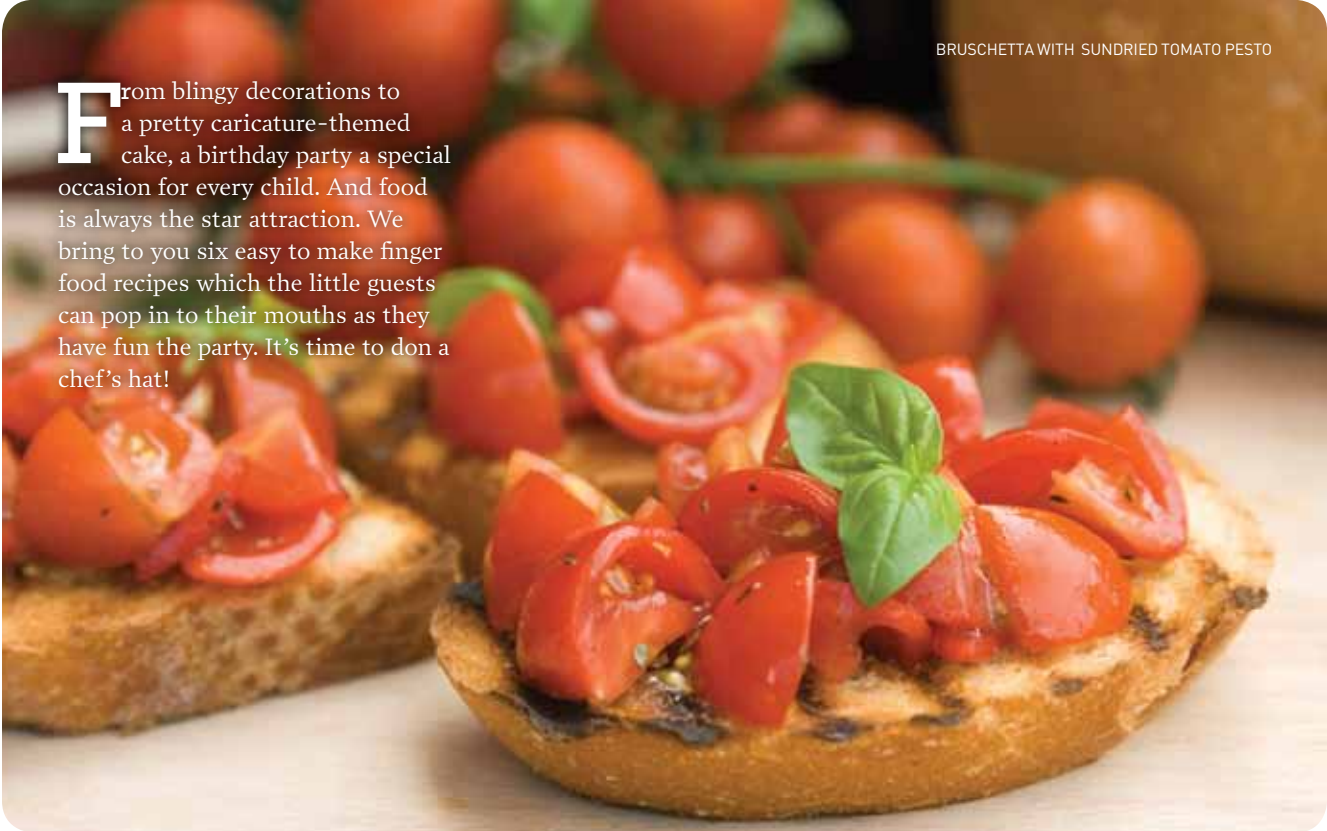


glam it up

Celebrate that special day in your kid’s life with these delectable recipes, themed around the birthday party.

by NIKHIL MERCHANT



BRUSCHETTA WITH SUNDRIED TOMATO PESTO

From blingy decorations to a pretty caricature-themed cake, a birthday party a special occasion for every child. And food is always the star attraction. We bring to you six easy to make finger food recipes which the little guests can pop in to their mouths as they have fun the party. It’s time to don a chef’s hat!

- 1 loaf of baguette (cut into 1/2" thick slices)
- Garlic cloves 5
- Chopped pine nuts or hazelnuts 1/4 cup
- Chopped coriander 2 tablespoon
- Sundried tomatoes in olive oil 200gm
- Basil leaves 15
- Small onion, chopped fine 1
- Tomato paste 2 tablespoon
- Tomatoes chopped finely 6 to 7
- Parmesan cheese 1/2 cup
- Lemon juice 1 tablespoon
- Paprika 1 tablespoon
- Pizza seasoning 1 tablespoon
- Salt and pepper

BRUSCHETTA WITH SUNDRIED TOMATO PESTO

A succulent twist to the original bruschetta, the bread is first layered with homemade sundried tomato pesto and then topped with lightly flavoured and tart tomatoes. Use a good baguette for the preparation so that the little guests can hold it better.

Method

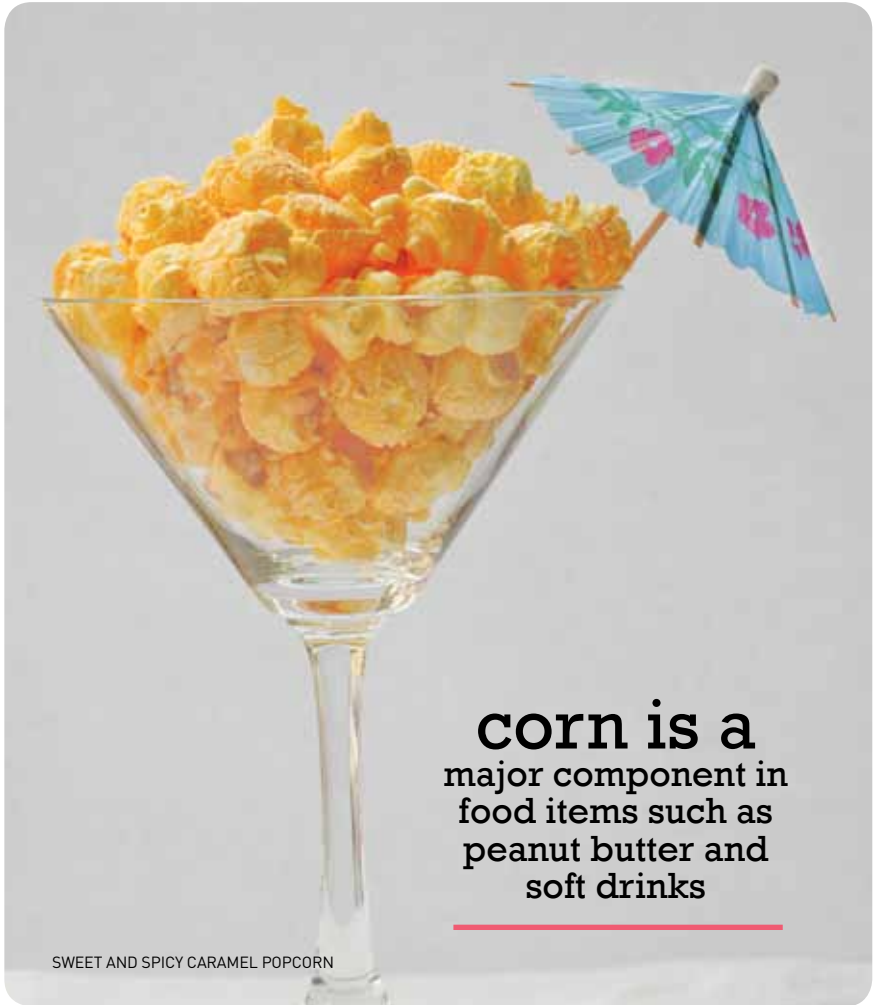
1. Preheat the oven to 180°C.
2. Now put sundried tomatoes (with olive oil), nuts, onions, tomato paste, vinegar, basil, coriander and parmesan cheese (1/2 cup) in a blender. Whizz till well incorporated. You can leave it a little rough if desired. Spoon out into a cup and keep the mixture aside.
3. Mix fresh tomatoes, lemon juice, chopped basil, paprika, pizza seasoning, salt and pepper in a bowl.
4. Proceed by slathering the pesto onto the sliced baguette on one side.
5. Now top with a tablespoon of fresh tomato bruschetta mix. Top with grated parmesan.
6. Flash bake in the preheated oven for about eight minutes until warm.
7. Serve with a few leaves of coriander for garnish.

SWEET AND SPICY CARAMEL POPCORN

Feel like a movie-themed party? Well, you must know that it’s not complete without some popcorns. This yummy gourmet version will keep your kid and his friends licking their fingers off. Make the popcorn ahead of time and flavour it before serving.

Method

1. Heat a frying pan on medium flame.
2. Place sugar and water in another vessel and melt it on a high flame till it bubbles. You need to stir it into a nice thick



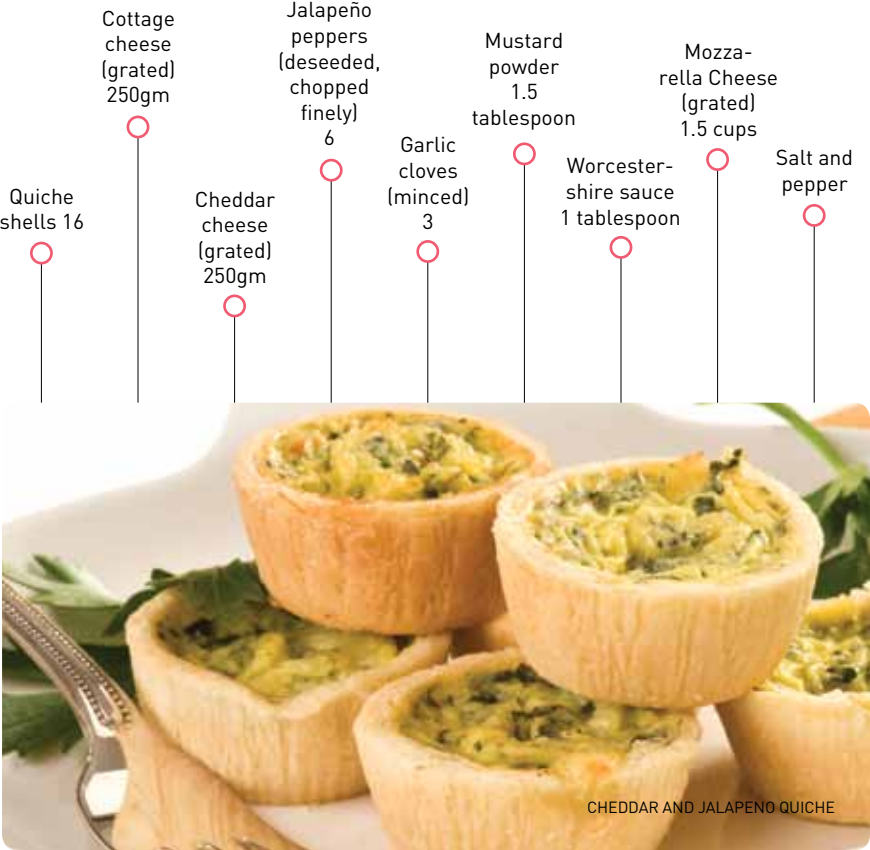
corn is a major component in food items such as peanut butter and soft drinks

SWEET AND SPICY CARAMEL POPCORN

- Unpopped corn kernels 1 cup
- Fresh thyme 1 tablespoon
- Brown sugar 1/4 cup
- Butter 2 tablespoon
- Red chilli powder 1 tablespoon
- Salt to taste
- Water 2 tablespoon

consistency till the sugar is caramelised and turns into a darker shade of brown.
3. Now, in the heated frying pan, add butter and let it melt into a small pool. Toss in the corn kernels and thyme, salt and red chilli powder. Shake well and cover with a lid.
4. Leave it untouched till you hear a few pops. Once you hear

the sounds, lift the frying pan and shake well above the flame with the lid. The popping will continue for a while, do not open the lid till you hear the pops die down.
5. Open the lid, pour in the caramel syrup (adjust the quantity depending on the sweetness you require).
6. Shake well and serve hot.



CHEDDAR AND JALAPEÑO QUICHE

Savoury tarts are easy to make, serve and eat. The cheese-chili combination is a quintessential winner, so why not welcome the quests with a quiche? Filled with the melty goodness of sharp cheddar and spiced just right with sweet jalapeño peppers, you can pop the preparation in the oven just 15 minutes prior to serving.

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C.
2. Mix cheddar cheese, jalapeño, cottage cheese, garlic, worcestershire sauce, mustard and seasonings in a large bowl.
3. Now put a tablespoon of the mixture in each quiche shell.
4. Top it up with grated mozzarella cheese till the brim of the shells.
5. Now bake the shells in the oven for about 15 minutes or till the top starts bubbling and turns light brown.
6. Serve hot with tabasco or some ketchup.

CRISPY POTATO POPS

Crispy, filling and with a chewable stick, this unique starter is a great dish to include in any party. Spruce up the plating by sticking these pops into a small sack of uncooked rice for that extra edge.

Method

1. Mash the potatoes in a large plate and season it well with salt, pepper, herbs, mango powder and cumin.
2. Now in a small saucepan, heat olive oil. Sweat the onions and add garlic. Stir well on medium flame till the mixture turns light brown.
3. Toss this mixture onto the mashed potatoes and add the ginger-chilli paste and cornflour.
4. Mix well. Now, heat oil in a

frying vessel.

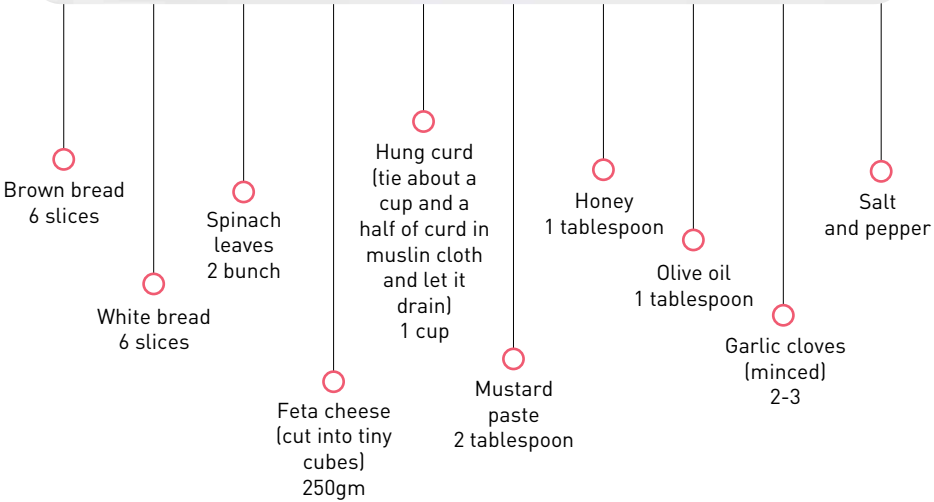
5. Take a sugarcane stick and a handfull of the potato mix. Now wrap it on 3/4th of the sugarcane stick, leaving about ¼ sticking out. Complete the remaining the same way.
6. While serving, roll each of the pops in breadcrumbs and then deep fry.
7. Serve hot with ketchup or a sweet and spicy sauce.

MINI SPINACH AND FETA SANDWICHES

These fun and dual tone mini-sandwiches make for a quirky but colourful dish on the plate. Slathered with a delicious and healthy filling, these will be a sureshot hit with the kids.

Method

1. Chop spinach into thin shreds.
2. Now heat olive oil in a small vessel and add garlic to it. As the aroma rises, toss in the shredded spinach and cook till just about wilted. Now remove from heat
3. Cool the spinach and then add feta cheese to it. Keep it aside.
4. Whip the hung yoghurt with seasonings, honey and mustard.
5. Spoon on to the spinach-feta mixture and mix well.
6. Slice off the bread sides and butter them on one side. Proceed by placing all the brown breads on a flat platform with the buttered side up.
7. Spoon about a tablespoon of the spinach-feta filling on each of the brown bread slices, top with the white bread slice with the buttered side down.
8. Now cut the sandwich diagonally into four triangles. Repeat for all.
9. Place on a serving platter wrapped in a thick cotton napkin and refrigerate till serving time.





ORANGE AND CHOCOLATE FONDUE

The word chocolate comes from the Aztec word Xocolatl which ironically means bitter water

ORANGE AND CHOCOLATE FONDUE

Children and adults will flip for this sinful concoction of melted dark chocolate served with fruits and accompaniments. Make this on a regular stove and invest in a tea-light fondue pot to keep it warm.

Method

1. Tie up the zest in a small muslin cloth and keep it aside.
2. In a heavy bottomed non-stick pan, chop up the chocolate into small chunks. Now, add all the ingredients except the cream.
3. Toss in the orange zest tied in the muslin cloth.
4. Keep this heavy bottomed pan into a water bath (with water coming up to 3/4th of the pan).
5. Now heat it on a high flame till the chocolate melts. Stir well till you get a smooth but thick paste.
6. Remove from heat. Also remove the zest muslin cloth and discard. Now add cream and stir it well till it incorporates well.
7. Transfer it into the fondue pot. It should gently heat.
8. Serve with fruits, cakes and almond fingers.

Dark cooking chocolate (covertures) 500gm

Olive oil 2 tablespoon

Vanilla pod (scraped) or vanilla powder or extract 1 stick or tablespoon

Orange (only zest) 1

Butter 1 tablespoon

Orange juice (you may use the juice of the same one you zested) 1

Cream ½ cup

Accompaniments: Strawberries, apples, pears, sponge cake (plain and chocolate) and almond fingers cut into chunks



The writer is a gourmet consultant and a food blogger.