

From Aunt Olivia's Kitchen

Summer hors d'oeuvres

by Lydia Lovell

Hors d'oeuvres, French for "outside of work," weren't part of Aunt Olivia's vocabulary. For one thing, spirits were never served at her house; she was a teetotaler. Aunt Olivia loved company, however, and would go to no end of effort to offer treats with teas, punches and coffees. Her recipes adapt readily to nibbles for serving with cocktails.

Living here on Cape Cod as she did, Aunt Olivia found fish always fresh, good and in plentiful supply. She often made relishes, lunches and snacks using fish as the basic ingredient. In addition to fresh fish, of course, a variety of canned not native to our shores, such as shrimp or tuna, was available. And, if crab or lobster was on hand, she didn't hesitate to substitute either one in recipes calling for shrimp.

For example Aunt Olivia often served a mousse that became a family favorite. When we spent a holiday at her house, we knew the chances were excellent that sooner or later she'd produce a mousse. We children joked and called it a mousse, but we ate **Crab Mousse** as enthusiastically as we would have without the joke.

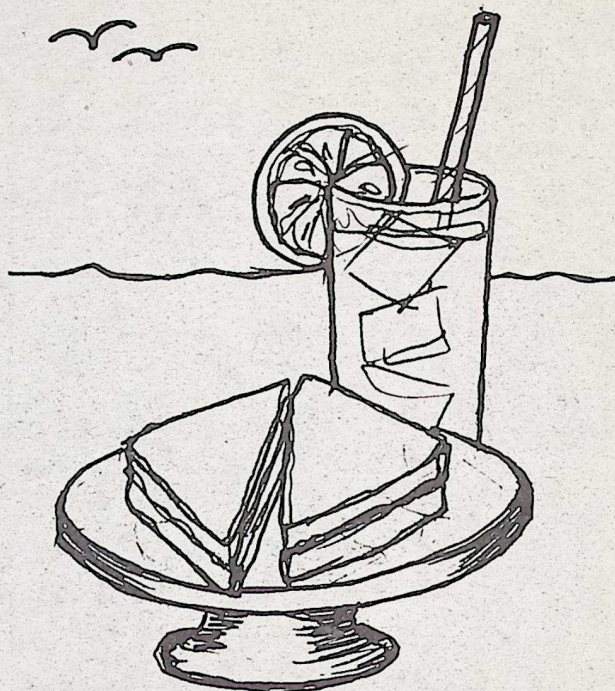
Using 1½ lbs. of cooked shrimp, crab or lobster, chop the meat to moderate dice. In the top of the double boiler, heat a can (10.5 oz.) condensed tomato soup and one 8 oz. package of cream cheese until cheese melts. Allow to cool slightly before stirring in 2T. unflavored gelatin, the chopped shellfish meat, 1 cup mayonnaise, ¾ cup finely chopped celery, and ½ cup, each, finely chopped green onions and green peppers. Season with 1 tsp. each Worcestershire sauce and lemon juice.

Mix well and pour into a well-greased 1½ quart mold. Cover and refrigerate at least eight hours or overnight. When ready to serve, unmold onto a platter, and surround with rich, buttery, rectangular wafers. The mousse yields 5½ cups.

For a hot and tangy **Crab Dip** which may be served like a fondue with either sesame bread sticks or toasted bread cubes to dip into the mixture, clean ¾ cup crab meat, removing any bits of shell or cartilage. In top of double boiler, combine 12 oz. grated sharp Cheddar cheese, 8 oz. grated Monterey Jack cheese, and 1/3 cup half-and-half.

Heat over boiling water, stirring until cheeses melt. Add crabmeat, 1/2 cup white wine, 1/8 teaspoon dried, crushed rosemary leaves, stirring until well blended. Do not allow to boil. When steamy, pour into a chafing dish set on low heat. Makes three cups.

Crabmeat on Toast was a special treat for all the Lovells, one we looked forward to whenever we visited Aunt Olivia in summer. She made this a main dish, spreading the crabmeat mix (see Roll Ups below) on two thick slices of home-made white bread. Then she toasted them until bubbly hot under the broiler, cut one slice diagonally twice, making four toast points, and allowing two slices of her delicious bread dressed with crabmeat, and garnished with crisp-fried bacon slices, per portion.



Our generation has adjusted the recipe for canapes, calling them **Mini-Crab Roll Ups**, which we enjoy as much as we ever did Aunt Olivia's open-faced sandwiches at Sunday night supper when something special seemed appropriate or for a hearty lunch suitable for company.

Lobster or tuna may be substituted in Roll Ups for crabmeat. If using crab, clean well to remove bits of shell or cartilage. Combine, in a two-quart mixing bowl, ½ pound crabmeat with one 8 oz. package of cream cheese which has been whipped to smooth consistency and to which has been added 2 tablespoons minced chives, 2 tablespoons chopped parsley and 1 tablespoon minced onion. Mix well.

Trim crusts from 15 slices of white bread. Spread each slice with a heaping tablespoon of crab mixture and roll like a jelly roll. Cut into thirds. Cut 1 pound bacon into half slices, crosswise. Wrap each bread roll in a half-slice of bacon, secure with a wooden toothpick, and bake on a cookie sheet for 25 minutes at 350°, turning once. (Drain excess bacon fat.) Serve piping hot. Makes 45 treats.

A make-ahead hot-day luncheon salad that may be served to anyone who relishes oysters is a shellfish specialty Aunt Olivia reserved for honored guests who truly appreciated **Marinated Oyster Salad's** unique flavors.

Drain and clean a pint of raw oysters. Rinse one pint of cherry tomatoes in cold water and wipe dry with paper towels. Clean 6 oz. fresh mushrooms thoroughly with a damp towel, remove a sliver from the stem end and slice large ones in half. In a 2-quart bowl, combine oysters, cherry tomatoes and mushrooms; then add six green onions cut into 2" lengths, using green as well as white part. Chop ¼ cup canned pimiento. Add vegetables to oyster mixture.

In another bowl, combine 1 cup cider vinegar, 1/2 cup olive oil, 1/2 cup water, 2 cloves minced or crushed garlic, 1 tsp. sugar, a tsp. salt, 1/4 tsp. black pepper, and 1/2 tsp. dried oregano leaves, crumbled. Stir thoroughly until sugar is dissolved.

Pour marinade over oysters and vegetables. Cover loosely and refrigerate for at least 12 hours. Stir gently occasionally. To serve drain and discard marinade, and heap mixture into lettuce cups with slices of cucumber ringing the plate. This will serve six for lunch; twice that many as a side dish.

For a small gathering or when other choices are offered, make **Shrimp Dreams**. Cook, peel, devein and chop to medium dice, 1/2 lb. shrimp. Allow to soften at room temperature for an hour or so two 3 oz. packages of cream cheese. Chop 1/2 cup of pecans. Combine shrimp, cream cheese and pecans. Add 1/2 cup drained, crushed pineapple, 1/4 cup chopped, pitted, ripe olives, 1 tbsp lemon juice. Mix well.

Refrigerate until ready to serve. Have handy 12 slices of good white bread. Just before your company arrives, butter one side of each slice of bread, spread six slices with approximately 1/3 cup of mixture, top with a buttered slice to make a sandwich. Cut each sandwich diagonally into four triangles. Yield: 24 Dreams. Dreams can be made with crab or lobster if preferred instead of shrimp.

Believe it or not, some people are allergic to shellfish but may eat fin-fish with impunity. To such as these who enjoyed fish, Aunt Olivia offered **Open-Faced Fishwiches**. Like Crab Roll-Ups, these can be adapted to hors d'oeuvres in much the same way.

In a 1-quart mixing bowl, combine one cup cooked, flaked, white fish (such as cod or haddock) with 1/3 cup mayonnaise, 2 tbsp minced green pepper, 1½ cup prepared mustard, 1½ tsp grated raw onion and 1/4 tsp. Worcestershire sauce. Mix well. Line a 15"x10"x1" baking pan with six slices of white bread. Spread each slice with equal amounts of fish mixture. Top each slice with a cherry tomato horizontally sliced into thirds or fourths. In a small bowl, mix 1½ cups of shredded sharp Cheddar cheese with six tbsp. mayonnaise. Place a tsp. of cheese mixture on top of each slice of tomato. Broil, 5 to 6 inches from unit, until cheese melts. Yield: Six open-faced fishwiches, or, cut into thirds or fourths, 18 to 24 canapes.

Pour the punch, iced tea, lemonade, coffee or whatever is your pleasure. Serve Aunt Olivia's treats with pride.