

Warm Crab, Artichoke & Parmesan Dip

Serve with thin slices of baguette brushed with a little garlic-and-herb-seasoned olive oil then lightly crisped in the oven, or with crackers.

Makes 7 cups--serves 14 - 20

8 ounces cream cheese
2 cups mayonnaise (Note: do not use reduced-fat or fat-free)
3/4 cup thinly sliced onion
1/4 cup minced sweet red bell pepper or substitute diced pimiento (optional)
1/4 cup minced green onions
1/2 cup minced celery
1/2 teaspoon Tabasco
1 teaspoon minced garlic
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
1 can or jar (13 1/2 oz. - 14 3/4 oz.) artichoke hearts (not marinated), drained well and coarsely chopped
3/4 pound Washington crab meat, drained well
3 cups (6 ounces) shredded, high-quality parmesan cheese
Garnish: minced fresh parsley or thinly sliced green onions, optional

In a medium bowl, cream the cream cheese till soft, then beat in the mayonnaise till just blended. Do not over-mix. Fold in remaining ingredients, except garnish, until well combined.

Place dip in a 9- x 13-inch baking dish or ovenproof serving dish. Smooth out but do not compact it. (Dip can be covered and refrigerated up to 2 days at this point.)

When ready to serve dip, place in a 425° F preheated oven. Bake for 8 - 12 minutes or until dip just starts to bubble around the edges, is heated through and the cheese is melted. If desired, sprinkle with minced fresh parsley or green onions. Serve immediately.

Kathy Casey's Tips: If you have any dip left over (which isn't likely!), it makes a great omelet filling the next day.

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