

Root vegetable crisps

Serves 4

Root vegetable crisps are a healthier and tastier alternative to your standard potato snack and are ready to go in minutes. We've added a few flavours into the mix, but there's nothing to stop you from making your own recipes. Once they have cooled down, protect their crispiness by sealing them in an air-tight container. Then, when you arrive at your perfect picnic spot, open them up and watch them vanish in no time at all.

Ingredients

1 sweet potato
1 large carrot
1 large parsnip
3 small turnips
2 medium beetroot
200g/7oz butternut squash, peeled
1L/33 fl oz vegetable oil
1 tbsp cumin seeds
½ tbsp sea salt
1 tsp smoked paprika
½ tsp black peppercorns, crushed



1. Scrub all the vegetables (except the squash).
2. Using a mandolin, slice all the vegetables up. The pieces should be 1–2mm thick.
3. Dry fry the cumin seeds for 1 minute, mix with the salt, paprika and pepper. Then crush in a pestle and mortar.
4. Line a large baking tray with kitchen paper.
5. Fill a very large, heavy-based saucepan one third full of oil and heat to approximately 180°C (when a vegetable slice sizzles slowly).
6. Fry small amounts of each vegetable for 1–2 minutes at a time until start to turn golden at the edges. Fry the beetroot slices last, as they will dye the oil.
7. Remove the fried slices with a slotted spoon, and then drain on the kitchen paper.
8. Sprinkle with the crisps with the cumin/salt/pepper/paprika mix. The crisps will firm up as they cool.

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Parsley potato salad

Serves 6

What would a picnic be without a potato salad? Full of flavour and wholesome goodness, our parsley potato salad is quick and easy enough easy to make in just 15 minutes. There's enough here to feed even the hungriest of families and there'll still be some left over.

Ingredients

800g/28oz small new potatoes
1 small red onion, thinly sliced
Juice of ½ lemon
6 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
2 tbsp capers, rinsed and drained
Large handful fresh flatleaf parsley
leaves, chopped



1. Scrub the new potatoes and let them simmer then in a pan of slightly salty boiling water for 10 – 12 minutes.
2. Mix together the red onion, lemon juice, olive oil, capers and parsley. Once mixed, add the new potatoes (halved).
3. Season with salt and pepper, as required. Simple but tasty potato salad!

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Vegetable sticks and dips

Serves 8

Okay, so you've got wraps, you've got puddings, but now you need to add something a bit healthier, enter the vegetable stick. With dips that you can prepare in just 30 minutes, this dish is a great way of getting your five a day. I always find that the kids are more likely to eat their greens when they get involved in the making. So grab their apron and chef's hat and get cooking!

Ingredients

For the houmous:

2 cloves garlic, peeled and crushed
2 tbsp olive oil
400g/14oz chickpeas, drained, liquid reserved
1 tbsp sesame seeds

For the vegetable sticks:

1 pack/bunch baby carrots
1 pepper (either red, yellow or orange)
8 celery sticks
1 cucumber portion
24 sesame seed breadsticks

For the tomato salsa:

400g/14oz tin of chopped tomatoes, drained
Half a large onion, peeled and finely chopped
1 garlic clove, peeled and crushed
1 tbsp mixed herbs
1 tbsp tomato puree
1 tbsp olive oil
Chilli powder

Tomato salsa:

1. Mix the tomatoes, onion, garlic, herbs, tomato puree and olive oil in a bowl.
2. Add the chilli powder as required.
3. Chill for at least 30 minutes before serving.

Homous:

1. Put the garlic and 3 tbsp olive oil in a saucepan and cook over a medium heat for 3 minutes.
2. Blend the chickpeas and 1 tbsp of olive oil in a blender or food processor until smooth.
3. Mix the garlic, sesame seeds and the chickpea paste by hand. Season to taste.
4. Refrigerate for at least 30 minutes before serving.

Vegetable sticks:

1. Wash and scrub the carrots and using a sharp knife, remove the tops
2. De-seed pepper and cut into strips.
3. Wash the celery, chop the two ends off and cut each stick in half
4. Cut the cucumber in half lengthways, then cut each piece into 8 sticks.
5. Keep in sealable containers until needed to avoid the vegetables drying out.

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Chicken wraps

Serves 8

Delicious chicken wraps with a slight hint of spice. Homemade food is much cheaper and far healthier than buying the supermarket alternative and you can get the kids involved in the making process too. You can prepare this dish in minutes and it cooks in less than 30 minutes in the oven. For the best flavours, we recommend you prepare the chicken the night before.

Ingredients

- 4 chicken breast fillets
- 2 tbsp soy sauce
- 1/2 bag of lettuce of choice
- 3 tbsp clear honey
- 150ml/5fl oz of orange juice
- 8 cherry tomatoes
- 1/2 red pepper (cut into thin strips)
- 1/2 tsp mild chilli powder
- 4 tortilla wraps
- 8 tbsp of garlic mayonnaise



1. Place chicken breasts into a roasting tin.
2. Mix the soy sauce, honey, orange juice and chilli into a bowl to produce the marinade.
3. Pour the marinade over the chicken. Ensure the fillets are well coated by turning them in the mixture.
4. Cover the roasting tin with cling film and leave them to marinade in the fridge for 1 hour (or overnight if possible).
5. Preheat the oven to 220°C/425°F/gas mark 7.
6. Remove the cling film from the roasting tin and coat the chicken once more in the marinade.
7. Roast the chicken for 25-30 minutes, turning the breast fillets half way through.
8. Once the breast fillets are cool, slice into strips.
9. Take a tortilla wrap and put it on a flat surface. Spread some garlic mayonnaise down the centre of the tortilla. Add the chicken, some pepper strips, lettuce and two cherry tomatoes (cut into quarters).
10. Roll the tortilla wrap over the filling into a sausage shape. Slice the tortilla wrap in half to give you two equally sized picnic wraps. Delicious!

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Cheese and onion tarts

Serves 4

Another great starter for your picnic is the delicious cheese and onion tart. The creamy cheese is undercut by sweet caramelized onion flavours. Yuummmmy. Pack these in your picnic bag and we guarantee they'll all be gone by the time you come home again.

Ingredients

75g/3oz cheddar cheese, grated

200g/7oz shortcrust pastry

15g/1/2 oz butter

1 onion, chopped

1 egg

90ml/3 fl.oz. milk



1. Preheat the oven to 190°C/375°F/gas mark 5.
2. Roll the pastry to a 4mm thickness on a lightly floured surface. Use a 10cm/4 inch pastry cutter to cut out 4 round shapes and place into tart tins.
3. Melt the butter in a pan, add the onion and fry gently until soft and transparent.
4. Divide the onion mixture evenly between the 4 tart tins and sprinkle the grated cheddar over the top.
5. In a jug, beat together the milk and egg and season with salt and pepper as desired.
6. Pour the egg mixture over the cheese and onion in the tart tins.
7. Bake for 30 -35 minutes until golden brown.
8. Allow to cool on wire racks.

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Sausage and spinach quiche

Serves 4

What child doesn't like sausages? And wasn't it spinach that gave Popeye all his strength? The quiche takes a little longer to make than the other recipes listed here so we recommend you get these made the night before. Enjoy hot or cold on the day.

Ingredients

200g/7oz shortcrust pastry
15g/1/2 oz butter
50g/2oz washed fresh spinach
225g/8oz chipolata sausages
1 large onion, chopped
25g/1oz plain flour
300ml/10 fl.oz. milk
1 egg



1. Preheat the oven to 190°C/375°F/gas mark 5.
2. Roll out the pastry to 6mm/1/4 inch thickness and line an 18cm/7 inch flan tin.
3. Cut the sausages into thick slices diagonally. Melt the butter in a frying pan, add the sausages and onion and fry gently for 5-8 minutes turning from time to time.
4. Meanwhile, cook the spinach in water for 2-3 minutes until just wilted. Drain well and chop.
5. Sprinkle the flour over the sausage and onion mixture and cook for 1 minute, stirring. Then gradually add the milk, a little at a time, and continue to cook for 2-3 minutes, stirring constantly, until the mixture comes to the boil and thickens.
6. Stir in the cooked spinach, season as required and cook for a further minute.
7. Finally, stir in the egg and mix well.
8. Pour the mixture into the pastry case and bake for 45 minutes.
9. This tasty picnic treat can be served either hot or cold.

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Lemon & lime muffins

Makes approximately 10 muffins

Everybody loves mum's homemade cakes, and what better way to finish off your picnic than by enjoying a delicious citrus-infused muffin? These delicious cakes cook in 30 minutes and prove a real hit with everybody, every time.

Ingredients

For the muffins:

2 eggs
300g/10oz plain flour
85g/3oz caster sugar
240ml/8fl oz milk
100ml/3½fl oz vegetable oil
3 tsp baking powder
½ tsp salt
2 lemons, zest only
2 limes, zest only

For the icing:

50g/2oz icing sugar
½ lemon, juice only
½ lime, juice only



1. Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/gas mark 6.
2. Beat the egg and mix with the caster sugar, milk and oil in a bowl.
3. Line a muffin tin with paper cases and spoon the mixture evenly between the cases.
4. Cook in the oven for approximately 30-35 minutes or until the muffins are golden brown. Once cooked, cool on a wire rack.
5. Combine the icing sugar, lemon juice and lime juice to make the icing.
6. Use the icing to top the muffins. Easy, melt-in-your-mouth muffins!

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Queen of hearts jam tarts

Makes 8 tarts

Another tasty accompaniment to your family picnic, the classic jam tart. These mouth-wateringly good tarts bake in just 12 minutes and are ready to eat in less than thirty minutes making them a perfect last-minute addition to your picnic. Make sure you've got plenty of wipes though - jam can get pretty sticky.

Ingredients

300g/10oz all-butter shortcrust pastry

16 tsp jam of choice

Flour, for dusting



1. Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/gas mark 6.
2. Using a rolling pin and a lightly floured surface, flatten the pastry to a 3mm thickness.
3. Use a 7-8cm heart shaped pastry cutter to stamp out 8 hearts.
4. Using a palette knife to loosen the underneath of the pastry, move the pastry shapes into heart moulds.
5. Give each heart 2 teaspoons of jam.
6. Bake the tarts for around 12 minutes or until the pastry is a light golden colour.
7. Cool the tarts for at least 30 minutes before serving - jam gets very hot when heated. The result is jam tarts your little ones will love!

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