

BANANA SLUSH PUNCH

4 cups sugar
6 cups water
1 46-oz can orange juice
½ cup lemon juice

1 46-oz can pineapple juice
5 ripe bananas, mashed
5 quarts ginger ale, chilled

Add water and sugar in a large saucepan. Heat to dissolve sugar. Set aside to cool. Add orange, lemon, pineapple juice, and mashed bananas and mix well. Pour into a freezer-safe container and freeze. Remove from the freezer several hours before use. The mixture should be slushy when ready to use. Empty into a large punch bowl. Add ginger ale and serve. Makes about 2½ gallons.

Mary Ann Hudgins

BEST EVER CHEESE BALL

2 blocks cream cheese, softened
2 jars Armour Dried Beef, finely chopped
1-2 bunches green onions, bulb and stems finely chopped (need 2 if small)

1 cup pecan pieces

Best made a day or two in advance. I like to use a food processor to chop the beef and onions for consistency, but you can hand chop. This makes one large or two small cheese balls. The dried beef can usually be found near the canned tuna section at the store. DIRECTIONS: In a large mixing bowl, mix the softened cream cheese until blended and no chunks remain. Add the onions and beef and mix till blended. Spread pecans in a single layer on a piece of plastic wrap. Wet your hands (keeps the cheese from sticking to you) and then form the cheese into a ball. Roll in the pecans to coat. Wrap the ball in the plastic wrap, then place in a bowl (to maintain shape) cover and refrigerate at least overnight, though a couple of days is better so the cheese has time to absorb the flavor of the onions and beef. I make this a lot and keep in the fridge in an airtight container. Keeps a week or more. The longer it sits, the better it gets! Serve with crackers of choice.

Nancy Hudgins
Dana Wayne

BIG ROYCE'S EGG NOG

1 gallon Borden Egg Nog
1 cup Blue Bell Homemade Vanilla Ice Cream

½ to 1 cup Crown Royal (or liquor of choice)
Nutmeg to taste

This is my father-in-law's locally famous recipe. I use it at our annual Christmas Open House. Since I serve both alcoholic and non-alcoholic versions, I make up what I call the base - which is everything but the liquor and keep it in gallon containers in the fridge, taking out what I need as I go. The recipe is easily multiplied and since we go through about 3 gallons at the party, I make up that much base. BASE DIRECTIONS: Place ice cream in a large container and stir till softened and almost melted. Add egg nog and nutmeg. Cover and refrigerate until ready to use. If making an alcoholic version, pour into the punch bowl and add desired amount of liquor. For 'plain', simply pour and serve. Garnish with extra nutmeg if desired.

Royce Hudgins
Nancy Hudgins

CHAMPAGNE PUNCH

1 orange
1 lemon
¼ cup cranberry flavored liqueur or cognac
¼ cup Gran Marnier

1 bottle (750ml) pink or regular champagne, well chilled
Fresh cranberries
Citrus strips for garnish

This is another holiday favorite. I usually double this recipe. Use a good citrus peeler to remove the colored peel from both the orange and lemon in long strips. Be careful not to get the white pith as this can make it bitter-tasting. Refrigerate the orange and lemon for other use. Place the peels in the bottom of glass pitcher and add the cranberry flavored liqueur/cognac and Gran Marnier. Cover and refrigerate 2-6 hours or overnight. Just before serving, tilt the pitcher slightly and gradually add the champagne. Leave the peels in for extra flavor. Place a cranberry in the bottom of each champagne flute and add punch. Garnish with citrus strips tied in knots, if desired. A single recipe makes about 4 cups, 6-8 servings. FOR NON-ALCOHOLIC VERSION: Pour 3 cups well-chilled club soda into ¾ cup (6 oz.) cranberry cocktail concentrate, thawed. Makes 3¾ cups, 6 servings.

Nancy Hudgins