

THE *Dish*
effortless
ENTERTAINING®

October 14, 2020

“My favorite fall or winter lunch is big steaming bowls of soup. I usually invite people for around 12:30 and have two hearty soups like shrimp corn chowder and lentil sausage soup, which can be made a day or two ahead.”

– Ina Garten



Dear Friends,

If Ina loves to serve soup ... let's all serve soup!



Thank you for your wonderful responses to last week's newsletter with EE's *Ten Steps to Effortless Covid Entertaining* and to Sunday's [video](#) featuring our Bloody Marys and Chili birthday lunch. For that lunch, we told everyone to dress warmly so that we could be on the porch and have windows and doors open for those sitting inside. We chose a menu that would warm our bodies ... and our souls ... and could be easily eaten on our laps. Our guests were free to move around and sit comfortably spaced. While our precautions are not 100% Covid-proof, those who gathered agree that we want to be together, and we will strive to be as safe as we possibly can.

In this week's newsletter, we offer menus and recipe options that follow our Sunday format; simple menus and comfort food recipes that are easy to prepare and serve. A bonus, you can prepare many of these recipes well in advance. If you don't want to cook, "Don't!" Procure through a local source or favorite caterer. Those who have heard me speak, what do I say? "Do what works for you!" For a soup or stew menu, handled soup cups are a favorite for us. See below for Vietri's beautiful cup. For super-easy cleanup, consider disposable.

A few things to consider with these menus and recipes ...

Welcome or Signature Cocktail

A way to give your gathering a little kick! Bloody Mary's are a great fit for daytime entertaining. Mint Juleps aren't just for the Kentucky Derby, and Hot Toddy's sound like the perfect sip for an outside gathering on a cool day. A few things to remember ... take care of your guests who don't imbibe with sparkling waters or other non-alcoholic choices. Also, keep in mind that some guests may prefer something other than your signature cocktail. Offer other choices. We typically offer a full bar so everyone can enjoy what they like!

Hors d'oeuvres

If you and your guests are comfortable sharing serving trays and bowls, the "chip and dips" work. If not, consider serving hors d'oeuvres that can be plated and served in individual servings.

Soups and Stews

The perfect make-ahead main, they only get better as the seasonings and flavors simmer and blend. Ideal for enjoying on our lap or on a tray with simple sides. You can serve over rice, grits, or polenta - completely optional. Fun to add a few toppings such as diced onions, shredded cheese, sour cream, hot sauce because ... some like it hot!

Salads

You may want to add a salad, although I don't think absolutely necessary. My recommendation is to keep it simple and let your chili or stew be the star.

Breads

Who doesn't love a little cornbread or a biscuit!

Desserts

Pickups desserts are perfect!

From our home to yours,



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MENU



Cocktails – Choose one

Bruce Julian's Bloody Mary

Mint Julep

Hot Toddy

Hors d'oeuvres – Choose two

Pimento Cheese

Guacamole and Salsa

Hot Crab Dip

Vulture Dip

Main – Choose one

Brunswick Stew

Chicken Chili

Chicken and Sausage Gumbo

Optional – Choose one

Rice Blend

Creamy Grits

Creamy Polenta



Toppings

Diced onion

Shredded Cheese

Sour Cream

Hot Sauce

Breads

Jalapeño Cornbread

Ham Rolls

Desserts

Game Day Brownies

Lemon Brownies

Granola Bars

SOURCES & RESOURCES



Vietri Lastra White Jumbo Cup

[Available here](#)



Disposable Soup Cups

[Available here](#)

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“This email on Covid entertaining is so helpful and encouraging. You are a girl after my heart!”

– Anita

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