

# Flavor and Flake



*Holiday Entertaining*

**ATHENS®**





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**WE'RE HOSTING AGAIN, AND WE COULDN'T BE MORE EXCITED. THIS YEAR WE'RE CELEBRATING WITH FRIENDS WE HAVEN'T SEEN IN A WHILE ... AND MAKING THE MOST OF THE HOLIDAY SEASON. IF YOU'RE READY TO SET THE TABLE, WE'VE GOT YOU COVERED.**

Explore our recipes for Friendsgiving, plus an incredible New Year's Eve celebration that feels extravagant but costs less than you'd think. We're all about stretching ingredients, freshening up existing recipes, and creating an atmosphere that lets the good times (and the champagne!) flow.

Whatever your plans, dive into our collection of hosting tips and holiday favorites.

Yours in phyllo,

*The Athens Foods Family*







## Hosting Notes

**THIS COULD BE YOUR FIRST EVER FRIENDSGIVING, OR YOUR TENTH. NO MATTER HOW SEASONED A HOST YOU ARE, IT'S ALWAYS A GOOD IDEA TO BE MINDFUL OF THESE TIPS TO KEEP THE CONVERSATION AND THE GOOD VIBES GOING STRONG.**

### **BEFORE YOU SET THE TABLE, SET GUESTS' EXPECTATIONS.**

A simple email with the date, time, and what to wear goes a long way. Hosting a potluck? Put together a shared Google doc so that you don't end up with all desserts and no sides. Prefer to fly solo? Let guests know that you've got the menu covered. As a courtesy, it's also nice to give guests a sense of the event's structure, i.e. whether you're planning festive cocktails, a formal-ish dinner party, or a casual hangout around the fire pit.

### **BE MINDFUL OF CULTURAL AND DIETARY DIFFERENCES.**

Not everyone on your guest list might celebrate traditions the same way. Embrace that diversity, and make your friends feel welcome no matter the occasion. Ask in advance if anyone has dietary restrictions — a vegan and vegetarian accompaniment to your main dish is always appreciated, as are non-alcoholic beverage options.

### **MAKE A TOAST. THEN, MAKE INTRODUCTIONS.**

Greet each guest. Then, once the party is underway, offer a toast to kick off the celebration and thank your friends for coming. If your guests are getting to know each other for the first time, help set them up for success. A simple, "There's someone I want you to meet," followed by a brief introduction and mention of a shared interest can help everyone feel comfortable mixing and mingling.

### **DON'T STRESS THE PARTICULARS.**

Your friends are coming to see you and share in the magic of the holidays ... not judge the excellence of your cooking. If a dish doesn't quite turn out, the house isn't squeaky clean, or whatever other hiccup arises, just laugh it off! The important thing is that you're celebrating together.

### **AND A WORD FOR GUESTS: SAY THANK YOU!**

Your host put in lots of time and effort to make the night special ... so don't forget to express your gratitude. Say thanks for the invite when you arrive, and thanks for a wonderful night as you leave. We're also big believers in a small token of appreciation. Pretty hand soaps, potted herbs, a small bottle of olive oil or tin of homemade treats are always welcome. For a grand gesture, send flowers the day after with a note to say you had a fantastic time.



## Tips + Tricks

**NEVER WORKED WITH PHYLLO? NO PROBLEM. WE'VE GOT A FEW HACKS THAT CAN MAKE THESE RECIPES A SUREFIRE SUCCESS.**

### **PLAN IN ADVANCE.**

Follow the package instructions to defrost phyllo dough (an overnight thaw in the fridge and a little time on the counter to come to room temp is critical). If you need an instant phyllo fix, make one of our recipes with phyllo shells! They're ready for immediate use — just fill and serve.

### **SAVE YOUR LEFTOVERS.**

Remove any phyllo not needed for the recipe, reroll, wrap in plastic and refrigerate for up to 1 week so it's ready to roll when you are, or refreeze up to 2 months.

### **DO - PREP FOR SUCCESS.**

Phyllo can dry out quickly, so have all your ingredients prepped before opening the package of phyllo dough. For best results, work quickly and keep the dough covered with plastic wrap plus a slightly damp towel over top. This keeps the dough from drying out throughout recipe assembly.

Many phyllo dishes can be assembled and frozen in airtight containers prior to baking. Do not defrost frozen dishes prior to baking.

### **DON'T - WORRY ABOUT PERFECTION.**

Phyllo is more forgiving than you think. If it tears, simply patch it back together and layer with another sheet. No one will know!

### **GET FLAKY WITH IT.**

Phyllo is extremely versatile, so don't feel limited by traditional phyllo dough recipes. Phyllo dough is awesome as a pizza crust, pie shell, tortilla bowl or even a cracker. If these recipes whet your appetite, dig into our recipe library at [athensfoods.com](https://athensfoods.com) for even more ideas and creative substitutions.

Phyllo shells come ready to use. But for maximum phyllo crunch with no-bake recipes, crisp empty phyllo shells for 5-10 minutes in the oven before filling however you'd like.







*Autumn Fare*



# Menu

**HONEY GOAT CHEESE & RASPBERRY SWIRLS p.15**

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## Honey Goat Cheese & Raspberry Swirls

Picture this: you've got a full oven, but you'd love to serve an appetizer as guests arrive. Enter these goat cheese and jam swirls. With a quick blitz of the mixer and a drizzle of jam, you've got the perfect app.

- **8 ounces** honey goat cheese, softened
- **3 tablespoons** heavy cream
- **1/8 teaspoon** pure orange extract
- **3 teaspoons** raspberry seedless jam
- **2 packages** (15 count, each) Athens® Phyllo Shells
- **10 raspberries**, sliced or whole, for garnish
- Orange zest strips and/or candied orange wedges, for garnish

### DIRECTIONS:

In a small bowl, using an electric mixer, combine goat cheese, heavy cream and orange extract. In another small bowl, mix the jam with a fork until smooth.

Drizzle jam onto goat cheese mixture. With a knife, swirl the jam to get a marbled effect.

Pipe the filling into the shells and top each with a whole or sliced raspberry, a candied orange wedge, and an orange zest strip.





## Green Beans & Mushrooms with Phyllo Shards

For an elegant take on crispy onion straws, sprinkle phyllo shards on top of your favorite green bean casserole. For even more flavor, shake your favorite seasoning in between the sheets of phyllo. Try Herbes de Provence, a classic Italian mix, or even a chile and cayenne combo for spice.

- **2 sheets** Athens® Phyllo Dough (9"x14"), thawed
- Olive oil spray
- **1 ½ teaspoons** onion salt, divided
- **1** small red onion, sliced
- **8 ounces** green beans
- **8 ounces** mushrooms, sliced
- Salt and pepper, to taste

### DIRECTIONS:

Thaw one roll of phyllo, following thawing instructions on package. Preheat oven to 400°F.

Place one sheet of phyllo on work surface. Spray lightly with olive oil. Sprinkle with ¼ teaspoon onion salt. Layer with a second sheet of phyllo, spray with oil and sprinkle with ¼ teaspoon onion salt. Transfer to a parchment-lined baking tray and bake for 10 minutes or until golden. Reroll unused phyllo sheets and follow storing instructions on package.

While the phyllo is baking, place the sliced onion, green beans and mushrooms on a parchment-lined baking tray. Spray with olive oil, and season with 1 teaspoon onion salt and salt & pepper if needed.

Cover and bake for 1 hour, mixing halfway through. Place in a serving dish or on a platter. Crush phyllo into shards and sprinkle on top.

**Tip:** So you'll always have some shards ready to sprinkle on other dishes like casseroles or salads, make a big batch using the whole roll of phyllo dough. Store in an airtight container or resealable bag at room temperature for up to 2 weeks.







## Spicy Eggplant with Caramelized Onions

These shells pack all the flavors of fall into a vegetarian bite. Leave out the feta, and they're vegan. To save time, pre-make the eggplant mixture in the morning, and then spoon in shells and bake just before you're ready to serve.

- **3 teaspoons** olive oil, divided
- **1 tablespoon** onions, julienne cut, for garnish
- **½ teaspoon** garlic, minced
- **1 ⅔ cups** eggplant, peeled, ½" cubed
- **2 tablespoons** red bell peppers, diced
- **3 tablespoons** salsa
- **¼ cup** fresh spinach, coarsely chopped, firmly packed
- **1 tablespoon** sun-dried tomatoes, julienne cut
- **2 tablespoons** reduced fat feta cheese
- **1 package** (15 count) Athens® Phyllo Shells

### DIRECTIONS:

Preheat oven to 350°F. In a small skillet, heat 1 teaspoon of oil over medium heat. Add onions and slowly sauté until fully caramelized and dark brown, about 5 minutes. Remove onions and set aside.

Heat 2 teaspoons of oil, add garlic and sauté for 1-2 minutes. Add eggplant and sauté for 7-10 minutes. Add bell peppers and salsa. Simmer until all liquid has evaporated.

Add spinach, tomatoes and cheese. Mix lightly. Spoon filling into each phyllo shell. Bake in oven for 5 minutes. Garnish with the caramelized onion. Serve warm.



## Mini Phyllo Pecan Tarts

You don't need the instruction of a Southern grandma to make a great pecan tassie. All it takes is a little butter, sugar, corn syrup and love. We speed up the cook time by subbing crispy phyllo shells for traditional cream cheese dough. With our recipe, you get all the ooey goodness in an extra crunchy bite.

- **1 large egg**
- **3 tablespoons** light brown sugar
- **¼ cup** light corn syrup
- **2 tablespoons** butter, melted
- **½ teaspoon** vanilla
- Pinch of salt
- **1 ¼ cups** pecans, chopped
- **2 packages** (15 count, each) Athens® Phyllo Shells

### DIRECTIONS:

Preheat oven to 350°F. In a medium bowl, whisk egg until light and fluffy, about 1 minute.

Combine egg with brown sugar, corn syrup, butter, vanilla extract and salt. Mix well. Add pecans and mix lightly.

Spoon filling into each shell and arrange on a baking sheet. Bake for 10-12 minutes. Let cool before serving. Enjoy!







## Apple Brûlée Phyllo Bites

We take apple pie to the next level with a custardy filling and a torched sugar topping. Our creative spin is just right for a Friendsgiving table — this is the place to experiment with updates to traditional desserts ... and you might just like this better than the classic!

- 1 McIntosh apple, peeled,  $\frac{1}{4}$ " diced
- $\frac{1}{3}$  cup caramel ice cream topping
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon cinnamon
- $\frac{2}{3}$  cup whipping cream
- 2 egg yolks, beaten
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 packages (15 count, each) Athens® Phyllo Shells

### DIRECTIONS:

Preheat oven to 325°F. Place apple pieces in a microwave-safe bowl with just enough water to cover the apples. Cover and cook in the microwave for 2 minutes or until tender. Drain well. Divide apples between the shells. Spoon  $\frac{1}{4}$  –  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon of caramel over the apples. Set aside.

In a small saucepan, combine 1 tablespoon of sugar, 1 tablespoon of brown sugar, cinnamon and cream. Stir and cook over medium heat until it begins to boil. Remove from heat and slowly pour the cream mixture into the beaten eggs, 1 tablespoon at a time, while whisking. Return the mixture to the saucepan and heat until it starts to boil; whisking constantly.

Remove from heat and stir in vanilla extract. Carefully spoon mixture to the top of each shell. Bake for 10 minutes. Combine remaining white and brown sugar. While warm, sprinkle each shell with sugar mixture.

**Tip:** If desired, use a crème brûlée torch or broiler to caramelize the tops.



## Pumpkin Mousse

A heavy slice of pie after an already filling meal can be a recipe for a long nap. Keep it light with these mini pumpkin mousse bites. Not only will they allow for a wide variety of garnishes, but they'll also keep you from feeling like you need to unbutton your jeans.

- **1 cup** canned pumpkin pie mix
- **5 tablespoons** cream cheese, softened
- **2 tablespoons** brown sugar
- **1 ½ teaspoons** cinnamon
- **1 ¾ cups** whipped topping, thawed, divided
- **2 packages** (15 count, each) Athens® Phyllo Shells
- Favorite toppings of your choice such as mini chocolate chips, cinnamon-infused whipped topping, or Heath® Toffee Bits

### DIRECTIONS:

In a small bowl, whip cream cheese. Add pumpkin pie mix, brown sugar and cinnamon, whipping until smooth. Fold in 2 tablespoons of whipped topping. Chill for 1 hour.

Spoon or pipe pumpkin mousse into phyllo shells. Garnish with remaining whipped topping. Serve immediately.

**Tip:** To create a cinnamon-infused whipped topping, mix 1 cup whipped topping with ½ teaspoon cinnamon.







*Winter Bites*



# Menu

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## Spicy Spinach Hors d'oeuvres

We live for any kind of appetizer that combines a green veg with a creamy dip. This one uses Greek yogurt, so it's actually pretty good for you. A little extra kick from the hot sauce, fresh spinach and subtle sweetness from the pine nuts will make this hors d'oeuvre your new go-to party pleaser.

- **2 tablespoons** olive oil
- **1** small onion, finely chopped
- **2** cloves garlic, minced
- **½ teaspoon** dried oregano
- **½ teaspoon** chili powder, plus additional for garnish
- **10 ounces** fresh spinach, chopped
- **¼ cup** pine nuts, chopped, toasted
- **1 teaspoon** hot sauce
- **½ teaspoon** salt
- **¼ teaspoon** black pepper
- **1 cup** Greek yogurt
- **1 package** (15 count) Athens® Phyllo Shells

### DIRECTIONS:

In a medium skillet, heat olive oil until simmering. Add chopped onion, garlic, oregano and chili powder. Sauté briefly until translucent.

Add spinach, stirring to wilt completely. Add pine nuts, hot sauce, salt and pepper. Allow to cool.

Combine cooled mixture with Greek yogurt. Spoon mixture into each shell. Garnish with additional chili powder.





## Honey Pistachio Phyllo "Breadsticks"

Could your crudité use some crunch? A phyllo breadstick is easy to twist together and makes a great addition to a charcuterie board or vegetable platter. To add some flair to your table, place the breadsticks upright in a pretty glass or short vase for height.

- **10 sheets** Athens® Phyllo Dough (9"x14"), thawed
- **½ stick** butter, melted
- **¼ cup** honey
- **¼ cup** pistachios, finely chopped

### DIRECTIONS:

Thaw one roll of phyllo, following instructions on package. Preheat oven to 350°F. Unroll and cover 10 phyllo sheets with plastic wrap and then a slightly damp towel to prevent drying out. Reroll unused sheets and follow storing instructions on package.

Place 1 sheet of phyllo dough horizontally on work surface and lightly brush with butter. Drizzle with some honey and lightly sprinkle pistachios, layer and repeat with 9 more sheets of phyllo. Cut in half to get two 9" x 7" stacks of dough. Cut each of those stacks into 6 strips approximately 1 1/2" x 7". Fold each strip in half lengthwise, gently twist and place on baking tray. Brush lightly with butter and sprinkle with any leftover pistachios. Bake for 5–8 minutes or until golden brown.







## Steak and Blue in Mini Phyllo Shells

Filet for a crowd? Expensive. A six ounce flank steak you can divvy across dozens of phyllo shells? Smart. This ingenious little bite tastes decadent without breaking the bank. If you're looking to stretch your budget, this recipe is a keeper.

- **6 ounces** flank steak
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- **2 teaspoons** extra virgin olive oil
- **2 cups** arugula
- **¼ cup** blue cheese dressing
- **2 packages** (15 count, each) Athens® Phyllo Shells
- **¼ cup** Gorgonzola cheese, for garnish

### **DIRECTIONS:**

Season steak with salt, pepper, and olive oil. Grill (or sear) to medium rare (132°F) or preferred temperature. Allow to rest for about 10 minutes. Slice in half with the grain of the meat. Thinly slice 30 strips of steak against the grain.

Place about 2 teaspoons of arugula into each shell. Top arugula with ½ teaspoon blue cheese dressing. Roll steak strips and place on top of dressing. Garnish with Gorgonzola cheese.





## 5-Spice Crab Bites

We love the idea of miniature surf and turf ... we also love that making it mini makes it more affordable to serve a crowd. Pair our Steak and Blue shells with these 5-spice crab bites for the ultimate festive NYE menu.

- **8 ounces** crab meat, lump, drained
- **¼ cup** water chestnuts, ¼" diced
- **1 teaspoon** fresh ginger, minced
- **1 teaspoon** Chinese five-spice powder
- **3 teaspoons** fresh basil, minced
- **1 tablespoon** red bell pepper, ¼" diced
- **1** lemon, juice and zest
- **2 packages** (15 count, each) Athens® Phyllo Shells
- **1** green onion, diced

### DIRECTIONS:

In a medium mixing bowl, combine the first seven ingredients. Refrigerate for 1 hour. Fill shells with one rounded teaspoon of crab mixture. Garnish with green onion. Serve chilled.







## Italian Almond Tarts

In parts of Northern Europe, it's tradition to hide a single almond among bowls of rice pudding — the lucky finder is promised a year of prosperity. We think everyone deserves blessings of good fortune in the new year ... and that good fortune starts with a scrumptious almond dessert.

- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup ricotta cheese, drained
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup orange marmalade
- **1 package** (15 count) Athens® Phyllo Shells
- $\frac{1}{3}$  cup almonds, sliced
- Candied orange wedges, for garnish
- Orange zest strips, for garnish

### DIRECTIONS:

In a small bowl, combine the ricotta cheese and marmalade. Spoon mixture into phyllo shells. Top each with a few sliced almonds. Garnish with a candied orange wedge and orange zest strip. Chill and serve.



## Chocolate Coconut Cream Bites

We're chocolate lovers any time of year, but especially around the holidays. The infusion of orange lends citrusy undertones while a dipped shell adds flair and flavor to our traditional phyllo shells.

- **1 can** (15 ounce) coconut cream, refrigerated at least 4 hours
- **2 ½ ounces** dark chocolate, chopped
- **2 ½ tablespoons** agave
- **¼ teaspoon** orange extract
- **2 packages** (15 count, each) Athens® Chocolate Phyllo Shells or Traditional Phyllo Shells
- **¼ cup** sweetened coconut flakes, toasted
- **1 cup** semi-sweet chocolate chips

### DIRECTIONS:

Scoop solidified coconut cream from can and place in medium saucepan. This should yield approximately  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup. (The liquid will not be used in this recipe but may be used in other recipe applications.) Place saucepan over low heat. Mix in chocolate, allowing it to melt. Add agave and orange extract, mixing until smooth, and remove from heat. Transfer mixture to a bowl. Allow to cool for 10 minutes and then set in freezer for additional 10 minutes.

Place semi-sweet chocolate chips in a small bowl and microwave for 30 seconds or until melted and smooth. Dip each shell halfway into the chocolate and place on a cooling rack to harden.

Spoon or pipe mixture into phyllo shells. Top with toasted coconut. Serve at room temperature or frozen.







## Get the Look

IF YOU LIKE WHAT YOU SEE, GOOD NEWS! WE'VE SOURCED THE TEXTILES, CERAMICS AND DECORATIONS USED IN OUR TABLESCAPES TO INSPIRE YOUR HOLIDAY MEALS.

### SETTING THE TABLE: FRIENDSGIVING

Warm whites and autumnal tones set the scene for a cozy dinner. We love the look of stoneware and linens for a textural element that speaks to the season. Set the table the night before, including the platters, casserole dishes and trivets you'll need for dinner. This creates less stress and ensures all your sides fit on the table with elbow room to spare.

### PREPPING THE BUFFET: NEW YEAR'S EVE

For a NYE cocktail party, we're all about the metallics. Don't be afraid to mix silver, gold and pewter — a healthy dose of black and white helps tie together the glitz. Hors d'oeuvres that don't require a fork and knife are ideal for this kind of fête — but still offer some disposable cocktail napkins and plates for guests. To create an appetizing array, use a mix of cake stands, footed platters, and layered boards to create height and depth on your table. Oh, and don't forget the confetti!

Seek inspiration for your holiday table like we did from retailers such as H&M, Target, Anthropologie, CB2, Pottery Barn, West Elm, Zara and Magnolia Home. Or hit your favorite thrift store for well-loved pieces that will look fabulous mixed with newer finds.



[ photographer credit ]

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