

Sunset

Our Ultimate Summer Guide

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BARBARA
GETAWAY
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- Triple-chocolate brownies



FOOD

AND ENTERTAINING

No-fuss cocktail party

Easy appetizers,
lime rickeys, and
casual style

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Here's something to ease your mind about entertaining: Even professional party planners keep it simple when they host at home. "There is never enough time to be perfect in all things, so be good in a few," says Alexandra Angle, who, with husband Eliot, runs the firm Aqua Vitae Design in Los Angeles. After launching an event-planning business in 1999, the Angles became the go-to caterers on the L.A. party circuit, and released their book *Cocktail Parties with a Twist* (Stewart, Tabori & Chang; \$30) in 2002. The Angles have moved away from party planning, but they still bring style to gatherings at their home in Elysian



Design team and couple Alexandra and Eliot Angle (at right) host friends on their shaded patio.



Heights. Here they've created a fun, hassle-free Fourth of July party. "It's too hot to spend hours working inside," Alexandra says. So she devised a menu of appetizers that can be served cold. "Perfect for an easy party."

Mediterranean Shrimp Salad in Cucumber Cups

Shrimp with lemon, parsley, and garlic echoes classic shrimp scampi, but here it's a cooling salad.

PREP AND COOK TIME: 25 minutes

MAKES: 18 hors d'oeuvres

NOTES: Prep the cups up to 1 hour ahead; assemble just before serving. They're juicy, so serve with napkins.

- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons chopped parsley
- 1 tablespoon minced drained capers
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic
- 1/2 pound peeled, deveined cooked shrimp, chopped (plus 8 to 10 extra whole shrimp for garnish, if desired)
- Salt and freshly ground pepper
- 2 English cucumbers, each about 1 1/2 inches wide (1 1/3 lb. total)

1. In a bowl, whisk together the olive oil, lemon juice, parsley, capers, and garlic. Add shrimp and season with salt and pepper to taste.

2. Cut the cucumbers into 18 3/4-inch slices. With a melon baller or small spoon, scrape out about half the flesh from the center of each slice. Fill each cup with shrimp salad, or, for an even prettier presentation, place a whole shrimp upside down into about half the cucumber cups, then spoon the salad around it.

Per serving: 43 Cal., 67% (29 Cal.) from fat; 2.9 g protein; 3.2 g fat (0.5 g sat.); 0.7 g carbo (0.2 g fiber); 50 mg sodium; 25 mg chol.

Prosciutto-Wrapped Asparagus with Citrus Dip

You can make these hors d'oeuvres even simpler: Without their scallion ties or lemon zest, the asparagus and prosciutto still taste terrific.

PREP AND COOK TIME: 30 minutes

MAKES: 18 hors d'oeuvres



Clockwise from top: Scooped-out cucumber slices hold shrimp salad; with a make-ahead menu served at room temperature, Alexandra has time to visit with guests; even during daylight hours, the warmth of lit candles can't be beat.

FOOD STYLING: VALERIE ALEXANDER-SMITH




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let the green in 

Patio party hints

■ **Lift the table.** To create an outdoor buffet, the Angles brought their dining room table outside and raised it 6 inches by placing the legs on stacks of books. "For a walk-around party, it's better to have the table at bar height," Alexandra says. "The guests can move comfortably around it and serve themselves."

■ **Jazz up the menu.** "Don't feel constrained by the typical July Fourth fare," Alexandra says. "We are a country of people from many countries, so don't hesitate to mix it up."

■ **Make edible centerpieces.** The Angles placed florist foam in square containers and put a candle in each. Then they pierced strawberries on bamboo skewers and poked them into the foam around the candles, so that guests could "pick" the berries during the party.



From top: Strawberries turn a simple candle display into an edible centerpiece (see "Patio Party Hints," left); prosciutto-wrapped asparagus; lime rickey, the perfect summer refresher.

NOTES: You can substitute chives for the green onions if desired. To make lemon-zest strips, use a vegetable peeler to shave off the lemon's thin outer peel, then cut this zest into strips.

- 18 asparagus spears
- 3 ounces thinly sliced prosciutto, cut crosswise into 2-inch-wide strips (18 total)
- 18 green onion tops, trimmed to 6-inch lengths (split lengthwise if wide)
- 18 thin strips lemon zest (see notes)
- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 3/4 teaspoon grated orange zest
- 1/2 teaspoon grated lemon zest
- Salt and freshly ground pepper

1. Rinse asparagus; snap off tough stem ends. Bring a 4- to 6-quart pot of salted water to a boil over high heat. Add asparagus and cook until crisp-tender, 3 to 4 minutes; rinse under cold water until cool.

2. Wrap a strip of prosciutto around each spear 3 to 4 inches from top. Tie the green onion strips around prosciutto and tuck a strip of lemon zest underneath the green onion. Arrange spears on a platter.

3. In a bowl, mix together olive oil, balsamic vinegar, grated zests, and salt and pepper to taste. Serve with asparagus as a dipping sauce.

Per serving: 42 Cal., 86% (36 Cal.) from fat; 1.8 g protein; 4 g fat (0.8 g sat.); 0.8 g carbo (0.2 g fiber); 81 mg sodium; 5 mg chol.

Lime Rickey

Make a simple syrup: In a 1-quart pan, mix 1/2 cup *each* sugar and water; stir over low heat until sugar is dissolved, about 5 minutes. Let cool, or chill. In a 3-quart pitcher, combine 1 1/2 cups gin, 3/4 cup fresh lime juice, and the cooled syrup. Cover and keep in freezer until ready to serve. To serve, add 1 1/2 quarts chilled soda water, pour into ice-filled glasses, and garnish with lime slices. Makes 6 to 8 servings.

Per serving: 182 Cal., 0.1 g protein; 0 g fat; 17 g carbo (0 g fiber); 0.9 mg sodium; 0 mg chol. ●



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