

K's Kitchen: Serving up a winning appetizer

By Kathryn Reed

Sports psychologists have made a living trying to figure out why people win or lose and the speed and consistency at which they do so.

But I have never read about food being a motivator.



I think it must be for the Zephyr Cove 3.5 women's team. They dominate at home, having won the last two matches 5-0. And it is the home team that provides the food and beverages after a match. (OK, there is a whole lot of talent on that team, too!)

I have played on USTA teams in Las Vegas and the Bay Area – the food is nothing like what these women serve. While I started the season on the Zephyr team known as Lake Aces, I am no longer a member because the USTA thinks I'm really a 4.0 – but that's another story.

I am still an eating and drinking member of the team.

Below is a recipe for a dish that Suzy brought to one of the matches. Her teammates and the opposition devoured it. She originally got it from her friend Heather.

Pesto Pistachio Cheese Torte

Pesto

2 cloves garlic

1 C fresh basil

1 C grated Parmesan

$\frac{1}{2}$ C olive oil

Blend pesto ingredients in food processor. (Can be made in advance and refrigerated.)

Garlic Cream

8 ounces cream cheese (softened)

2 T butter

1 clove garlic (minced)

$\frac{2}{3}$ cup shelled and roasted pistachios (chopped; reserve 2 T for sprinkling on top.)

Black pepper (pinch)

Blend garlic cream ingredients either by hand or in food processor.

Other

1 lb provolone (deli thin sliced)

$\frac{3}{4}$ C sun dried tomatoes packed in oil (not drained/chopped)

Select two bowls or one loaf pan for the mold. (Ideally nothing with an inverted lip.) Generously grease inside with olive oil. (It's nice to make two versus one ... your choice!) Line the bowls/pan with half provolone. Leave about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch excess to fold over sides. Press edges together to seal. Spread half pesto on provolone. Add a layer of provolone. Spread half of the tomatoes. Spread all of the garlic cream. Spread remaining tomatoes. Add another layer of provolone. Spread remaining pesto. Top with final layer of provolone. Fold excess provolone from sides over top and place in fridge to set for about an hour. (It can be kept in a cold part of fridge for up to a week.)

Serving suggestions:

Invert on to a plate or platter. Slice in half to reveal layers and wedge open. Sprinkle reserved pistachios over top and on platter for effect. Add pretty basil leaves for a nice presentation. Best served with crustini but may use crackers in a pinch.

Crustini:

1 sourdough loaf (good quality such as Truckee Sourdough or bakery fresh)

Spray can olive oil.

Slice thin slices on baking sheet, spray with olive oil. Broil until golden. Turnover and spray other side, broil until golden.