

THE
2026

EASY-BUT-FANCY SPRING MENU

what to cook for a kentucky derby party

COCKTAIL

mint julep garden bar

HORS D'OEUVRES

benedictine chicken salad sandwiches

salt & vinegar deviled eggs

bloody mary seafood cocktail

kentucky hot brown sliders with honey dijonaise

what
to
cook

EASY-BUT-FANCY KENTUCKY DERBY PARTY

the plan of attack

Almost every single recipe in this menu can be prepped in full ahead of time, and, as usual with our easy-but-fancy menus, we've provided tips for how to prep what when.

When I'm serving a menu of heavy hors d'oeuvres, I like to have some set out when guests arrive, then bring out a few more during the party. The official start time of the Kentucky Derby is 6:57 p.m. ET, and I'd aim to start the party about 2 hours before race time, then let people linger afterward for as long as they (or you!) would like.

Here's when to prep and serve everything in this menu:

1 week in advance:

- **Buy your eggs!** It is impossible to peel *fresh* eggs, so you want to buy them about a week in advance of hard boiling and peeling them.

Up to 4 days in advance:

- **Make the mint, berry, and peach syrups** for the julep bar. Let cool completely, then store the bottles in the fridge.
- **Make the cocktail sauce** for the seafood platter and store it in an airtight container in the fridge.
- **Write simple signage for the mint julep garden bar** so people know how to make their own drinks. Include labels for the three different syrups and instructions for the julep and bourbon spritz recipes included below.

1 to 2 days in advance:

- **Prep the deviled eggs:**
 - Hard boil and peel the eggs.
 - Slice the eggs in half and remove the yolks.
 - Make the deviled egg filling and transfer it to a zip-top bag (don't cut the corner yet!). Press out as much air as possible, then seal and refrigerate.
 - Store the egg whites separately: arrange them cut-side down in a paper towel-lined container (layer with more paper towels if needed), cover, and refrigerate.
- **Make the chicken salad sandwich filling.** Store in an airtight container in the fridge.
- **Bake the bacon** for the sliders, let cool, and store in an airtight container in the fridge.
- **Set out your serving platters and bowls** and label each one with a sticky note reminding yourself what you'll put in which vessel so that you're not scrambling day of.

Night before or morning of:

- **If using frozen shrimp and crab, transfer them to the fridge to thaw** (do this the night before the party). **If you are using fresh peeled and deveined shrimp, cook the shrimp the morning of.** Let them cool completely then store in the fridge in an airtight container.

- **Make the mint sugar** and set aside.
- **Slice lemons** into wedges for both the julep bar and the seafood platter.
- **Skewer the olives** for the seafood platter.
- **Finely chop the chives** for the deviled eggs.
- **Assemble the Kentucky hot brown sliders** (don't bake them yet!). Cover and refrigerate.

Early afternoon (2 to 4 hours before guests arrive):

- **Fill the deviled eggs:** Snip the corner off the zip-top bag and pipe the filling into the egg whites. Arrange the eggs on your serving platter. Cover loosely and refrigerate.
- **Set up the mint julep bar** (minus the ice): get your syrups, bourbon, glasses, garnishes, and mint all ready to go.
- **Go get dressed!**

1 hour before guests arrive:

- **Assemble your chicken salad sandwiches** and pile them on a serving platter. Cover loosely and store in the fridge. If you don't have room to store them in your fridge, assemble them right before party time and just set them out once made.
- Unless you have a pebble ice maker, **crush some ice** for the julep bar and cocktail platter and return it to the freezer.
- Do a quick **kitchen reset** if it would make you feel good... but also remember it's OK for the kitchen to be kinda messy! You're throwing a party!

15 minutes before the party starts and/or as the first guests arrive:

- **Add crushed ice to the julep bar** to bring it to life (fluff the mint, tidy as needed).
- **Finish off the deviled eggs** by topping them with salt & vinegar chips and chives and set them out.
- **Set out the chicken salad sandwiches.**
- **Assemble the seafood platter:** Fill your platter with crushed ice, pat the chilled shrimp and crab claws dry, and arrange them on top of the ice. Place the cocktail sauce somewhere on there, and scatter clusters of olives and lemon wedges all around.

Guests love a job! There's science behind including them in the preparation of a meal — it makes them feel happier and useful and involved. So, let them help! "Can you set out the drink garnishes? Can you fill this bowl with ice? Can you take this tray to the table outside?"

45 minutes into the party:

- Grab a friend and head to the kitchen to **bake the sliders:** Cover with foil and bake for 8 minutes, then uncover and bake for 1 to 2 more minutes until lightly golden. SET A TIMER! Do not burn the tops!! Slice the sliders and transfer them to a serving platter. Serve while they're still nice and warm!

Throughout the party:

- Let your guests mix their own drinks at the julep bar, but also jump in there and show people how it's done!
- Give the julep bar a quick refresh as needed (top off ice, put out more mint).

- Sit back and enjoy!

At 6:57 p.m. ET (or your time zone's equivalent):

- Watch the 152nd Kentucky Derby!

EASY-BUT-FANCY KENTUCKY DERBY PARTY

grocery list from *What To Cook When You Don't Feel Like Cooking*

● mint julep garden bar

● salt & vinegar deviled eggs

● benedictine chicken salad sandwiches

● bloody mary seafood tower

● kentucky hot brown sliders with honey dijonaise

PROTEIN

- 1 1/2 lbs boneless, skinless chicken breasts ●
- 1 lb cooked jumbo shrimp, chilled and peeled ●
- 1 lb snow crab claws ●
- 8 slices of bacon ●
- 1/2 lb thinly sliced roasted turkey ●

PRODUCE

- 8 lemons ●●●●
- Fresh chives ●
- English cucumber ●
- Sweet onion ●
- 2 large bunches fresh mint ●
- 1 pint strawberries, raspberries, or blueberries ●
- 1 ripe peach or frozen peaches ●
- 1 large tomato (about 7 to 8 oz) ●

OILS, VINEGARS, AND SAUCES

- Worcestershire sauce ●
- Light-colored vinegar (if hard-boiling eggs) ●

BAKERY

- 32 slices very soft white sandwich bread (about 1 1/2 loaves depending on brand) ●
- 1 package Hawaiian rolls (12 rolls) ●

DAIRY & EGGS

- 12 hard-boiled eggs, peeled ●
- Crème fraîche ●
- Whipped cream cheese ●
- 6 oz Gruyère cheese ●
- Butter ●

SPICES

- Kosher salt ●●●
- Smoked paprika ●
- Freshly cracked black pepper ●●●
- Dried dill weed ●
- Garlic powder ●
- Celery salt ●

ALCOHOL AND BEVERAGES

- 1 bottle bourbon (I like Woodford Reserve) ●
- Club soda or sparkling water ●
- Ice (if you don't have a lot on hand) ●●

PANTRY + CANNED GOODS

- Mayonnaise ●●●
- Sweet pickle juice (from a jar of sweet pickles) ●
- Dijon mustard ●●●
- Salt & vinegar potato chips ●
- Mango chutney (optional but excellent) ●
- Sugar ●
- Ketchup ●
- Prepared horseradish ●
- Hot sauce (such as Tabasco) ●
- Cocktail olives ●
- Honey ●



MINT JULEP GARDEN BAR

BY CAROLINE CHAMBERS

Set up a little mint julep garden bar with crushed ice, fresh herbs, and a few flavored syrups so guests can build their own perfect Derby drink — no muddling required.

Traditional juleps involve muddling mint, which is lovely when you're making one drink... but chaotic when you're hosting a party. So we're skipping the muddling entirely and making a few simple syrups ahead of time instead. Guests can pour, stir, and sip without anyone standing at the bar smashing herbs for 20 minutes.

I like to make mint, berry, and peach syrups so everyone can pick their favorite — or mix and match. A splash of club soda at the end keeps things light and extra refreshing.

Makes 10 drinks

Prep time: 20 minutes to make the simple syrups + a few hours to let them cool

Tools:

- [Small saucepan](#)
- [Blender](#)
- [3 small bottles](#) (for the syrups)
- [Microplane](#) (for zesting lemon)
- Small plate or shallow bowl (for mint sugar)
- [Cocktail jigger](#)

Ingredients:

- 3 1/2 cups sugar, divided
- 3 cups water
- 2 large bunches fresh mint, divided
- 1 cup strawberries, raspberries, or blueberries
- 1 ripe peach, chopped, or 1 cup frozen peaches
- 2 lemons
- 1 bottle bourbon (I like Woodford Reserve)
- Crushed or pebble ice
- Club soda or sparkling water

Make a simple syrup by adding **3 cups sugar and 3 cups water** to a small saucepan and bring to a simmer over medium heat, stirring until the sugar dissolves. Remove from the heat.

Add **a large handful of fresh mint leaves** to the first bottle. Pour about **1/3 of the warm simple syrup** over the mint and let it steep while you prepare the other syrups.

Place **1 cup strawberries, raspberries, or blueberries** in a blender with **1/3 of the simple syrup** and blend until completely smooth. Transfer to the second bottle.

Rinse the blender, then add **1 chopped peach or 1 cup of frozen peaches** with the remaining **1/3 of the simple syrup** and blend until fully pureed. Transfer to the third bottle.

Let the syrups cool completely before serving.

To make mint sugar: Combine **1/2 cup sugar, grated zest from 1 lemon, and 4 mint leaves** in a shallow bowl. Use your fingers to rub everything together until fragrant, then remove and discard the mint leaves and transfer the mint sugar to a small plate or bowl for rimming glasses.

Cut **2 lemons** (including the one you just zested) into wedges and place in a small bowl.

Now the fun part! Set up the mint julep garden bar by placing the **mint syrup, berry syrup, peach syrup, bottle of bourbon, club soda, crushed ice, lemon wedges, and the remaining mint sprigs** together.

Once everything is set up, guests can build their drinks right at the bar. Here are two easy cocktail ideas using any of the flavored syrups.

julep

Rub **a lemon wedge** around the rim of a glass and dip the rim into the **mint sugar**, if desired. Fill the glass with crushed ice.

Add **2 ounces bourbon** and **1 ounce flavored syrup of your choice** (mint, berry, or peach). Stir until the glass becomes frosty.

Garnish with **a mint sprig** (clap it between your hands first to release the aroma) and serve.

bourbon spritz

Fill a glass with crushed ice.

Add **2 ounces bourbon, 2 ounces flavored syrup of your choice** (mint, berry, or peach), and the **juice from 1 lemon wedge**. Stir to combine.

Top with **2 ounces club soda** (or more if you prefer a lighter drink).

Garnish with **a mint sprig or lemon wedge** and serve.



BENEDICTINE CHICKEN SALAD SANDWICHES

BY CAROLINE CHAMBERS

This chicken salad is inspired by Benedictine spread, the iconic cucumber-and-cream-cheese spread from Louisville, Kentucky. Here it gets a little glow-up with finely chopped chicken and just enough mayo to make it light, creamy, and super spreadable. Cut the crusts off, stack the sandwiches high, and suddenly you've got a very Kentucky Derby-ready snack situation.

Serves 10

Prep time: 25 minutes

Tools:

- Saucepan or [skillet](#)
- [Meat thermometer](#)
- [Chef's knife](#)
- [Cutting board](#)
- [Box grater](#)
- Large bowl
- Serving platter

Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 pounds boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 1/2 English cucumber, sliced in half vertically, seeds scooped out and discarded
- 1/4 sweet onion
- 1/2 cup plus 2 tablespoons whipped cream cheese
- 1/3 cup mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1 tablespoon mango chutney (optional but excellent)
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon dried dill weed
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 32 slices very soft white sandwich bread (about 1 1/2 loaves depending on brand)

Place **1 1/2 pounds boneless, skinless chicken breasts** in a saucepan or skillet and cover with an inch of water. Season generously with **kosher salt and pepper**. Bring the water to a boil over high heat, then reduce to a simmer over low heat. Cover and cook for 12 to 15 minutes, until the chicken registers at 165°F internally using a meat thermometer.

Slice **1/2 an English cucumber** in half lengthwise and scoop out the seeds (you can discard them). Using the largest hole of a box grater, grate the cucumber along with **1/4 of a sweet onion**.

Let the chicken cool slightly, then finely chop it — it should resemble grains of rice in size.

In a large bowl, combine the chicken with the grated cucumber and onion. Add **1/2 cup plus 2 tablespoons whipped cream cheese, 1/3 cup mayonnaise, 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard, 1 tablespoon mango chutney (if using), 2 tablespoons lemon juice, 2 teaspoons kosher salt, 1 teaspoon dried dill weed, 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder, and several grinds of freshly cracked black pepper**.

Taste and add more kosher salt or lemon juice if needed. The mixture should feel light and very spreadable.

Lay out the **32 slices of soft white sandwich bread** and spread the chicken salad evenly over 16 of them. Top with the remaining bread slices.

Trim the crusts off the sandwiches, cut each sandwich into triangles (either 2 or 4 per sandwich!), stack them high on a cake stand or platter to create a sandwich tower, and serve.



SALT & VINEGAR DEVILED EGGS

BY CAROLINE CHAMBERS

These deviled eggs get their richness from crème fraîche, which makes the filling extra creamy and smooth alongside the mayo and mustard. A crunchy salt-and-vinegar chip on top brings the salty, tangy bite that makes the whole thing feel like a very good party snack. You'll likely have extra crème fraîche left over, which is a great excuse to keep the snacks coming. Dollop it onto potato chips with a little caviar if you're feeling fancy, or stir it with fresh dill, lemon, and a pinch of salt for a quick dip for chips or vegetables.

Makes 24 deviled eggs

Cook time: ~15 minutes (plus time to hard boil eggs)

Tools:

- [Sauté pan](#) or saucepan (if hard-boiling your eggs)
- [Mixing bowl](#)
- Fork
- [Microplane](#) (for zesting lemon)
- Sealable plastic bag
- Serving platter

Ingredients:

- 12 peeled hard-boiled eggs (if hard-boiling your own, you'll also need a splash of a light-colored vinegar)
- 1/2 cup crème fraîche
- 1/4 cup mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon sweet pickle juice
- 1 tablespoon Dijon or yellow mustard
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/4 teaspoon smoked paprika
- Zest from 1 lemon
- Freshly cracked black pepper
- Salt & vinegar potato chips, for topping
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh chives

Pre-peeled hard-boiled eggs are a great shortcut, but if you're boiling them yourself, here's the easy way:

Place **12 eggs** in a sauté pan or saucepan that fits them in a single layer. Add enough **water** to just cover the eggs and a **splash of light-colored vinegar** (like apple cider, white wine, or red wine vinegar). Cover and bring to a boil over high heat. Once the water reaches a boil, turn off the heat, move the pan off the burner, and let the eggs sit in the hot water for 10 minutes.

Drain the hot water from the pot then add cold water with ice. Drain again. Once cool enough to handle, gently roll each egg on the counter to crack the shell all over. Start peeling from the wider end, then slide a spoon under the shell to help lift it off. Rinse away any stray shell pieces and you're ready to go.

Slice the **12 hard-boiled eggs** in half lengthwise and scoop the yolks into a mixing bowl.

Mash the yolks with a fork until smooth, then stir in **1/2 cup crème fraîche, 1/4 cup mayonnaise, 1 tablespoon sweet pickle juice, 1 tablespoon Dijon or yellow mustard, 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt, 1/4 teaspoon smoked paprika, grated zest from 1 lemon, and a few grinds of freshly cracked black pepper**. Taste and add more kosher salt if needed. If the mixture looks a little lumpy, you can switch to a whisk to make it extra smooth.

Spoon the filling into a plastic zip-top bag, snip a small corner off the bag, and pipe the filling back into the egg whites. If this feels too fussy, you can just use a spoon.

Just before serving, top each deviled egg with a **salt & vinegar chip** and garnish with **chopped chives**. Set the rest of the chips out, too, for extra snacking.



BLOODY MARY SEAFOOD COCKTAIL

BY CAROLINE CHAMBERS

Think of this as a Bloody Mary... but in seafood platter form. A punchy cocktail sauce with horseradish, lemon, and hot sauce sits in the center while chilled shrimp, crab claws, olives, and lemon wedges pile high over crushed ice. It's festive, dramatic, and perfect for Derby Day or any gathering where people want something snacky and a little fancy. If you can't find crab claws but still want a little crab on the platter, grab some lump crab meat instead. Stir it with a little whipped cream cheese and a sprinkle of celery salt, then spoon it into celery sticks and cut them into bite-size pieces — a very good little stand in.

Serves 10

Prep time: ~20 minutes

Tools:

- [Small mixing bowl](#)
- Large serving platter
- Small serving bowl
- Small skewers or [cocktail toothpicks](#)
- [Chef's knife](#)
- [Cutting board](#)
- Crab claw (or nut) cracker, for serving

Ingredients:

- 1 cup ketchup
- 3 tablespoons prepared horseradish
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1 lemon, halved
- 1 teaspoon hot sauce (such as Tabasco)
- 1/4 teaspoon celery salt
- Freshly cracked black pepper
- 1/2 cup cocktail olives
- 2 lemons, cut into wedges
- Crushed ice, for serving
- 1 pound precooked U-20 (jumbo) peeled and deveined shrimp, chilled
- 1 pound snow crab claws, thawed overnight in fridge if using frozen

If you are using frozen shrimp and crab claws, remember to thaw them overnight in the fridge the day before you plan to serve. If you have raw peeled and deveined shrimp, you'll need to cook it. To do so, bring a large pot of water to a boil and season generously with kosher salt and lemon juice. Add the shrimp and give them a stir. Cook until they are opaque, pink, and have curled into a slight "C" shape. Drain and let cool completely then store in the fridge until ready to serve. (Crab claws almost always come pre-cooked!)

Make your cocktail sauce: In a small bowl, stir together **1 cup ketchup, 3 tablespoons prepared horseradish, 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce, juice of 1/2 a lemon, 1 teaspoon hot sauce, 1/4 teaspoon celery salt, and a few grinds of freshly cracked black pepper**. Taste and add more horseradish, hot sauce, or lemon juice if you like things punchier, or more ketchup if you want things more mild. Transfer the sauce to a small serving bowl, or store in the fridge in an airtight container until ready to serve.

Slide **1/2 cup cocktail olives** onto small skewers or toothpicks. Slice **2 lemons** into wedges (slice the remaining 1/2 lemon you'll have from making the sauce into wedges, too!).

Fill a large serving platter with **crushed ice**. Arrange **1 pound pre-cooked and peeled chilled shrimp** and **1 pound of snow crab claws** over the ice. Place the bowl of cocktail sauce in the center.

Scatter the olive skewers and lemon wedges in groups around the platter and serve immediately. Set out a crab or nut cracker for guests to crack the crab claws.



KENTUCKY HOT BROWN SLIDERS

BY CAROLINE CHAMBERS

Legend has it that in 1926, the chef at Louisville's legendary Brown Hotel invented the Hot Brown, an open-faced broiled turkey sandwich topped with a rich Mornay sauce, bacon, and tomato, to fill the bellies of late-night partiers. It was an instant hit and is now a culinary staple of Kentucky. These sheet-pan sliders channel the flavors of the Hot Brown, but in a perfectly handheld and snackable style.

Makes 12 sliders

Prep time: ~20 minutes

Tools:

- [Serrated knife](#)
- [2 baking sheets](#)
- [Parchment paper](#)
- Box grater, for shredding cheese
- Foil

Ingredients:

- 1 large tomato (about 7 to 8 ounces)
- Kosher salt
- 8 slices of bacon
- 1 package Hawaiian rolls (12 rolls)
- 2 tablespoons mayonnaise
- 2 heaping teaspoons Dijon mustard
- Roughly 1 tablespoon honey
- 6 ounces Gruyère cheese, shredded
- 1/2 pound thinly sliced roasted turkey
- 4 tablespoons butter, thinly sliced into 12 pats (aka very thin slices)

Preheat the oven to **375°F**.

Using a serrated knife, slice **1 large tomato** into very thin slices. Arrange the slices on paper towels and sprinkle lightly with **kosher salt**. Let them sit for a few minutes to release some liquid, then gently blot dry with another paper towel.

Meanwhile, line a baking sheet with parchment paper. On it, place **8 bacon slices** in a single layer. Bake for 12 to 15 minutes, until crisp. Transfer to a plate.

Line another small baking sheet with parchment — this is where you'll build and bake the sliders.

Using a long serrated knife, slice **12 Hawaiian rolls** in half horizontally, keeping the rolls connected (so you'll end up with one large bottom half and one large top half). Place the two halves on the sheet pan with the cut sides facing up.

Add **1 tablespoon mayonnaise** to each half of the rolls and spread it evenly over the bread. Dollop **1 heaping teaspoon Dijon mustard** onto each half, again spreading it out so that it's evenly distributed. Drizzle **honey** (roughly 1 tablespoon total) all over the cut sides of the rolls so there's a little honey across the whole surface.

Use a box grater to shred **6 ounces of Gruyère**. Sprinkle half the shredded cheese over the bottom half of the rolls. Layer **1/2 pound sliced turkey** over the cheese, bunching it so it has some height rather than lying flat.

Arrange the tomato slices in an even layer over the turkey, then distribute the bacon evenly across the top. Sprinkle with the **remaining shredded Gruyère**.

Place the top half of the rolls over the filling. Slice **4 tablespoons butter** into 12 thin slices, aka pats, and place a pat on each roll.

At this point, the sliders can be covered with foil and refrigerated for up to 24 hours, or baked in the preheated oven.

If you prepped ahead: preheat the oven to **375°F**.

Bake the sliders covered with foil for 8 minutes, then uncover and cook for 1 to 2 more minutes until the tops are light golden brown. Don't let them burn!

Use a knife to slice between the rolls and separate into 12 sliders. Serve immediately.

notes and substitutions

- **How many people will this feed?** This spread provides a drink and filling hors d'oeuvres for 10 people. If you're hosting a bigger crew, double or triple recipes as needed.
- **Prep ahead:** Go back up and read the "plan of attack" section above the recipes.
- **How do I crush ice?** Pulse it in your blender!
- **Tell me more about the crab claw sub idea:** Mix 8 ounces of lump crab meat with about 3 tablespoons whipped cream cheese (or regular cream cheese brought to room temp). Add a pinch of celery salt and spoon it into celery sticks. Cut into bite-sized pieces for easy grazing!
- **I love this and want to cook even more:** Here are some WTC recipes that would be a great addition to this spread if you're wanting to serve a main course in addition to these heavy apps: [pulled pork sandwiches](#), [sweet and spicy grilled chicken and onions](#), [balsamic basil grilled chicken](#), [grilled pickle-brined chicken sandwiches](#), [sesame-ginger grilled steak](#), [marinated grilled veggies with burrata](#) and any of the salads [rounded up here](#).
- **Shopping tips:**
 - **Shrimp:** You have options. If you have access to fresh seafood through a fishmonger, you can buy raw fresh peeled and deveined shrimp and cook them yourself by boiling them in water seasoned with kosher salt and lemon juice. Or, you could buy frozen pre-cooked, peeled, and deveined shrimp [like these](#) and thaw them in the fridge overnight before the party (pat them dry before assembling the platter). Or you could buy "cocktail shrimp" from the refrigerated seafood section of your store. That is not the freshest option, but it sure is convenient.
 - **Crab claws:** Many grocery stores carry these both in the freezer section or in the seafood section on fresh display. We've found them online throughout the country at Costco, Whole Foods, Publix, and Safeway. Either way, they are almost always pre-cooked!! So you'll just need to thaw them overnight in the fridge, if using frozen. If you can't find them, the crab meat-stuffed celery bite sub mentioned above is truly delicious. Find lots of info on buying lump crab [here](#).
 - **Sweet pickle juice:** By this I mean to scoop out some liquid from a jar of sweet pickles like "[sweet gherkins](#)" or "sweet baby pickles."
 - **Mango chutney:** This could be in the condiments aisle, near the pickles and relishes, or potentially in the international/Indian section of your grocery store. Or you can order it online (I love [Stonewall Kitchen's](#)).
 - **Prepared horseradish:** This will be either in the refrigerated section or the condiments aisle.
 - **Sweet onion:** These look like yellow onions but are a little different. Vidalia is a common example of a sweet onion. [Here](#) is an article with more info!
 - **Cocktail olives:** Any large green pitted olive will do.
- **Store-bought shortcuts:** Use store-bought hard-boiled eggs, cocktail sauce, and the breasts of a rotisserie chicken. You could also swap the Gruyère for pre-shredded Swiss.

- **Recs for good serving trays?** Hunt for them at a local Goodwill, thrift store, or estate sale! I've found a lot of good ones that way.
- **Vegetarian:** Omit the chicken from the Benedictine sandwiches and double (or even triple) the cucumber. Swap the seafood platter out for a cheese board/antipasto platter with olives, pickles, mustards, cheese, and roasted veg. Keep the cocktail sauce, the roasted veg would be good dipped in it! Swap the turkey out for sautéed or thinly sliced grilled mushrooms.
- **Dairy-free:** Here are ideas for eliminating dairy from the recipes that have it:
 - In the deviled eggs, replace the crème fraîche with dairy-free sour cream.
 - In the chicken salad sandwiches, use dairy-free cream cheese.
 - For the sliders, use a DF shredded cheese you love or just skip it. And use a plant-based butter.
- **Gluten-free:** Here are ideas for eliminating gluten from the recipes that have it:
 - For the drinks, double check that your bourbon is GF (Woodford Reserve is).
 - For the eggs, make sure your chips and mustard are gluten-free certified.
 - For the chicken salad sandwiches, you can use a GF sandwich bread you love, or you could serve the chicken salad in lettuce cups, with GF crackers, or in cucumber cups (hollowed out thick slices of cucumber).
 - For the seafood platter, look carefully at your Worcestershire sauce because some have gluten and others don't. Use coconut aminos as a sub if needed.
 - For the sliders, try to find GF slider buns or rolls! If you can't, ditch this app and replace it with something from the "I want to cook more" note above.
- **If you have honey mustard in the fridge:** You can use that instead of Dijon mustard + honey for the sliders!
- **Sub for turkey:** Ham would be delicious.
- **Sub for Gruyère:** Swiss, Jarlsberg, fontina, or another melty cheese you like, like Cheddar.
- **More subs:** We don't write complete subs lists for easy-but-fancy meal plans since we provide a grocery list to avoid forgetting elements at the store. Let Google be your friend when finding the best sub option if needed for dietary modifications, or leave a comment if you're stumped!