

Hot Trends in Hors D'Oeuvres and Canapés

by Thei Zervaki

Upcoming Trend

According to Shai Tertner of Shiraz Events, a new trend is molecular gastronomy:

"We created caviar-looking drops of flavor using molecular gastronomy. Lately, we've been serving a small bite-sized dessert with chocolate cups filled with grape mousse and pomegranate 'caviar.'"

Cost-Effective Trend Edible Cutlery and Plates/ Glasses

Unique and surprising to the guest but also easy to prepare and to serve (and you don't have to do the dishes). Banana leaves that will "fit" a rice dish, plates made from baked dough, cups from rice paper, knives and forks from crusty bread or chocolate or a tomato base for a pasta canapé are a few to give you ideas!



Definitions

Ceviche: Raw fish marinated in lime or lemon juice with olive oil and spices and served as an appetizer, born between Peru and Ecuador

Biryani: A set of rice-based foods made with spices, rice (usually basmati) and meat, fish, eggs or vegetables, an Indian/South Asian specialty

Popsicle: Ice cream or water ice on a small wooden stick



The economy turned south during 2009, and that affected the event planning and catering business field. Although catering companies claimed they lost many corporate clients, they continued to organize events and to customize their catering endeavors to satisfy their new and existing clients as well as to save some dollars.

So, what is currently hot in hors d'oeuvres and canapés around the country?

Diane Gordon of Diane Gordon Catering (www.dianegordancatering.com), a NYC-based company, says the trend is any kind of canapé inspired by "street food."

"High-end takes on empanadas filled with duck, parsnips and prunes and small plates of lobster biryani are two favorites," says Gordon. "Crab tacos are a big hit, and little steak, pepper and onion sandwiches are also very trendy, together with steamed dumplings."

Shai Tertner, president of Shiraz Events (www.shirazevents.com), a catering company in Miami and New York agrees.

"Gourmet fusion empanadas are hot in Miami," Tertner says. "The Latin community in Miami is so strong, so we've taken a basic concept of the empanada and created gourmet fusion empanadas, for example, filling them with foie gras and date compote."

A new trend popular not only in New York but also in California and the southern states

has emigrated from Peruvian and Ecuadorean cuisines. It is called ceviche.

Gordon says, "The scallop ceviche is of a high demand. We serve it on homemade nori chips or little ceramic spoons."

But if street food-inspired canapés are popular in New York, more traditional foods are hot in Savannah, Ga. Susan Mason of Susan Mason Catering (www.susanmasoncatering.com), a Savannah-based catering company, says that tomato sandwiches, mini crab cakes and fried oysters are always popular, and so is macaroni and cheese served in small ramekins.

"We also serve sliders of tuna or beef, but a new favorite is shrimp corn dogs," Mason says.

Food that is "hot" in Miami isn't necessarily served warm. What they call "lollipops" in Miami are known as "popsicles" in the Northeast, and they can be either sweet or savory. From cucumber and clam chowder to watermelon and hot pepper to basil and mint popsicles, all are refreshing and unexpectedly pretty and unique. They give a different flavor to an event, and they appeal to all ages.

"Lollipops are popular in Miami," says Tertner. "Local guests love their lollipops, so we aim to please and serve salmon and goat cheese lollipops as well as frozen red grape with pistachio and blue cheese. The cold soup bar is very hot: watermelon gazpacho, chilled apple-ginger-carrot, chilled sweet pea and mint in demi cups. Guests at the MOCA Gala found it irresistible."

As for desserts, passing bite treats are the best. Gordon has been serving liquid desserts such as mini sippable panna cottas and "inside out" molten chocolate cakes and chocolate chip bars. An upcoming trend is bacon and peanut brittles, Oreo balls and mini cupcakes: nostalgic foods that are not only tasty on the palate but that also satisfy the hidden inner child. And if you want to serve a dessert drink, a milkshake will do the job.

Don't they all sound mouth-wateringly delicious?

FROM THE KITCHEN



Calamari Fritto Fried Calamari Serves 5

There is no real trick to fried food, other than perfect primary ingredients.

Ingredients:

30 oz. calamari, cleaned and drained
5 oz. calamari fry mix flour
2 oz. buttermilk
2 oz. roasted pepper, cut in strips
10 oz. pepperdew dipping sauce
5 ea. half lemons, grilled

Method:

Clean and drain the calamari, cut the tub into 1-inch rings and leave the tentacle. Combine the calamari with the buttermilk. Strain the calamari to remove the buttermilk, carefully mix the calamari with the calamari fry mix and then toss into a large strainer and bat it against your hand to remove the excess fry mix. Carefully drop the calamari into 375° F fry oil and cook until golden brown and crispy, about one minute. Transfer to a plate lined with paper towels to drain. Season the calamari with roasted pepper strips and grilled lemon and serve with pepperdew dipping sauce.

Calamari Fry Mix Flour Serves 5

Ingredients:

1 lb. Krispy Fry Mix or Wondra flour
1 cup cornstarch
6 oz. blackened seasoning blends

Method:

Combine all ingredients evenly in a large mixing bowl.

Pepperdew Dipping Sauce Serves 5

Ingredients:

1 cup pepperdew peppers
5 oz. extra virgin olive oil
Salt to taste

Method:

Drain the pepperdew peppers, carefully drop into a blender with extra virgin olive oil and fully mix with salt to taste.