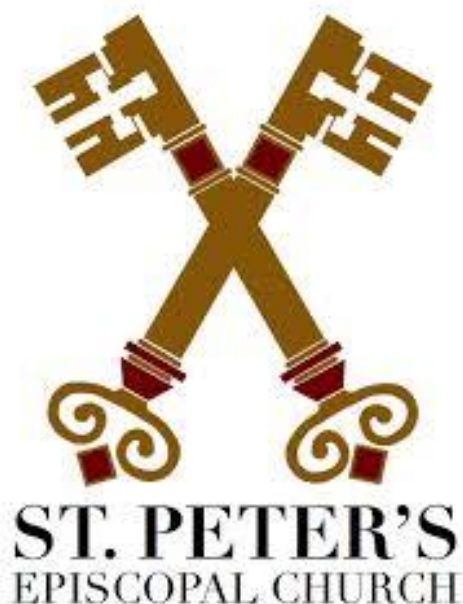




Meatless Appetizer Recipes

From St. Francis Fest Celebration

October 4, 2026

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Cowboy Caviar

Lynn Bauer

3 Roma tomatoes

2 Avocados diced

1/3 cup red onion diced

1 (15 oz) can black beans drained and rinsed

1 (15 oz) can blackeye peas rinsed and drained

1 ½ cups frozen corn kernels thawed

1 bell pepper diced, any color

1 jalapeno seeds removed, finely diced

1/3 cup cilantro

Tortilla scoops or chips for serving

Dressing

1/3 cup olive oil

2 tablespoons red wine vinegar

1 teaspoon granulated sugar

½ teaspoon of salt

¼ teaspoon garlic powder

Combine tomatoes, avocado, onion, black beans, black eyed peas, corn, pepper, jalapeno pepper, and cilantro in a large bowl. Toss and stir/toss well mixed.

In a separate bowl, whisk together olive oil, lime juice, red wine vinegar, sugar, salt pepper, and garlic powder.

Pour dressing over other ingredients and stir/toss well

Keep refrigerated. If not serving immediately stir/toss well before serving

Mediterranean Pinwheels

Jo De Burns

Ingredients:

6 cups (5 ounces) fresh baby spinach or ½ cup defrosted frozen spinach
4 burrito size 10-inch flour tortillas
8 ounces cream cheese or soft goat cheese (or combination)
1/3 cup finely chopped sundried tomatoes in oil or jarred roasted red peppers
½ tsp dried basil
½ tsp dried oregano
¼ tsp garlic powder
¼ tsp kosher salt
¾ cup shredded mozzarella cheese

Instructions:

Cook the spinach:

Place spinach leaves in a skillet with ¼ cup water. Heat over medium heat for a few minutes until spinach completely wilts down, about 2 to 3 minutes, stirring occasionally. Remove spinach to a bowl. Add cold water to instantly cool it, then squeeze out as much water as possible. Finely chop spinach. (If using frozen spinach, defrost it, squeeze out the liquid and finely chop it.)

Chop the filling ingredients:

Chop sundried tomatoes or roasted peppers.

Make the filling:

To a medium bowl, add the spinach, sundried tomatoes or roasted red peppers, cream cheese or goat cheese, basil, oregano, garlic powder, and salt. Mix until it comes together into a smooth filling. Taste and add a pinch of salt if desired.

Roll the pinwheels:

Place tortilla on cutting board and spread it with 1/3 cup of the filling. Sprinkle with 3 tbsp of mozzarella cheese. Roll up tortilla very tightly, making sure to keep tight at the beginning (to avoid a hole in the middle!). Repeat for all tortillas. Refrigerate in a sealed container for at least 2 hours to allow the filling to set. Slice off the ends of the rolls and discard, then slice into 3/4 - inch slices to make pinwheels. They last up to 3 days refrigerated, but taste best the day of because tortillas become softer over time.

Yield: 40 Pinwheels

Layered Bean Dip

Dot Closs

1 16 oz. can fat-free refried beans

1 15 oz. can black beans, rinsed and drained

½ cup reduced-fat sour cream

1 cup salsa, preferably a thicker one

1 cup (4 oz.) Mexican blend cheddar cheese shredded

Optional : chopped cilantro

Combine beans and spread in bottom of 8" pie pan or small casserole dish.

Spread with sour cream.

Top with salsa, then cheese.

Cover and bake for 20 minutes in preheated 375 degree oven.

Uncover and bake 10 more minutes, until bubbly

Serve with tortilla chips or crackers. Scoops work well.

Rutherford County Vegetable Spread

Malissa Hawkins

8 oz. cream cheese-softened

2/3 cup finely grated carrots

1/4 cup finely chopped onions

1/4 cup finely chopped cucumbers

1/4 cup finely chopped green pepper

1/4 cup finely chopped celery

1 tablespoon lemon juice

Drain green vegetables on paper towels, then mix everything together. Makes about 2 cups.

Layered Greek Dip

Lauren Hill

Ingredients

- 1 16 oz container of hummus
- 8 oz plain yogurt 2% works better than non fat
- 2 cloves garlic minced
- 2 teaspoons dried dill
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- 1 large english cucumber seeded and chopped or two mini cukes
- 2 tomatoes seeded and chopped or a handful of grape tomatoes halved
- 1/2 cup of chopped red, green or yellow peppers
- 1/2 cup crumbled feta cheese
- 1/3 cup chopped kalamata olives

Instructions

Combine yogurt, garlic, dill and lemon juice. Set aside.
Spread hummus in 8 x 8 dish and top with yogurt mixture.
Top with cucumbers, tomato, peppers, feta and olives.
Serve with pita chips, crackers or veggies for dipping

Spinach Dipping Sauce

Zerle Hubbard

1 16ounce jar of thick and chunky salsa (hot or mild depending on your taste)
1 8ounce package of cream cheese softened
2 and 1/2 cups of shredded Monterey Jack cheese
1 cup of half and half
1 and 1/2 tablespoons of vinegar
1 10ounce box of frozen chopped spinach, thawed and drained well Salt and pepper to taste
Paprika

Mix all ingredients in a 2 quart casserole and sprinkle top with paprika. Bake at 375 degrees for 30 minutes or until bubbly.
Serve hot or cold with chips of choice

THE Best Artichoke Dip (and easiest)

Wendy Lauber

Ingredients

- 1- 15 oz. can artichoke hearts drained and chopped
- 1- 7 oz. can diced mild green chiles undrained
- 8 ounces freshly shredded Parmesan cheese
- 2 scant cups [mayonnaise](#)

For Serving:

- Saltine crackers or sliced baguettes

Instructions

1. Pre-heat oven to 325F degrees.
2. In a medium bowl, mix artichoke hearts, green chiles, Parmesan, and mayonnaise. Stir until well combined.
1- 15 oz. can artichoke hearts,
1- 7 oz. can diced mild green chiles,
8 ounces freshly shredded Parmesan cheese, 2 scant cups mayonnaise
3. Pour mixture into a 2-quart baking dish or 9-inch glass pie plate (I find the pie plate works well).
4. Bake for 25-30 minutes, or until the top starts to just bubble and turn golden.
5. Serve hot with saltine crackers or sliced baguettes.

Notes

- For the creamiest dip, shred Parmesan from a block—avoid pre-shredded cheese.
- Bake until gently bubbling and cheese is melted; if it bubbles too hard, the mayonnaise may separate.
- Don't increase oven heat to rush baking, or the dip may turn greasy.
- Can be assembled ahead and refrigerated; add 4–5 minutes to bake time.
- Saltine crackers pair especially well with this dip, even more than baguette slices.

Whipped Ricotta

Cindy LoBue

15-16 oz container whole milk ricotta

1 tablespoon olive oil

In the bowl of a food processor, combine ricotta and olive oil and purée until light and fluffy, about 2 minutes.

Serve in a bowl topped with a few swirls of honey, a sprinkling of lemon zest and chopped salted pistachios. Serve with crackers, pita, or crostini. You could customize the topping with other nuts, chopped dried apricots, fresh thyme, black pepper.

Easy Cheese Ball (Party and Holiday Appetizer)

Melinda Long

This **festive Cheese Ball** is a creamy, savory, and slightly sweet appetizer that's perfect for entertaining during the holidays, parties, or for a game day spread. It combines tangy cream cheese, sharp cheddar, and fresh herbs, all coated in a crunchy layer of toasted pecans, cranberries, chives, and pumpkin seeds. It's the kind of **make-ahead, crowd-pleasing party dip** that instantly elevates any gathering.

Author: Julia's salbum.com

Ingredients

- 16 ounces full-fat cream cheese (2 bricks), softened
- 1 ½ cups sharp white cheddar shredded
- ¾ teaspoon garlic powder
- ¼ teaspoon fine sea salt
- ⅛ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 cup toasted pecans-roughly chopped, divided
- 1 cup dried cranberries-roughly chopped, divided
- 2 tablespoons parsley-finely chopped, divided
- 2 tablespoon chives finely chopped, divided
- 2 tablespoons pumpkin seeds

Instructions

- In a mixing bowl, add the cream cheese and beat until smooth and creamy. Add the shredded cheddar, garlic powder, salt, pepper, and half each of the pecans, cranberries, parsley, and chives.
- Mix until fully combined then bring the mixture together with your hands into a ball shape. It will be a bit sticky so lightly wetting your hands with water first will help.
- Spread the remaining pecans, cranberries and chives, along with the pumpkin seeds on a board, mixing them together.
- Next, roll the cheeseball on the board and use your hands to press the ingredients to it so it's completely coated. Cover with cling wrap and refrigerate for 30-45 minutes.
- When you're ready to serve, unwrap the cheeseball and place it on a serving platter.

- Surround it with your choice of crackers then garnish with rosemary sprigs for a festive presentation.
- Allow guests to dig in and help themselves. Enjoy!

Notes

- **This cheeseball is really customisable**, I've gone with cranberries and pecans but you could use pistachio and pomegranate or fig, walnuts and thyme.
- **Sharp white cheddar is ideal here**, it adds depth without altering the elegant white interior.
- **Fun additions:** Add 1-2 teaspoons Dijon mustard to the cheese mix for subtle warmth and acidity. Or, add 1-2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce for deep, savory umami.
- **This recipe is very make-ahead friendly.** In fact, the flavor improves after a few hours in the fridge.

Storage

- **Room Temperature:** Keep out for up to 2 hours while serving.
- **Refrigerator:** Store tightly wrapped for up to 5 days.

Savory Cucumber Sandwich Recipe

Sandy McKenna

Italian salad dressing easily flavors this simple spread. Serve it as a dip with crackers and veggies or use it as a sandwich filling.

Ingredients:

- 1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese, softened
- ½ cup mayonnaise
- 1 envelope Italian salad dressing mix (dry mix; I use a little less because 1 whole envelope is too salty)
- 36 slices snack rye bread or pumpernickel bread
- 1 medium cucumber, sliced
- Sprinkle cucumber with dry dill weed (the original recipe does not call for this, I always add it on)

Directions:

- In a small bowl, combine the cream cheese, mayonnaise and salad dressing mix.
- Just before serving, spread over rye bread; top each with a cucumber slice.
- Yield: 3 dozen.

Soft Pretzel Bites

Nell Orscheln

Ingredients:

1 cup warm water (~110-115°F)
1 Tablespoon sugar
1 pack active yeast (~2¼ teaspoons)
3 cups bread (or all purpose) flour
2 Tablespoons butter
1 tsp. salt
9 cups water
½ cup baking soda
1 egg
1 Tablespoon water
Coarse salt (or pretzel salt)
Melted butter

Instructions:

To make the pretzel bites: In a large mixing bowl, whisk the warm water and sugar together. Gently stir in the yeast and allow to stand for 5 minutes until the mixture is foamy.

Add 2 cups flour, the melted butter, and salt to the yeast mixture and stir until well combined. This is where you can use your own judgement. Start kneading the dough on a floured surface adding up to 1 more cup of flour but no more. Knead for at least 3 minutes until the dough is not sticky. Form the dough into a ball and place in a lightly oiled bowl. Cover the dough and allow it to rest in a warm area for 30 minutes.

To make the baking soda bath: Once the dough is ready, preheat the oven to 425°F. Line two large baking sheets with parchment paper and set aside. Pour the 9 cups of water and baking soda into a large pot over medium-high heat and stir until well combined. Divide the dough into 6 equal pieces. Roll out each piece into a rope about 15 inches in length. Cut each rope into smaller pieces that are about 1 ½ inches long, you should end up with 10 pieces per rope = 60 pretzel bites.

Once the water and baking soda has come to a boil, use a slotted spoon to carefully lower a few of the pretzel bites into the boiling water for 10 to 15 seconds. Gently lift the pretzel bites out of the water and allow any excess water to drip off. Transfer the pretzel bites to the prepared baking sheets, making sure to leave a little room between each one. Repeat with the remaining pieces of pretzel dough.

To make the egg wash: Add the egg and water to a small mixing bowl and whisk or beat well with a fork. Brush the top of each pretzel bite with egg wash, then top with coarse salt.

Bake for 10 to 12 minutes or until baked through and have that classic pretzel golden brown color. Remove the pretzels from the oven and brush each one with a little melted butter, if

desired. You could add cinnamon and sugar along with more butter here now too and dip in a quick icing as a sweet variation. These are best served straight from the oven!

Beer Cheese Pretzel Dip

Ingredients:

2 Tablespoons butter
3 Tablespoons flour
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup half and half or milk
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup beer, poured and let foam go down (lager or IPA)
1 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
1 tsp. Dijon mustard
1 tsp. horseradish
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. garlic powder
 $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. paprika
 $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. salt
Pepper to taste
2.5 cups cheese (extra sharp cheddar but can add other soft cheeses like Monterey jack)
Green onions

Instructions:

This recipe goes so fast, it's best to have everything laid out before you start-especially the cheese needs to be grated and ready and the beer needs to be poured out with no more foam.

Melt butter in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Add the flour and whisk together until a thick and clumpy paste forms, about one minute. In a slow and steady stream, whisk in the milk. After it's all added, continue whisking until it slightly thickens, about 1 minute.

One at a time add the remaining ingredients with the cheese last. Remove the dip from the heat soon after, or even before, adding the cheese. Sprinkle green onions on top or even mix in. Good for dipping soft pretzels or apples.

Roasted Carrot Tart

Linda Remick

Ingredients:

- 4 oz goat cheese
- 4 oz cream cheese
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh dill
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley
- 2 tbl chopped fresh chives
- Zest of one small lemon
- 1 tbl fresh lemon juice
- 1/4 tsp sea salt
- Freshly ground black pepper to taste
- ~ 1 lb carrots, regular or multi colored, scrubbed or peeled, and quartered lengthwise
- 1/2 tsp Kosher salt, 1/4 tsp coarsely ground black pepper
- 1 tbl olive oil
- 1 sheet of frozen puff pastry, 9 x 13
- 2 tbl butter, melted

- Optional: 1/4 cup toasted nuts of your choice, chopped (walnuts, almonds, or pistachios)
- Flakey sea salt

1. Preheat oven to 400 F with racks in the upper and lower thirds of the oven.
2. Toss the prepared carrots with 1 tbl olive oil and salt and pepper and place in a single layer on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper or foil. Roast on the upper rack of the oven until lightly browned, 15-20 minutes.
3. While the carrots are roasting prepare the cheese mixture (1st 9 ingredients listed above). This can be done in a food processor or in a medium bowl. Mix until smooth.
4. Prepare the puff pastry sheet. On a lightly floured surface, lightly roll the pastry sheet into a 9x13 rectangle and place it on a parchment lined baking sheet. Use a fork to poke the pastry to prevent it from puffing up. Bake on the bottom rack of the oven 12 to 14 minutes.
5. Spread the herb and cheese mixture on the baked pastry leaving a 1 inch border, then top with the roasted carrots. Brush the edges of the pastry with the melted butter. Return the pan to the lower rack of the oven and bake an additional 10 to 15 minutes until the cheese is heated through and the carrots have further caramelized. Remove from the oven and sprinkle with the toasted nuts, if using, and a little flakey sea salt.
6. Use the parchment paper to transfer the tart to a cutting board and use a very sharp knife to cut into rectangles of desired size.
OPTION if you don't wish to prepare the herbed cheese, substitute 6 to 8 oz of an already prepared herbed cheese such as Boursin.

Artichoke Dip

Delores Smith

1 (14 ounce) can artichoke hearts, drained and chopped
1 cup grated Parmesan cheese
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup mayonnaise
1 clove garlic; minced
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon Worcestershire sauce (vegetarian)
 $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon hot sauce

Combine all ingredients, stirring well. Spoon into a lightly greased 1 quart casserole. Bake, uncovered, at 350 for 20 minutes or until bubbly. Serve with Melba toast rounds.
I baked it in a crockpot on low 2 1/2 hours and topped with more Parmesan.

Strawberry Pretzel Dip

Delores Smith

Ingredients

8 oz cream cheese, softened
 $\frac{1}{3}$ cup sugar
pinch of salt
8 oz tub of whipped topping
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup strawberry pie filling, divided
Pretzels for serving

Instructions

Beat together softened cream cheese, sugar, and salt until smooth
Fold in Whipped topping
Stir in $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the strawberry filling
Pour into a serving bowl. Top with remaining pie filling.
Refrigerate until ready to serve. Serve with pretzel chips.