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WHAT'S FOR DESSERT?

14 pages of special-occasion sweets

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FAMILY. The term is so cozy, so comforting, so... *flexible*. This year, gather your closest might-as-well-be-related **BUDDIES** for a **new** kind of *celebration*. It might not be the traditional family *feast*, but **we** bet it'll still do **Mama proud**.

BY ADAM ROBERTS | RECIPES BY DAVID MCCANN | PHOTOGRAPHY BY JIM FRANCO



RESERVED FOR...
roommate

RESERVED FOR...
best friend

RESERVED FOR...
neighbor

You love your family, but between work deadlines, weather snafus and airfare costs, not going home may look like a pretty good option this year. Don't worry. This is the time to call upon your other family—your closest friends—to create a new holiday, one filled with good conversation and good food. Sure, it won't include Mom's homemade stuffing, but that's okay. (Look on the bright side: It also won't include any questions about whether you finally sent Aunt Vera that thank-you note for the knitted potholders.) By dessert, you'll be too busy making new memories to mind the change of venue. Just don't tell your real family how much fun you had without them.



Rum-Spiked Ginger Beer Cocktails

MAKES 8

In a pitcher, combine **6 ounces dark rum** and **¼ cup fresh lime juice**; refrigerate. Meanwhile, place **½ cup sugar** in a shallow bowl and **2 tablespoons lime juice** in a saucer. Sugar the rims of 8 glasses by dipping them first in the lime juice, then in the sugar. Refrigerate the glasses. Add **two and a half 12-ounce bottles chilled ginger beer** to the chilled rum-lime mixture and divide among the prepared glasses. Garnish each with a **lime wedge**.

Retro Spinach Dip and Pumpernickel Spears

SERVES 8 PREP 20 MIN COOK 5 MIN

- 2 cups pumpernickel bread cubes
- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- One 10-ounce package frozen spinach, thawed and squeezed dry
- 3 scallions, chopped
- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 1 cup sour cream
- Salt and pepper
- 6 heads endive, leaves separated

1. Using a food processor, grind the bread into coarse crumbs. In a small nonstick skillet, toast the crumbs with the olive oil over medium-low heat, stirring often, for about 5 minutes. Let cool.

2. In the food processor, pulse the spinach, scallions, mayonnaise and sour cream until almost smooth; season with salt and pepper.

3. To serve, spoon the spinach mixture onto the endive spears and top with the toasted breadcrumbs.



