

Savory tidbits make a perfect Super Bowl snack



Ingredients for Olive and Cheese Nuggets Photo Susie Iventosch

By Susie Iventosch

These savory rolls are super delicious and so easy to make. What I love about them is that they call for olive oil instead of butter and nonfat plain yogurt to bind them together. Not to mention, they are full of olive bits and grated cheese, two of our favorite foods! These tidbits are great with soups or salads, and if you make them bite-sized, they are a perfect appe-

tizer to pass. With Super Bowl just around the corner, these could be a nice addition to your menu.

Our favorite olive for this is Mt. Athos Greek green olives, but you can use any green olive you like, or even substitute Kalamata olives for a change-up. We used a combination of white and yellow cheddar, but either one works perfectly for this recipe.

Olive & Cheese Nuggets

(Make 14-16 dinner rolls, or 24 appetizer sized rolls)

INGREDIENTS

2 1/2 cups self-rising flour*
5 oz. olive oil
5 oz. nonfat plain yogurt
1 cup grated sharp white or yellow cheddar cheese, divided (3/4 cup for dough and 1/4 cup for topping)
3 oz. chopped green Greek olives

*Substitution for Self-Rising Flour:

You can make your own self-rising flour by using a ratio of 1 cup flour to 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder to 1/4 teaspoon fine salt)

DIRECTIONS

Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Preheat oven to 350 F.

Place flour and salt in a mixing bowl. Mix well with a fork or whisk. Add olive oil, yogurt, grated cheese and olives. Mix all well and gather into a ball. The dough will seem more like short bread or a scone at this point. Knead on a floured surface for just a minute or so just to make sure all of the flour is well-incorporated into the dough.

Divide dough into 14 or 16 round balls. (Make them smaller if you're planning to use these as an appetizer.)

Place dough balls on the prepared baking sheet. Press down slightly with finger tips. Evenly distribute the remaining 1/4 cup grated cheddar on the top of each dough ball.

Bake for approximately 15-20 minutes, or until rolls begin to get golden-brown on top and the cheese is melted. (Shorten the baking time if making smaller appetizer nuggets.)

Remove from the oven and let sit for 10 minutes to set up before serving. Serve warm. If you are making them in advance, store them in the refrigerator in an airtight container and reheat them in a low (200 F) oven for about 10 minutes to crisp them back up!

Susie can be reached at suziventosch@gmail.com. This recipe can be found on our website: www.lamorindaweekly.com If you would like to share your favorite recipe with Susie please contact her by email or call our office at (925) 377-0977. Or visit <https://treksandbites.com>



Pet dental health

Love means brushing your dog's teeth



Sierra gets her teeth brushed

Photo Wendy Scheck

By Mona Miller, DVM

February is National Pet Dental Health Month sponsored by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA). The AVMA webpage shows an image of an ice floe, which is a perfect picture to understand that what we see above the surface – the crown of the tooth – is only part of the structure of the tooth. Thus, it's only part of the problem when we smell stinky breath, see pus or blood at the gumline, or more commonly, have accumulation of years' worth of tartar buildup in our pet's mouth.

In the past, we as a community (veterinarians included) applied a lower standard of care and diagnostics to our pets than we apply to humans. As humans, we brush twice daily, go to the dentist twice yearly for deep cleanings, have radiographs taken every two years to examine the crown-root junctions and roots. We accept this level of care as basic.

Since its formation in 1988, the American Veterinary Dental College has sought to apply similar standards of care to our animal patients. Additionally, advanced dental care is now also available in

animals, usually through Veterinary Dental Specialists. Some examples include root canals, orthodontia for malocclusions, and prosthodontia for police dogs.

Here's a bit of historical perspective for those of us older individuals who grew up with dogs and cats, and whose parents and veterinarians spent minimal discussion on dental care. As a student at UC Davis School of Vet Med, I received about three to four hours of total instruction and laboratory to learn about oral/dental health and cleaning techniques. During spring 1990, my graduation year, I witnessed the build-out of a small room in the Teaching Hospital that would become the clinical practice Dental Suite. Nowadays, the current curriculum provides a full

three-week course with 10 hours of laboratory for all students, with additional elective hours available.

It is widely known that dental disease and bacterial infection contribute greatly to internal diseases, such as heart valve infection, kidney and liver disease, even overall blood stream infections, called sepsis.

The focus has shifted from taking care of obvious severe problems, such as abscessed loose teeth, to preventive oral health. In truth, dental disease is always occurring as a slow progression. It takes only 24 hours for the biofilm to build up on the surface of the teeth, extending down into the periodontal area, which is the key junction between crown and root. As humans, we slow down this progression with the twice-daily measure of brushing. It is reasonable to apply a standard of this type to our family pets.

Cleaning under the gumline is a key factor to slow down the progression of periodontal disease. This can best be accomplished with a thorough ultrasonic scaling cleaning. It would be ideal if dogs and cats understood what our goals are and were cooperative during the 30-60 minutes needed for a thorough cleaning, allowing us clear visualization, tolerating the equipment in their mouths, and rinsing when needed. Unfortunately, they do not. So, anesthesia is necessary for most animals in order to accomplish a thorough and complete dental cleaning and evaluation. Anesthesia is often the bulk of the expense of routine dental services.

Non-anesthetic teeth

cleaning remains a subject of controversy – both from the standpoints of high-quality medical care, and from the legal practice of veterinary medicine. Without anesthesia, cleaning is limited to scraping calculus off tooth crown surfaces, and applying a polish. It is difficult to do a deep cleaning under the gumline where periodontal disease originates, even in the most cooperative of patients. And it is almost impossible without anesthesia to do any level of thorough cleaning on the inner sides of the teeth, much less have the ability to evaluate for tooth decay or disruption. Non-anesthetic crown cleaning is best done in the hands of experienced veterinary staff, trained in proper restraint and dental cleaning. Additionally, these staff members must know when to stop – with loose teeth, excessive bleeding, pain, uncooperative patients – in order to “above all, do no harm.” I know of only a few veterinarians who have the skill set needed to train their staff in this way.

The California Veterinary Medical Board defines veterinary dentistry in part as the use of hard instruments to clean teeth. Veterinary staff are allowed to perform certain dental procedures under the direct supervision of a licensed veterinarian. Grooming services that offer non-anesthetic teeth cleaning and charge a fee are practicing veterinary dentistry, perhaps illegally if there is no veterinarian on the premise when this service is performed.

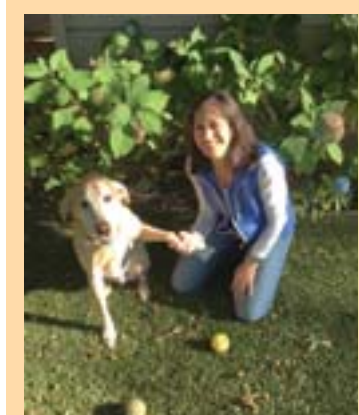
Whether it's non- or anesthetic deep cleaning, all cleaning sets the reset button to pearly whites. The most effective

method of maintaining oral and dental health is to provide regular frequent tooth brushings at home, and at a frequency that makes sense. The ideal would be to brush our pets' teeth twice daily, but most of us don't have that on our bandwidth. Brushing once weekly still provides a frequency comparable to more than 10%. I recommend to my clients that they try for three to four times weekly.

Tooth-brushing at home is most successful when the dogs and cats enjoy it, so it is worth taking some time (about 1 month) to habituate your pet slowly and gently to brushing. Make it a positive experience with lots of praise, and yummy flavorful dog/cat paste! It is worth the inexpensive investment in a pet brush or finger cap (like a thimble) for small pets, and a flavored dentifrice paste (malt, liver, chicken, etc.). American Kennel Club has a particularly good video available on YouTube, and these comments apply to cats too:

www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=F6S50BZU1D0

As with all health concerns, consult with your veterinarian about the specifics related to your own dog or cat!



Dr. Mona Miller lives in Lafayette with her son, two cats and yellow Labrador. She attended UC Berkeley as an undergraduate, and received her DVM from UC Davis. She has been happy to call Lafayette home since 2001. She can be reached via email at MonaSDVM@aol.com. She welcomes questions from readers that may get incorporated into a column.

GCCP presents 'Russian Valentine'



Bay Area musicians, Olga and Sergey Rakitchenkov Photo provided

Submitted by Pamela Freund-Striplen

Surprise your Valentine with a heartwarming program of music for harp and viola. Gold Coast Chamber Players presents “Russian Valentine” at 4 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 14 and provides an intimate glimpse into the musical and romantic lives of two legendary Bay Area musicians, Olga and Sergey

Rakitchenkov.

The program offers two pieces for viola and harp by Claude Debussy, Girl with the Flaxen Hair and Romance as well as Debussy's iconic Arabesques for solo harp. Select movements from Max Reger's Suite No. 1 for solo viola as well as Reger's rarely performed Romance are included. Music written for the couple by Dmitri Smirnov called Shadow and Light and

Duo for viola and harp by local composer Shinji Eshima will complete this heartwarming program.

After the concert, the couple will be available on Zoom for audience questions and socializing. Single tickets \$20. Concerts are live-streamed via YouTube LIVE. Purchase online at www.GCCPmusic.com or by calling (925) 283-3728.