter. Sprinkle evenly over carrot mixture.

**5.** Bake until hot and bubbly, 30 to 40 minutes.

**6.** May be prepared ahead and baked the day of meal.

Yield: 10 servings.

**Blue Cheese “Hot Wing” Dip**

* 1 (8-oz.) package 1/3-less-fat cream cheese, softened and cut into pieces
* 1/2 cup loosely packed fresh flat-leaf parsley leaves
* 1/4 cup chopped green onions
* 1/4 cup reduced-fat mayonnaise
* 1/4 cup reduced-fat sour cream
* 2 tablespoons white wine vinegar
* 1 garlic clove, minced
* 1 teaspoon hot sauce
* 1 teaspoon lemon zest
* 1/2 teaspoon coarsely ground pepper
* 1 (4-oz.) package crumbled blue cheese
* 1 to 2 Tbsp. milk (optional)
* Garnishes: crumbled blue cheese, chopped green onions, freshly cracked pepper

1. Pulse first 10 ingredients in a food processor 4 times or just until blended. Transfer mixture to a serving bowl, and gently stir in blue cheese. If desired, stir in 1 to 2 Tbsp. milk, 1 tsp. at a time, for desired consistency. Cover and chill 1 to 2 hours before serving. Garnish, if desired. Serve with chicken tenders, celery sticks, radishes, and hot wing sauce. Store leftovers in refrigerator up to 7 days. Makes about 3 cups.

**Easy Blackberry Cobbler**

* 4 cups fresh blackberries
* 1 tablespoon lemon juice
* 1 large egg
* 1 cup sugar
* 1 cup all-purpose flour
* 6 tablespoons butter, melted
* Whipped cream (optional)
* Garnish: fresh mint sprig

1. Preheat oven to 375°. Place blackberries in a lightly greased 8-inch square baking dish; sprinkle with lemon juice. Stir together egg, sugar, and flour in a medium bowl until mixture resembles coarse meal. Sprinkle over fruit. Drizzle melted butter over topping. Bake at 375° for 35 minutes or until lightly browned and bubbly. Let stand 10 minutes. Serve warm with whipped cream, if desired. Garnish with fresh mint sprig, if desired.
2. For a neat presentation, bake for the same amount of time in 6 (8-oz.) ramekins on an aluminum foil-lined baking sheet.

**Chilled Vegetable Salad**

* 1 cup sugar
* 3/4 cup cider vinegar
* 1/2 cup vegetable oil
* 1 medium-size green bell pepper, chopped
* 1 medium onion, chopped
* 3 celery ribs, sliced
* 1 (7-ounce) jar diced pimiento, undrained
* 1 (15 1/4-ounce) can small sweet green peas, drained
* 1 (14 1/2-ounce) can French-cut green beans, drained
* 1 (11-ounce) can white shoepeg corn, drained
* 1/2 teaspoon salt
* 1/4 teaspoon pepper

1. Bring first 3 ingredients to a boil in small saucepan over medium heat; cook, stirring often, 5 minutes or until sugar dissolves. Remove dressing from heat, and cool 30 minutes.
2. Stir together chopped bell pepper and next 8 ingredients in a large bowl; gently stir in dressing. Cover and chill salad for 8 hours. Serve with a slotted spoon. Yield: 8 cups.

NOTE: Salad may be stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator for several days.