



Salmon Carpaccio With Mango Salsa

STARTERS

People arriving at a dinner party are often starving and needing almost immediate sustenance. A drink or two to quench their thirst also helps!

The choice of a starter is vital. It often sets the tone for an entire meal. My friends are all so conscious of what they eat these days that I try not to make very filling or starchy starters. My aim is to tempt the palate and tease it with a starter which should be light and, most importantly, match the main course. Starters should also look sensational, giving your guests something to talk about!

It's always crucial to plan a meal well. A definite no-no is to repeat the same ingredients over and over – albeit in different formats. You also want to have time to enjoy your guests when they arrive; that's why I like to keep any last-minute scuttling to the kitchen to a minimum. So to keep your stress levels to a minimum, these starters are designed with pre-preparation in mind.

We all know that the days of stuffy – and stuffed – vol-au-vents are gone. Better to tempt your guests with luscious mango salsa over salmon carpaccio or baked Camembert with three pestos. And then once your visitors have eaten the first course, keep them hungry enough to be interested in what follows next. I have some friends who'll order two starters rather than a main and a starter when they eat out. These recipes offer a feast of possibilities for all appetites.

Baked Camembert Tricolore

Herb Frittatas With Feta And
Smoked Trout

Parmesan Crisps With
Avocado Salsa

Artichoke And White Bean Purée
On Crostini

Tapenade Twists

Salmon Carpaccio With
Mango Salsa

Antipasto Salad

Mediterranean Tartlets

Meat Kefta With Hummus Sauce

Corn And Cheese Samosas