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Last year we decided on a Chinese theme for our New Year's Day party.

Prior to the party, I remembered that when I was a child, my mother would occasionally give me marvelous crepe paper balls to unravel. The thrill was the discovery of the little treasures hidden inside, which became apparent upon unraveling the layers of paper. I remembered them being so much fun that I decided to make one for each of my children as their party favor. So I purchased crepe paper to match the colors of my decorations. Unfortunately I could not find orange crepe paper, which I preferred to the store's brown, but the yellow and pink matched the decorations perfectly. Next I collected little surprises: little boy and girl elves, cufflinks, wool socks, chocolate, and jellied fruit wedges.

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When I arrived home, I began rolling each ball by placing an elf on the end of each roll, and rolling it up in crepe paper like I would a ball of yarn, adding little trinkets along the way until I had a nice large ball filled with little treasures. I secured the final end with beautiful color coated pins.

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For the decorations, Jedidiah hung Chinese lanterns and streamers from the ceiling. I carried the colors of the lanterns and the Chinese theme to the table using purple lanterns, purple vases, and a ceramic shell with rose, purple, and pink flowers. I also used my purple and yellow plates, alternating the colors at each place setting by placing yellow dessert plates on purple dinner plates and purple dessert plates on yellow dinner plates.

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On top of the plates, Sonia and I stacked burgundy rose, yellow, and purple napkins, alternating their points like flower petals. I then placed Chinese carry out cartons on top of the napkins and two chopsticks in each.

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I also added a few other Chinese dishes, fans, and a wooden fish. I even used fortune cookies and the children's crepe paper balls as part of the table decorations. The color combination was stunning.

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After the table was set, Sonia, Jedidiah, Josiah, and I got busy preparing all the wonderful recipes Sonia and I selected—Egg Rolls, Mini Asian Crab Cakes, Crab Rangoon, Potstickers, Thai Green Curry Shrimp, Chicken Tikka Masala (none of us liked this one, so I did not include this recipe, but if you are interested, you may find this on Martha Stewart's website) and Pina Coladas. After scooping the Pina Coladas into our crystal goblets, I topped each drink off with an umbrella.

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After all the recipes were completed, we placed the food on serving dishes and displayed these on the table as part of our decorations, with the Thai Green Curry

Shrimp in the Chinese carry out cartons. The table looked great.

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Even our cat enjoyed the crepe paper.

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Pork Egg Rolls
from Martha Stewart

1/2 c. soy sauce
2 T. rice vinegar
2 T. light brown sugar
12 c. vegetable oil
2 Napa cabbages, thinly sliced
8 carrots, coarsely grated
8 cloves garlic, minced
2 T. grated fresh ginger
Salt and pepper
2 lb. ground pork
12 green onions, thinly sliced
32 egg roll wrappers

Combine soy sauce, vinegar, and sugar. In a large skillet, heat 2 T. oil over medium-high. Add cabbage, carrots, garlic, and ginger; season with salt and pepper. Cook, tossing, until vegetables are tender for 3 to 5 minutes.

Raise heat to high; add pork and soy mixture. Cook, tossing, until pork is no longer pink and liquid has evaporated for 5 to 7 minutes; mix in green onions. Transfer mixture to a plate to cool. Lay wrappers flat on a work surface and assemble egg rolls by laying 3 to 4 egg roll wrappers flat on counter. Keep other wrappers covered with a damp paper towel. Place 1/3 c. pork mixture in center of each.

Using a pastry brush, wet border with egg. Fold point of wrapper that is closest to you over the pork mixture, and tuck under the filling, folding it in. Fold both side corners toward center of wrapper. They won't meet in the center. It should look like an open envelope. Tightly roll up filled pocket to close wrapper, then gently press down to seal the edges.

In 5 quart pot, heat remaining oil until a deep-fry thermometer registers 350°. Fry egg rolls until golden, turning occasionally about 2 minutes; drain on paper towels. Serve with sweet and sour sauce.

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Mini Asian Crab

Cakes from Martha Stewart

8 oz. lump crabmeat
1/4 c. mayonnaise
2 green onions, chopped
2 T. soy sauce
2 t. wasabi paste
1 t. finely grated lime zest
1/2 c. plus 2 T. plain bread crumbs
1/2 c. flour
Salt and freshly ground pepper
2 eggs
1/4 c. sesame seeds
2/3 c. oil
1 cucumber
1/2 pickled ginger

Combine crabmeat, mayonnaise, green onions, soy sauce, 2 t. wasabi, and lime zest. Stir in 2 T. breadcrumbs. Cover with wrap; chill 1 hour. Whisk flour, salt, and pepper; set aside. Beat eggs with 1 T. water; set aside. Stir together sesame seeds and 1/2 c. bread crumbs.


Form one scant T. crab mixture into a ball. Dip in seasoned flour. Flatten into a 3/4-inch high cake about 1 1/4 inches in diameter. Repeat with remaining crab mixture. Dip cakes in egg mixture, then roll in breadcrumb mixture.

Heat oil in large skillet over medium heat until hot but not smoking. Add half the crab cakes; cook, turning once, until golden and crisp on both sides, about 4 minutes. Using a slotted spatula, transfer to paper towel-lined plates to drain. Repeat with remaining cakes, adding more oil if needed. Let cool completely. Freeze until firm, about 1 hour. You can freeze up to 6 weeks.

To serve, preheat oven to 425°. Place the cakes on ungreased baking sheet, and bake until heated through, 10 to 14 minutes.

Stir together remaining 3 T. mayonnaise and 1/2 t. wasabi. Using vegetable peeler, make 24 (2 by 3/4 inch) ribbons from cucumber; fold each ribbon into thirds.


Dot each crab cake with 1/2 t. wasabi mayonnaise, top with slice of cucumber and slice of ginger.



Crab Rangoon

16 oz. cream cheese
2 cans lump crab meat
2 bunches green onions, chopped
4 cloves garlic, minced
2 packages wontons

Mix well. Place dollop in center of each wonton. Moisten wonton edges. Fold into triangle. Press to seal. Deep fry. Serve with dipping sauce.






Pot Stickers from Martha Stewart

24 wonton wrappers
1/2 c. chopped Napa or Savoy cabbage, finely chopped
1/2 t. salt
6 oz. ground pork
3 green onions
1 T. fresh ginger, peeled/chopped
1 t. soy sauce
1 t. toasted sesame oil
2 T. oil
2 green onions, chopped
1/3 c. soy sauce

Sprinkle cabbage with salt and let sit 10 minutes. Drain and then place in double layer of paper towels; firmly squeeze out excess liquid. Return cabbage to bowl, add pork, green onions, ginger, soy sauce, and sesame oil. Mix well with fork.

Place 1 t. filling in wonton. Moisten wonton edges. Fold into triangle. Press to seal.

In a 12-inch skillet with a tight-fitting lid, heat 1 T. oil over medium-high heat. Add half the wontons and cook, turning once, until lightly browned about 1 minute per side. Carefully add 1/2 c. water (oil may sputter), cover, and steam until translucent and just cooked through, 2 to 3 minutes. Repeat with remaining T. oil and wontons. Sprinkle pot stickers with onions and serve with soy sauce.



247.jpg" style="width: 444px; height: 296px;" /></p><p> Thai Green Curry-from Martha Stewart</p><p> 6 stalks lemongrass, outer leaves discarded, crushed
 12 green onions, trimmed
 9 fresh green chilies, halved and seeded
 12 cloves garlic, coarsely chopped
 3 (2-inch) piece fresh ginger, peeled and coarsely chopped
 3 large bunches fresh cilantro, plus leaves for garnish
 3 t. coriander seeds, crushed
 24 fresh or dried kaffir lime leaves
 9 T. soy sauce
 3 T. fish sauce
 3 T. peanut oil
 3 T. sesame oil
 3 lbs. large shrimp, peeled and deveined
 1? c. snow peas
 3 14 oz. cans coconut milk
 1 lime
 Cilantro leaves for garnish
 Chopped red chili
 Cooked basmati rice</p><p> ♦</p><p> Using the heel of your hand, crush lemongrass and add to the bowl of a food processor along with green onions, chilies, garlic, ginger, cilantro, coriander seeds, and lime leaves. Process until finely chopped. With the processor running, add soy and fish sauce. Continue processing until a smooth paste is formed. Set aside.</p><p> Cook rice.</p><p> Heat a large skillet or wok over high heat and add peanut and sesame oil, swirl to coat. Add shrimp and snow peas; cook, stirring constantly, for 30 seconds. Add coconut milk; stir to combine. Cook until heated through, about 3? minutes. Squeeze lime over curry and garnish with cilantro leaves and red chili. Serve with rice.</p><p> ♦</p><p> ♦</p><p> </p><p> </p><p> ♦</p><p> Pina Coladas</p><p> 1 can cream coconut
 1 can crushed pineapple
 Lots of ice</p><p> ♦</p><p> Place 1/2 can cream coconut and 1/2 can pineapple (with half of juice) in blender and fill to top of blender with ice. Blend till smooth. Then repeat. Place in goblets and top with umbrella. These are delicious, so we make them throughout the year to accompany our evening meal.</p>