

Finger Foods for Bar-B-Q or Clambake

by Lydia Lovell

Once in a blue moon," Aunt Olivia always declared as soon as calm had been restored following the 4th of July weekend festivities, "we really ought to give a party."

Uncle Henry, sitting on the porch in his favorite wicker rocker, would tilt his head down and look up at her over the top of his reading glasses. "Why, Livy, of course we should. When is it to be? And who's coming?"

"Why, everybody's coming, I guess. And wouldn't next weekend be a good time? Do you suppose the Gifford boys would like to make us a clambake? If they could have it ready by 5:30 or 6, it'll still be light for another hour or so. I'll fix snacks and everybody can come around 4. I should think most folks would be back from the beach or the links or sailing by then, wouldn't you? And, if they're not, they can come when they're ready. We'll all have a grand visit!"

"I'll call the Giffords," Uncle Henry would promise. "Shall I tell them Saturday or Sunday?"

"Oh, Saturday, dear. So we can all rest up on Sunday."

And so it was decided. And everybody did come. All the family, Aunt Olivia's sisters and their husbands and children; both Uncle Henry's brothers and their wives and offspring; neighbors and friends came too. By the time the steamed clams were being raked off the bake and passed around, the driveway was lined with cars, the back yard bustled with young and old, and picnic and card tables were laden with stacks of paper plates, platters of corn-on-the-cob, heaps of clams shelled and unshelled, more than enough lobsters to go around, and plenty of tonic, punch, and iced tea. In the kitchen waited the desserts that would be distributed after dinner to anyone who still had space for a sweet.

With so much activity, it seemed as though everyone was playing musical chairs. Someone was moving around all the time because everyone wanted to be sure to use this opportunity to talk with everyone else.

When the Gifford boys put on a clambake, they started in the morning to build the fire and get the stones heated through. They brought along a trailer-load of seaweed, of course, and supplied as many lobsters and clams and as much corn, new potatoes, and onions as could possibly be consumed by the crowd Uncle Henry estimated would gather. Once the bake was steaming under the seaweed, all packed down beneath the big canvas tarpaulin, anticipation mounted and appetites grew sharp. To ease the strain, Aunt Olivia set out trays of finger food. It would never do for anyone to suffer hunger pangs while attending a party at the Lovells!

Aunt Olivia used a chafing dish to keep her **ORIENTAL CHICKEN SAUCE** hot. She served it with cubes of chicken meat arranged on a big round platter with a short, squat jar full of toothpicks in the center. I find this sauce particularly well-suited for dipping broiled chicken wings and have reduced the recipe to yield an adequate quantity for a small gathering of six to eight people.

1 C. orange marmalade
1/3 C. cider vinegar
1/4 C. sugar
2 T. brown sugar

1 T. curry powder
1 T. Worcestershire Sauce
1 t. salt
1/2 t. ground ginger



Combine all ingredients in a small saucepan; bring to a boil. Simmer, stirring constantly, until marmalade melts and sauce is blended. May be served hot or cold as a dip for cold cubes of chicken, or with hot broiled chicken wings.

Raw vegetables, in Aunt Olivia's opinion, were good for whatever ailed you. She always made certain an abundance of carrot sticks, turnip cubes, cucumber rounds, celery sticks, green pepper strips, cauliflowerets, radishes, and tiny green onions were available for nibbling. To give them extra appeal, she supplied a choice of dips and dunks. I could never decide whether I preferred Egg Dip or Avocado and Bacon Dip, so usually we prepared both for a party. **EGG DIP** is the simpler of the two to mix.

5 hard-boiled eggs
1/4 C. mayonnaise
1/4 C. sour cream
2 T. milk
1 3-oz. pkg. cream cheese

1 T. prepared mustard
1/4 t. salt
1/8 t. black pepper
1 T. chopped chives
3 drops Tabasco

Chop the eggs, then blend with all the other ingredients. Surround bowlful of dip with various raw vegetables.

BACON AND AVOCADO DIP was a bit more complicated, but not much.

3 slices of bacon,
cooked and crumbled
2 ripe avocados, peeled,
seeded, mashed
1/2 C. sour cream
1 T. lemon juice
1 green onion, chopped fine

3 mint leaves, chopped
1 clove garlic, crushed
1/2 t. salt
1/8 t. black pepper
3 drops Tabasco

Blend all ingredients and chill for at least an hour. This dip is as delicious with potato chips or crackers as with vegetable sticks.

Uncle Henry enjoyed making his own specialties for parties; his **SHRIMPS IN BEER** were well received even by those who were teetotalers.

2 lb. small-size shrimp
2 12-oz. bottles of beer
1 clove garlic, crushed
2 t. salt
1/2 t. thyme

2 bay leaves
1 t. celery seed
1 T. chopped parsley
1/8 t. cayenne pepper
Juice of half-a-lemon

Wash shrimp, but do not remove shells. Combine other ingredients in a large saucepan and bring to a boil. Add the shrimp and bring to boil again. Simmer, uncovered, for 2 to 5 minutes (depending on the size of the shrimp). Drain and chill. Serve with a bowl of hot butter seasoned with the juice of the other half-lemon and a drop of Tabasco or offer a choice of prepared cocktail sauce. Be sure to provide a bowl for discarding shrimp shells.

And Uncle Henry sometimes decided people might like to sample his **DANISH PUMPERNICKEL FINGERS**, so he would ask Aunt Olivia to make a loaf of pumpernickel bread a day or two ahead of the party. You and I can find it on our market shelf.

1/2 lb. butter
1/2 lb. Danish blue cheese
or Roquefort

6 T. cognac
20 thin-cut slices of
pumpernickel bread

Cream butter, add cheese, and mix until smooth. Stir in cognac. Spread sixteen slices of bread with cheese mixture. Make four stacks of spread slices and top each with one unspread slice. Wrap well in waxed paper or plastic and refrigerate until firm. Cut stacks into thirds, then each third in half crosswise. Yield: 24.

It is not absolutely necessary to follow up these finger foods with an old-fashioned clambake, but if you do, it's guaranteed to be an unforgettable occasion. Bon Appetit.