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Recipe of the month

Festive Guacamole Appetizers

2 tubes (8 ounces each) refrigerated seamless crescent dough sheet
1-1/2 teaspoons taco seasoning, divided
20 pretzel sticks, broken in half
4 ounces cream cheese, softened

1 cup guacamole
2 medium sweet yellow peppers
1 medium sweet red pepper
1 medium green pepper
Chopped fresh cilantro, optional

Prep Time: 1 hour Bake: 10 min. + cooling Yield: 40

1 Preheat oven to 375°. On an ungreased baking sheet, unroll one tube of crescent dough and press into a 13x8-in. rectangle. Prick with a fork; sprinkle with 3/4 teaspoon taco seasoning. Repeat with remaining dough and seasoning.

2 Bake until golden brown, 10-12 minutes. Transfer to wire racks to cool completely.

3 Cut each rectangle crosswise to make 4 strips (about 8x4-in.). For trees, cut each strip into 5 triangles, reserving scraps at each end for another use. For trunks, insert a pretzel piece into the base of each triangle.

4 Beat cream cheese and guacamole until smooth; spread over trees. Halve and seed peppers. Cut 40 stars from yellow peppers using a 3/4-in. star-shaped cookie cutter. Dice and julienne remaining peppers for tree decorations. Decorate trees with pepper pieces and, if desired, cilantro. Refrigerate until serving.

Source: <https://www.tasteofhome.com>

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Vol. 19 No. 51 December 19, 2022

Everybody's Talking

Pretty camels: Getting a Botox injection is something some people do to improve the appearance of aging skin. In Saudi Arabia, however, camel breeders have been known to beautify their animals with the substance. At the annual King Abdulaziz Camel Festival, breeders can enter their animals in a camel beauty contest. Cheating by way of Botox injections and other methods is not allowed. But the prize money of approximately \$66 million (USD) is a powerful temptation, and some camels and their owners are kicked out of the competition for trying to get around the rules. The festival also offers races and other activities in honour of this important animal.

Long address: A recent occurrence in Ireland proves that a mailed letter might have a chance of landing in the recipient's mailbox, even without an address on the envelope. Feargal Lynn of Cushendall, County Antrim in Northern Ireland, received a letter from an old acquaintance in Belfast. Instead of Lynn's address, the envelope contained a little story, with details that the sender must have hoped would lead to Lynn. The story included the names of Lynn's parents, recalls that Lynn played guitar, and that one of his friends was the butcher. Royal Mail worker Fergus McAlister saw the story and knew exactly who was the intended recipient.

Peculiar paint job: When painting a house, most people choose from an array of colours on the spectrum. However, real estate agent Seth Goodman of Lincoln, Illinois (U.S.), went a different route when he purchased an octagonal home. He painted it black, both inside and out. Now known as the "goth" house, he put the property on the market, knowing it would appeal to those who like the colour black. When Goodman renovated the home, he originally just painted the roof black, but then he was inspired to give the entire house a black theme. The inside has some white and gray accents, and lots of both natural and artificial light, making the space cozy and unique.

Visit with dolphins: At a beach on the coast of Western Australia, within the Shark Bay World Heritage Area, wild bottlenose dolphins drop in daily for visits. The beach is called Monkey Mia and, under supervision, members of the public are allowed to feed them. Back in the 1960s, many people did this and the dolphins became endangered because the adults stopped teaching their young how to fish in the natural world. Researchers took note and began to regulate the activity. Today, only a few of these marine mammals come daily, and conservation officers ensure that they are only given a tiny amount of their daily needs so they'll forage for more food.

Quoteable Quotes

"You never know if you can actually do something against all odds until you actually do it."
—Abby Wambach

"Worry never robs tomorrow of its sorrow; it only saps today of its strength."
—A.J. Cronin

What's Happening

Nov 23 to Dec 31 - Luminaria Come stroll through the candlelit pathways of the Kurimoto Japanese Garden, sip hot apple cider, enjoy a capella singers and spot magical glittering ice sculptures. University of Alberta Botanic Gardens - 51227 Hwy 60, Parkland County AB, Alberta

Dec 1 to 31 - Youth Drop In Free drop in at the Salvation Army Community Centre 165 Liberton Dr. from 2:30-5:30pm every Tuesday is basketball and Thursday is hangouts

Jan 30 - Will's Jams This prodigy will give you a morning of pure fulfillment with his witty wordplay and sing-along choruses the perfect kick-start to the day. Horizon Stage 10am, more info at www.horizonstage.com

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Trivia

1. In what country is the Great Barrier Island?
2. What is the largest organ of the human body?
3. Tom Hanks received his first Oscar nomination for this movie.
4. Tashkent is the capital of what country?
5. Which bird's genome was the first to be genetically sequenced?

(Flip bottom of page for answers)

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Your Weekly Horoscope

ARIES (March 21 - April 20)
The disturbing effects of a past issue may begin to dissipate now. What do you think you might have learned? You may need to wait a bit to begin a new phase. Lucky numbers: 3, 7, 14, 18, 31, 35.

TAURUS (April 21 - May 21)
Are you itching to break free and try something different with your life? Now may be the right time, especially if it involves connecting with a new romantic partner. Lucky numbers: 9, 11, 15, 17, 26, 32.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)
Are you having trouble right now communicating with those of another gender? Adjusting your viewpoint to see the world through their eyes may help the situation. Lucky numbers: 4, 8, 10, 13, 35, 41.

CANCER (June 22 - July 22)
The astrological energies for the next month may not be conducive for you to make progress in your endeavours. Consider hunkering down in your shell for now and recharge. Lucky numbers: 3, 8, 9, 10, 12, 44.

LEO (July 23 - Aug. 23)
At week's end, you may feel that your head and heart are not in sync. Be aware of this dynamic, especially if you are celebrating holidays with difficult family members. Lucky numbers: 7, 14, 21, 22, 36, 45.

VIRGO (Aug. 24 - Sept. 23)
Holidays often trigger nostalgia. This may be true for you early this week. If you encounter an unpleasant memory, reliving it at the dinner table might not be productive. Lucky numbers: 10, 11, 25, 30, 36, 40.

LIBRA (Sept. 24 - Oct. 23)
You may be entering a period that requires consciousness of how you are opposing others, or vice-versa. The differences can get blown out of proportion, compared to reality. Lucky numbers: 17, 21, 32, 41, 43, 48.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22)
Your thoughts and feelings may be more in sync than usual at the beginning of the week. This might be a good time to use your intuitive skills to reach a decision. Lucky numbers: 10, 16, 17, 24, 30, 35.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 - Dec. 21)
The astrological landscape has begun to shift away from Sagittarius energy. The middle of the week might provide one final boost, and you could try to take advantage of it. Lucky numbers: 6, 12, 18, 21, 27, 40.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 - Jan. 20)
The Sun is returning this month to the same place as when you were born. To celebrate, expand your comfort zone. Consider taking a small risk in an area of new opportunities. Lucky numbers: 1, 2, 5, 19, 31, 36.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19)
Many Aquarians communicate through lofty, idealistic concepts. At mid-week, you may have an opportunity to add a more practical element that others can readily follow. Lucky numbers: 5, 12, 23, 38, 42, 46.

PISCES (Feb. 20 - March 20)
Pisces are known for being able to touch the invisible, ethereal plane. This week, however, you may be able to incorporate into your psyche some information of a more grounded nature. Lucky numbers: 2, 7, 16, 41, 42, 45.

Lucky numbers this week: This week's odds favour Scorpio winners with the luckiest number being 17.

Did You Know...

Boning up: Adults have over 200 bones in their bodies. The largest of these is the femur, which is the thigh bone. The smallest is found in the eardrum and is called the stirrup.

Brilliantly beautiful: There are 92 known species of the peacock spider, most of which live in Australia. The males are brilliantly coloured and do a dance for their mate, just like a peacock.

Yummy spread: Hummus, originating in the Middle East, is now known in many places. The chickpea, tahini, and olive oil spread is flavoured with garlic and lemon juice. Many other ingredients, such as peppers and onions, can be added.

Wrap it up! Bubble Wrap was invented in 1957 to be a new style of three-dimensional wallpaper. When that didn't succeed, people soon recognized its use as packaging material. Popping the bubbles is fun, too.

Well-rooted: Kapot trees grow very tall, and part of the roots stay above ground for stabilization. The trunk has big thorns. Kapots produce fibre-filled pods that are used in pillows and other items. These trees grow in the world's rainforests.

On the Lighter Side

Him: "...and that's how they invented hockey."
Her: "I-cy."

Why did the barn fall down? It wasn't stable.

Why was the astronaut late for school? He forgot his launch box and had to go back home for it.

Knock! Knock! Who's there? Mater. Mater who? See you mater, alligator.

How does bee part his hair? With a honeycomb.

Answers

Trivia answers: 1. New Zealand 2. Skin 3. Big 4. Uzbekistan 5. Chicken

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Reader of the Month
Heath Bowen from Grande Prairie

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