



Enjoy Prosciutto Wrapped Asparagus marinated in a spiced vinaigrette and accents of blue cheese. Rich and Creamy Chile Cheesecake is a crowd pleaser. Crostini With Roasted Red Pepper Spread adds new flavors and interest to the party. Lightly Marinated Shrimp is a quick and easy variation of a happy hour favorite.

*Entertaining with the Junior League*

# HAPPY HOUR

## AT BECCA LAYTON'S

Energy and laughter fill the air as the members of this year's fundraising committee celebrate the success of their latest fundraiser, the Trash to Treasure Rummage Sale, for the Junior League of Las Cruces. "It was a lot of work, but well worth it," says Becca Layton, this year's chairperson. "All the money goes to literacy projects for the children of Dona Ana County."

This evening, the committee is enjoying a happy hour full of fresh spring flavors with an array of appetizers and cocktails, all made from recipes included in various Junior League cookbooks. "Even though we are all so busy it is important to get together," Becca says of her close-knit committee. "Most of us love to cook and entertain, but don't do it often enough. Hosting happy hour after a successful fundraiser is a great way to say 'thank you' to my committee."

By Kelley Cleary Coffeen  
Photography by Russell Bamert



Sara Johnson, Angie DeRuyter, Lucia Bond, and Gena Castillo gather around to enjoy fresh spring appetizers and drinks in Becca's beautiful French country style kitchen.



### Fresh Peach Daiquiris

The Junior League of Pensacola, Florida

Fresh peaches of the season teamed with lemonade concentrate add a tangy sweetness to these simple refreshing daiquiris.

- 3 ripe peaches, peeled, seeded and chopped
- 1 (6 oz.) can frozen pink lemonade concentrate
- 1-teaspoon sugar
- 4 ounces light rum\*
- 2 cups cracked ice

Combine all the ingredients in a blender and blend for 10 to 15 seconds. Pour in stemmed glasses garnished with fresh strawberries, peach or pineapple chunks.

\*Omit rum for a flavorful non-alcoholic alternative

### Marinated Shrimp

The Junior League of Pensacola, Florida

Chilled, marinated shrimp is cool and refreshing. The dressing mix shortens the ingredient list and adds a host of different herbed flavors to this appetizer.

- 1 package Good Seasons Italian dressing mix
- 1 cup cider vinegar
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 2 tablespoons water
- 2 pounds medium shrimp, cooked, peeled and deveined
- 1 pound small fresh mushrooms
- 1 medium onion, sliced and separated into rings

Combine dressing mix, vinegar, oil and water. Add shrimp, mushrooms and onions. Gently toss to coat well. Cover and marinate in refrigerator for 4 hours, tossing every hour or so.

### Crostini With Roasted Red Pepper Spread

The Junior League of Saint Louis

Little cocktail rounds topped with a blend of peppers and spices taste delicious. Prepare the pepper topping ahead to save last minute preparation time.

- 2 (7 ounce) jars roasted red peppers, drained
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh Italian parsley leaves
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons capers, drained
- 1 medium garlic clove, minced
- Olive Oil
- 1 baguette loaf of bread, thinly sliced
  
- 1 bunch fresh basil leaves, shredded into 1/8-inch strips

Remove peppers from the jar and drain on a double layer of paper towels. Combine the next 5 ingredients in a food processor bowl; process until capers and parsley are very finely chopped. Add peppers and continue processing using on/off pulses, until peppers are coarsely chopped. Refrigerate for up to 5 days. Bring to room temperature at least 30 minutes before serving. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Slice bread into 1/4 inch slices. Place on a baking sheet and brush tops lightly with olive oil. Bake until edges are light brown and centers are crisp (about 10 minutes). Spread roasted red pepper mixture on each slice of crostini. Sprinkle each slice with fresh basil.

### Prosciutto Wrapped Asparagus

The Junior League of Saint Louis

Fresh asparagus wrapped in prosciutto, a seasoned salt-cured Italian ham, makes a simple appetizer for any cocktail party.

- 36 medium asparagus
- 36 slices prosciutto ham, 4 inches long (see note)
- 4 ounces blue cheese, crumbled
- Dressing
  - 1/2 cup balsamic vinegar
  - 1/2 cup vegetable oil
  - 1/2 cup olive oil
  - 1/2 teaspoon salt
  - 1/2 teaspoon pepper
  - 1/2 teaspoon lemon juice
  - 1/2 teaspoon basil

Trim asparagus to 4 to 6 inches and peel end with a potato peeler. Place asparagus in a microwable container with 1/2 cup water. Cover tightly with plastic wrap. Microwave on high 2 1/2 to 3 minutes. Remove asparagus and plunge into icy water. Drain and dry. Wrap each asparagus with a slice of prosciutto. Arrange wrapped asparagus on a large, flat platter with a lip around the edge. Sprinkle blue cheese over top of asparagus. Mix dressing ingredients in a jar with a lid and shake to mix. When ready to serve, pour dressing over top.





### Chile Cheesecake

The Junior League of Denver

This elegant southwestern appetizer combines the border flavors of crispy baked corn tortilla chips with rich creamy cheeses and spicy fresh chile. Accents of fresh tomato, green onions and black olives make this a showstopper for any occasion.

- 1 cup tortilla chips, crushed
- 3 tablespoons butter, melted
- 2 (8 ounce) packages cream cheese, softened
- 2 eggs
- 4 ounces chopped green chiles
- 1 fresh jalapeno pepper, cored, seeded, and diced
- 4 ounces Colby cheese, shredded
- 4 ounces Monterrey Jack cheese, shredded
- 1/4 cup sour cream
- 1 large tomato, seeded and chopped
- 3 green onions, chopped
- Diced black olives

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. In a medium bowl, combine tortilla chips and butter. Press into a 9-inch spring form pan. Bake 15 minutes and remove from oven, leaving oven on. In a large bowl blend cream cheese and eggs. Add green chiles, jalapeno, Colby and Monterey Jack cheese. Blend well. Pour over corn tortilla crust and bake 30 minutes. Do not overcook. Remove from oven and cool in pan 5 minutes. Run knife around inside edge and remove sides from pan. Spread sour cream over top and decorate with tomatoes, green onions, and olives. Serve with cocktail crackers and corn tortilla chips.

*The Junior League of Las Cruces is an organization of women committed to promoting voluntarism, developing the potential of women and improving communities through the effective action and leadership of trained volunteers.*

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