

New Year's Eve Party Dishes

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Recipes courtesy of Claire Hoenke

Lamb Puffs

- One pound ground lamb
- One sheet puff pastry, thawed
- Three tablespoons panko
- Three tablespoons milk
- One shallot, diced small
- One egg, beaten
- Fresh ginger
- Cinnamon
- Turmeric
- White pepper
- Ground coriander seed
- One teaspoon kosher salt

In a small bowl, combine your panko breadcrumbs and milk. In a medium bowl, combine lamb with the shallot, a couple of shakes each of your dried spices, salt, and the milk mixture. As with many of my own recipes, I didn't pay very close attention to how much of each spice went into the bowl, but I'd say approximately 1/8 tsp each. Then grate about an inch of peeled ginger into the bowl, and mix it all together until just combined. You can use a fork, but I think you get a better mix if you just go in with your hands.

Roll the puff pastry out on a lightly floured surface until it is about 10 inches across and 14 inches long, and then cut it length-wise into three evenly-sized strips. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper and lay the pastry out on the sheet. Portion your meat mixture into thirds, and spread each one out in about an inch-wide stripe down the middle of each piece of pastry. Fold the sides over the meat and use the beaten egg to help seal it. With the pastries seam-side down on the baking sheet, cut small diagonal slits at one inch intervals along the top of each one and brush the tops and sides with the egg. If you are going to serve them right away, set the pan in the freezer to chill for thirty minutes before baking. If you are making them ahead of time, tightly wrap the entire sheet in plastic wrap before freezing. They will keep for up to two weeks in the freezer, and there is no need to thaw them before baking.

When you're ready to bake, preheat the oven to 425°. Bake the chilled or frozen pastries until they start to puff up, about 15 minutes, and then reduce the heat to 350°. Continue baking until the meat is cooked through and the pastry is golden and completely puffed up, about another 25-35 minutes. Transfer them to a cutting board and let them cool slightly, and then use your cuts as a guide to slice the pastries into one-inch pieces. Eat the ends yourself, because you want to keep a uniform look on your serving platter, and anyway, let's face it, you just deserve it.

Icebox Cake

- One or two boxes of Nabisco Famous Chocolate Wafers
- Two pints heavy whipping cream
- Two tablespoons powdered sugar
- One to two tablespoons vanilla or liqueur of your choice

In a large bowl, combine cream, sugar, and vanilla or liquor. I used Boulard Calvados, which is a really lovely apple brandy, but limoncello, Irish cream, Drambuie, or really any liqueur you prefer will work here. Whip the cream to stiff peaks. Carefully stack the wafers using layers of cream to bind them. I made mine in a ring shape for a round platter, but you can shape it any way you like, even including that ultimate holiday dessert classic, a yule log. When you're done stacking and shaping, use the whipped cream to cover the outside of the cookie log.

There should be a little bit of leftover cream, which you should cover and reserve. Loosely cover your cake in plastic wrap and set in the fridge to chill for at least four hours, and up to 24. The wafer cookies absorb moisture from the cream and puff up, so when you are ready to serve, use the reserved cream to cover up any cracks in the cream or places where the chocolate has bled through. To get the layered effect, cut the cake at a deep angle so that the knife goes through several cookies. I like to serve my icebox cake with some kind of topping, like some Luxardo cherries or this incredible [homemade cranberry ginger jelly](#).