Two simple Hors D'oeuvres recipes that have been popular at family or friends’ gatherings.

Meatballs, Chili

This is a crowd pleaser. It’s easy to expand to large quantities or make a few just for you.

The key is good small meatballs. Frozen meatballs are fine. My favorite is frozen Italian meatballs at Sam’s and Costco. Of course, you could make your own.

Another key is Homade (yes, it’s spelled without the ‘e’.) Chili Sauce. Other chili sauces are okay?

Ingredients

For a small group about 20 meatballs about 1 lb. (Costco or Sam’s 6 lb. bags - 128 meatballs.)

½ cup Chile sauce, (I like Homade Chili Sauce Smiths or Vons. Heinz Chili sauce okay.)

½ cup Grape Jelly – use a name brand.

2 teaspoons chili-garlic sauce (to Lynn’s taste. Use less if you don’t like spicey.)

For large group – 2 to 3 pounds frozen Italian Meatballs from Costco or Sam’s (Comes in 6-pound bags)

Increase the quantity of sauce accordingly.

Instructions.

Microwave meatballs on high for 3 to 4 minutes (temperature above 165 degrees)

(Or for large quantities roast in oven. 3 pounds (1/2 bag) takes about 20 minutes in a 400-degree oven (turn partway through for an even roasting.)

In a sauce pan mix other ingredients chile sauce, grape jelly, and chile sauce. Heat and stir until jelly melts and mixture is thoroughly mixed. Add warm meatballs to sauce.

Serve in chafing dish with toothpicks. (I use a small crockpot for serving.)

Artichoke-Spinach Dip

This usually disappears at gatherings. (Modified from “Top Secret Restaurant Recipes”)

Ingredients

1 15 oz can artichoke hearts, rinsed and chopped coarsely. (Note if the leaves are tough, cut thin slices perpendicular to the fibers.)

1/2 cup cooked chopped spinach about 6 oz frozen – ½ 12-oz bag (note below)

8 oz cream cheese - Philadelphia, please

1/2 cup grated Parmesan Cheese (Fresh grated Italian Parmigianino Reggiano recommended)

1/2 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes

1/4 teaspoon salt (to taste)

1/8 teaspoon garlic powder

Dash ground pepper

Note Spinach Preparation

In a microwave safe container, cook 6 oz frozen cut or chopped spinach on high for 5 minutes until tender. (I just cook a whole bag for about 6 minutes and use the excess for other dishes.)

When it cools, squeeze out excess liquid in a cotton towel.

Instructions:

Heat the cream cheese in a small bowl in the microwave for 1 minute.

Add the spinach and artichoke hearts to the cream cheese - stir well.

Stir the remaining ingredients into the cream cheese mixture. Taste for seasoning.

Serve hot with Corn Chips, Croutons, Crackers

Can be made ahead of time and microwaved.