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## Sumptuous and simply delicious Super Bowl nibbles

By Susie Iventosch



Pan-fried olives with gorgonzola sauce and onion puff pastries. Photo Susie Iventosch

With Super Bowl right around the corner on Sunday, Feb. 4, here are some fancy finger foods to pass around your football gathering this year. These pan-fried olives and caramelized onion puff pastry treats are sure to be crowd pleasers. A friend sent me the onion puff pastry recipe, which he found in the instruction manual of his KitchenAid food processor! I've made the tarts a few times now, but the very best were those made with the Old Amsterdam premium aged Gouda from Trader Joe's. That cheese is amazing, and combined with puff pastry and caramelized onions, it's hard to go wrong.

For the fried olives, I used pitted Mt. Athos olives from the deli department and they were perfect for this recipe. These are halkidiki (or chalkidiki) olives - large, flavorful, green Greek olives. However, if you cannot find them, I would think any large, pitted green Greek olive would work well. Just don't use ripe green olives. They don't have the right flavor characteristics for this recipe. If you have the patience, it would be fun to stuff these

olives with blue cheese before breading them. The olives I bought were stuffed with red peppers, but I removed those before breading them.

Cooking Term of the Week

Whey

Whey is one of two primary proteins found in milk. It is also the liquid that is expelled from the curds during the cheese-making process. Whey is rich in protein but is often discarded in the process of making cheese. However, it can be used in place of milk or water in some recipes.

## Fried Olives with Gorgonzola Sauce

(Makes approximately 2 dozen)

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 pint pitted green Greek olives
- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 2 egg whites, beaten with a fork
- 3/4 cup plain bread crumbs (I used panko, but regular plain bread crumbs are okay)
- 2-3 Tbsp. olive oil
- Sauce:
  - 4 ounces crumbled Gorgonzola cheese
  - 3/4 cup cream or half & half
  - 1/2 tsp. ground white pepper

### DIRECTIONS

Remove any stuffing from the olives and rinse olives in cold water to remove some of the brine. Pat dry with paper towels. If you decide to stuff them with blue cheese or Gorgonzola, do it after rinsing and drying.

Stir egg whites and place in a small bowl. Place flour and panko in two other separate bowls. Working in batches, dredge olives in flour, then dip in egg white and roll in bread crumbs. Set olives on a plate until ready to fry.

Heat oil over medium-high heat and place olives in pan in batches. Cook until browned and crispy, turning as needed to brown both sides.

Meanwhile, heat cream in a sauce pan and bring just to a boil. Reduce heat and stir in gorgonzola until melted. Add white pepper. Serve hot as dipping sauce, or drizzle over olives before serving.

Caramelized onion puff pastry with aged Gouda cheese

(Makes approximately 16)

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 sheet frozen puff pastry
- 1 large yellow or red onion, cut into thin slices
- 2-3 Tbsp. olive oil
- 2 Tbsp. brown sugar
- 2 Tbsp. balsamic vinegar
- 1 teaspoon sea salt

6 ounces aged Gouda, grated

**DIRECTIONS**

Heat olive oil in a large frying pan. Add onions and cook over medium-high heat until translucent. Stir in brown sugar and balsamic vinegar and continue to cook over low heat until caramelized, approximately 20 to 30 minutes.

Place pastry sheet on a cutting board and cut into roughly 2-inch square pieces. Place squares on a baking sheet and pierce each with a fork. Bake at 400 F for about eight minutes. Remove from oven and make an indentation in the center of each with the back of a spoon.

Spoon onion mixture into each cavity and sprinkle generously with grated Gouda. Bake for an additional 8-10 minutes at 400 F until cheese is bubbly and beginning to brown. Serve warm.

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