

# P Is for Party



I was reading a design magazine recently and saw a party planning feature. The woman was talking about how you don't need to know how to cook (even a lick), but you can still have a cocktail party.

She said all you need are the 3 Ps.

Parmesan, potato chips and Prosecco.

That's it.

Her idea was that you go out and buy a really fine piece of Parmesan-Reggiano.

Put it on a nice platter. Cut some bits off of it with a cheese cutter. And leave the cheese cutter next to it so people can serve themselves.

Get out some pretty, small bowls and stack them with potato chips. Her idea was to prop the potato chips upright. Then sprinkle something on them. One idea might be a grating of pepper. Another idea could be Italian herbs or even a rub mixture.

Then serve Prosecco in some pretty flutes and there you have it.

Cocktail party.

I “borrowed” that idea and expanded on it.

At my party, I served the Parmesan. Truth be told I’ve done that before. I love to nibble on bits of Parmesan and drink wine. It’s a perfectly simple opener to a dinner party. You just have to make sure you buy the good Parmesan.

I served the potato chips, too. I sprinkled a meat rub on them that is one of my favorites.

I also served Prosecco but I turned it into party punch. All I did was make up some cranberry apple iced tea and served half iced tea and half Prosecco in some pretty flutes.

Then I kept going. I did a marinated party salad of veggies soaked overnight in Italian dressing. I had a vegan in attendance at my party and wanted to make sure there were a few things that fit her diet. This was one.

Prosciutto on a platter with olives and nuts provided a nice antipasti platter. The accompaniments also provided more vegan options.

I served pork sliders with bread and butter pickles. I bought pulled pork at the grocer and found a fairly healthy barbecue sauce. All I had to do was mix them together and put it in a crock-pot to heat. Tiny buns on the side.

For dessert, I served my peanut clusters. Dark chocolate wonders.

And I broke all out and served gourmet caramel corn, but I took it up a notch and served it with mixed nuts scattered throughout. The caramel corn is a carbohydrate nightmare but if you put in the mixed nuts and people just eat a handful, the

nuts make it less carby and take down the glyceemic uptake.

Did you notice everything on my menu started with a *P*? I've never done a theme like that before. It was really fun designing the menu and it all worked out great. I hardly had to do any cooking either. This made for a super-easy weekday cocktail party for 15.

Cheers,

Enjoy!

*Zola*



# Dark Chocolate Peanut Clusters

These are delightfully decadent treats. CAUTION: Treat them like candy!