



A Night at the Oscars & Crostini with Beef Tenderloin & Stilton

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Winter is not a particularly glamorous time of year in New Hampshire. We spend our days bundled up in bulky sweaters and heavy socks. Before leaving the house, we don jackets that turn us into Michelin Man clones. With very few exceptions, everyone has a chronic case of hat hair. Thank goodness, relief is on the way. No, not an all-expense paid trip to the Caribbean. A golden knight, commonly known as Oscar, will soon swoop into our living rooms and rescue us with a little razzle-dazzle.

The Oscar awards are a great time to invite your friends and neighbors over for a star studded evening. After the Super Bowl, it is the most watched show on television. We could all use a little infusion of glitz and glitter in our otherwise

fleece and down-filled lives. At least for one night, we can watch beautiful people in elegant gowns and tuxedos. The show will be filled with tension and melodrama. There will be music, laughter and a few awkward and interesting moments.

Ask everyone to come about 7:00 to watch the stars sashay down the red carpet. It is the perfect opportunity to feast your eyes on the good, the bad and the ugly of Hollywood fashion. Encourage debate and take a poll for best and worst dressed. Then it is on with the show.

While many hosts stipulate black tie and gowns at their Oscar parties, formal attire is certainly not required. If black tie isn't your thing, costumes can be fun. Ask your guests to dress as their favorite star or pretend they are an extra in one of this year's best picture nominees. You'll have everything from saris to football jerseys, Civil War uniforms, kufiya and camouflage gear. Since the show always seems to go on and on and on, usually ending well past my bedtime, a pajama party works for me! Whatever you do, consider offering prizes for best and worst dressed, most creative or funny.

Not sure about your Oscar party menu? Let the movies inspire you. Use the best picture nominees as a guide and put together an international, and very memorable, evening. No, you don't need to serve stale bread and gruel for *Les Misérables*. The key is to let the movies inspire you, not tie you down. Feel free to take a lot of poetic license. Celebrate *Amour* and *Les Mis* with French food. Enjoy a taste of India for the *Life of Pi*. Honor *Argo* and *Zero Dark Thirty* with Middle Eastern delicacies. Whip up your favorite recipes from the Deep South in deference to *Django Unchained*. Add some Creole treats for *Beasts of the Southern Wild* and a batch of corn cakes, a favorite of President Lincoln. Finally, think football food but take it up a notch for *Silver Linings Playbook*. Your friends will be delighted.

Don't worry, nine nominees does not mean you need to stress over a nine course meal. A buffet is a great idea for an Oscar Party. Let everyone wander over to the table and nibble at leisure. Stick to finger food and dishes which are easily eaten with a just fork or spoon. By all means, go glam with the cocktails. Put the champagne on ice or get creative with a special Hollywood inspired cocktail. To pull everything together, dress up your table with a bright red runner, bring out lots of candles and maybe add a few Oscar statuettes from the party store. Your guests will love it.

Enjoy a wonderful evening, filled with fun, glitz and glamor, cheers and jeers, mixing, mingling, sipping and nibbling. On with the show and bon appétit!

Crostini with Beef Tenderloin & Stilton

A very distant relation to the infamous Philly Cheese Steak, these elegant, little sandwiches will make a great addition to your Oscar Party. Enjoy!

Makes 16 small open-faced sandwiches



Olive oil
1 red onion, thinly sliced
1/4 teaspoon dried thyme
Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
1 pound mushrooms, sliced
4-6 ounces crumbled Stilton
1 ounce cream cheese at room temperature
1-2 tablespoons sour cream
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
Thinly sliced baguette, toasted
About 12 ounces thinly sliced beef tenderloin, filet mignon or New York strip steak*
Arugula

Heat a little olive oil in a medium skillet over medium heat. Add the onions, sprinkle with thyme, season with salt and pepper and toss to combine. Reduce the heat to medium-low and cook slowly, stirring occasionally, until the onions are golden brown. Remove from the heat and reserve.

Heat a little olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the mushrooms, season with salt and pepper and cook, stirring frequently, until the mushrooms are golden brown. Remove from the heat and reserve.

Put the cream cheese, sour cream and mustard in a bowl, season with salt and pepper and stir to combine. Add the Stilton and stir again to combine.

Assemble the Crostini: Spread a little of the Stilton mixture onto each slice of toast, add 3-4 arugula leaves and top with beef. Garnish with caramelized onions and serve.

You can prep the onions, mushrooms, Stilton spread and beef and the toast baguette slices early in the day and assemble at the last minute when your guests arrive.

** You will find recipes for cooking beef tenderloin and strip steak on my blog at www.wordpress.susannye.com.*

