

2017 Cooking Contest Recipes

Harvest Cheese Ball

8 oz. cream cheese (room temperature)	¼ cup raisins
4 oz. goat cheese (room temperature)	¼ chopped pecans
1 Tbsp. sour cream	¼ cup sunflower seeds
1 Tbsp. blue agave nectar (Domino brand)	1 Tbsp. dried apricots, chopped

In large bowl, mix cream cheese, goat cheese, sour cream and nectar together. Chop raisins in food processor and add to cheese mixture. Mix well. Place cheese mixture onto plastic wrap and form into a ball. Secure and refrigerate for 2-24 hours. Pour nut mixture and dried apricots into food processor and chop. Pour nut mixture into colander and stir. This will allow small crumbs to escape. Roll cheese ball into nut mixture, lightly pressing into ball. Serve with crackers.

Jennifer Salac, Baldwin County

Cranberry Cheese Ball

3 (8 oz.) pkgs. cream cheese	1 tsp. vanilla
1 can crushed pineapple, drained	½ cup confectioners' sugar
1 pkg. raisins	1 cup chopped peanuts
1 tsp. lemon juice	

Mix all ingredients except nuts. Place in refrigerator for 1 hour. Form into shape. Add nuts. Cover and chill.

Stephanie Miller, Blount County

Blueberry Cheese Ball w/ Lemon Topping

2 (8 oz.) pkgs. cream cheese	2 tsp. vanilla
2 sticks unsalted butter	1 cup chopped pecans
1 – 21 oz. can blueberry pie filling	½ cup graham cracker crumbs
½ cup brown sugar	Dickinson Lemon Curd
1 cup powdered sugar	Assorted cookies

Cream the cream cheese and butter. Gradually beat in sugars and vanilla. Stir in pecans and blueberry pie filling until completely combined. Line a bowl with plastic wrap and fill with mixture. Make sure the top is covered securely. Refrigerate for at least three hours.

Combine the graham cracker crumbs and chopped pecans in a small bowl and set aside. Invert cheese ball on serving board. Coat with crumbs and pecans, patting gently to secure. Serve immediately or refrigerate until ready to serve. When ready to serve, spoon lemon curd on top and around cheese ball. Garnish with blueberries and dust with pecans. Serve with assorted cookies.

Shari Lowery, Butler County

Cheese Ball Bites

12 oz. cream cheese, softened
1 cup shredded cheddar cheese
1 tsp. garlic powder
1 tsp. paprika
Dash of kosher salt

Dash of finely ground black pepper
8 slices bacon, cooked and finely chopped
1/3 cup finely chopped fresh chives
1/3 cup finely chopped pecans
18 pretzel sticks

Mix together cream cheese, cheddar cheese, garlic powder, paprika, kosher salt and pepper. Form into 18 small balls and refrigerate until firm (at least 1 hour). In a small bowl or on a plate, stir together cooked bacon, chives and pecans. Roll balls in bacon-chive-pecan mixture and insert a pretzel stick in each ball. Serve on a 9x12 tray, with pretzel chips or crackers of your choice.

Delle Bean, Calhoun County

Cheese Ball

1 (8 oz.) cream cheese, softened
1 cup shredded sharp cheddar cheese
1 Tbsp. finely chopped onion
½ cup finely chopped bell pepper
½ cup finely chopped celery
½ cup finely chopped pecans

½ tsp. salt
1 tsp. pimento
1 tsp. lemon juice
1 tsp. red pepper
1 cup chopped pecans

Mix above ingredients well, keeping out 1 cup pecans. Mix until thoroughly blended. Roll in ball and chill. Roll in 1 cup finely chopped pecans and serve with crackers.

Harriet Jones, Chambers County

Pizza Cheese Ball

2 (8 oz.) pkgs. cream cheese, softened
¼ cup grated parmesan
½ cup shredded mozzarella
½ cup shredded cheddar cheese
1 clove minced garlic
1 ½ tsps. Italian seasoning

2 Tbsps. Chopped sun-dried tomatoes
1 Tbsp. diced bell pepper
¼ cup chopped pepperoni
¼ cup chopped ham
Chopped fresh herbs (chives, rosemary, oregano, basil) and paprika for rolling

In mixer, beat cream cheese, parmesan, mozzarella, and cheddar cheese until well mixed. Add garlic and Italian seasoning. Fold in sun-dried tomatoes, bell pepper, pepperoni and ham. Shape into ball, and roll in chopped fresh herbs and paprika. Serve with toasted Italian bread slices or your choice of cracker.

Phyllis Jones, Cherokee County

Chicken Cheese Ball

1 (8 oz.) pkg. cream cheese, softened	1 (10 oz.) can white meat chicken, drained and chopped
1 (0.4 oz.) pkg. buttermilk ranch dressing mix	1 cup finely chopped pecans
½ cup mayonnaise	

Mix first four ingredients in order given. Roll in pecans. Chill.

Ann Harrison, Clarke County

Chocolate Chip Cheese Ball

8 oz. pkg. cream cheese	2 Tbsps. Brown sugar
¼ cup butter (not margarine)	¾ - 1 cup mini chocolate chips
¼ tsp. vanilla flavoring	2.5 oz. (¾ cup) chopped pecans
¾ cup powdered sugar	Graham cracker sticks

Beat cream cheese and butter until smooth. Add vanilla, powdered sugar and brown sugar. Mix well. Stir in chocolate chips. Chill for 2 hours. Form into ball and wrap in plastic wrap. Chill for one hour. Roll in chopped pecans. Serve with chocolate or regular graham cracker sticks.

Felicia Dewberry, Clay County

Pineapple Cheese Ball

2 (8 oz.) pkgs. cream cheese, softened
1 (8 oz.) can crushed pineapple
¼ - ½ cup finely chopped green bell pepper
1-2 tsps. Seasoned salt
Chopped pecans

Drain pineapple well. Mix cream cheese, pineapple, bell pepper and seasoned salt together. Shape into a ball and roll in the chopped pecans. Chill for several hours before serving.

Cheryl Bagents, Crenshaw County

Peanut Butter Chocolate Chip Cheese Ball

2 (8 oz.) pkgs. cream cheese
1 cup peanut butter
1 cup brown sugar
½ cup powdered sugar
1 cup small chocolate chips
½ tsp. vanilla flavoring
1 ½ cups chopped pecans

Mix cream cheese, peanut butter, brown sugar, powdered sugar and vanilla flavoring together until smooth, stir in chocolate chips and ½ cup of pecans. Mix well and put in refrigerator until firm, roll in 1

cup of pecans until ball is covered, place in refrigerator for a couple of hours. Garnish dish with chocolate chips and pecans. Serve with graham crackers or vanilla wafers.

Terri Gilley, Cullman County

Chicken Ranch Cheese Ball

16 oz. cream cheese, softened
2.5 oz. can chicken, chopped
1 oz. pkg. ranch dressing seasoning mix
2 cups shredded sharp cheddar cheese
2.5 oz. real bacon pieces

Combine cream cheese and chicken with fork. Add ranch and 1 cup of cheddar cheese to the cream cheese/chicken mixture. Form into a patty and then cover with bacon pieces and the remaining cheddar cheese. Serve with crackers.

Lyn McDaniel, Dale County

Easy Cheese Ball

2 (8 oz.) pkgs. cream cheese, original
1 pkg. Ranch dressing mix
3/8 cup bacon crumbles
Chopped pecans to roll ball in

In blender, add softened cream cheese and ranch dressing mix. Blend until smooth consistency. Remove from processor and stir in bacon. Shape into a ball and roll in plastic wrap to chill for at least two hours. Remove plastic wrap and roll ball in chopped pecans.

Patty Lambrecht, Elmore County

Bacon Pecan Cheese Ball

2 (8 oz.) pkgs. cream cheese, softened	1 Tbsp. minced onion
1 (8 oz.) can crushed pineapple, drained	2 tsps. Seasoned salt
1 (2.8 oz.) real bacon bits	1 cup chopped pecans
½ cup minced red & green peppers	

In a medium bowl, mix all ingredients, except pecans, until well blended. Form into a ball. Refrigerate 1 hour or until firmed. Pour pecans into place. Roll chilled ball in pecans until completely covered. Wrap in plastic wrap until ready to serve. Serve with crackers of your choice or fresh vegetables such as carrots or celery.

Gail Oden, Etowah County

Chocolate Chip Cheese Ball

2 (8 oz.) pkgs. cream cheese	4 Tbsps. Packed brown sugar
1 ½ cups powdered sugar	½ tsp. vanilla
2 Tbsps. Unsweetened cocoa	

Mix well with electric mixer. Chill at least 2 hours. Form ball and roll in chocolate chips (1 cup) and toasted walnuts (1 cup). Serve with Graham crackers.

Marilyn Madison, Fayette County

Island Cheese Ball

2 (8oz.) pkgs. cream cheese, softened
¼ cup red bell pepper, finely chopped
2 Tbsps. Green onions, finely chopped
2 ½ cups fresh pineapple, chopped, reserve pineapple top for garnish
2 ½ cups pecans, ½ cup chopped, 2 cups in halves
2 tsps. Lawry's seasoned salt

Using an electric mixer, combine all ingredients except the 2 cups of pecan halves. Form the mixture into a pineapple shape. Wrap in plastic film and refrigerate until firm.

Toast the 2 cups of pecan halves. Place the chilled, firm cheese ball on a serving platter. Working from the bottom of the cheese ball, place toasted pecan halves in an overlapping fashion to resemble the exterior of a pineapple. Use the reserved pineapple top as the "top" of your pineapple cheese ball. Serve with your favorite crackers.

Shirley Ezzell, Franklin County

Blueberry Cheeseball

1 (8 oz.) pkg. cream cheese, softened	2 cups fresh blueberries
½ cup butter (softened-no substitutes)	½ very finely chopped pecans (food processor)
½ tsp. vanilla	1 box of graham crackers – broken into rectangles (or may use teddy graham crackers)
¾ cup confectioner sugar	
2 Tbsps. Brown sugar	

In a small mixing bowl, combine cream cheese, butter and vanilla until light and fluffy. Gradually add the sugars and beat until just combined (Do not over-beat). Gently stir in 1 cup of fresh blueberries. Cover and refrigerate for 2 hours. Remove from refrigerator and shape into a small ball. Refrigerate for 1 more hour. Remove ball just before serving, roll the ball in the pecans and cover the outside with blueberries. Serve with graham crackers.

Cathy Bennett, Geneva County

Easy Cheese Ball

2 (8oz.) pkgs. cream cheese, softened	2 ½ cups shredded cheddar cheese
1 (1 oz.) pkg. ranch dressing mix	1 ½ cups chopped pecans

In a medium size bowl, mash cream cheese. Mix dressing mix and cheddar cheese into the cream cheese. Shape the mixture into a ball. Roll the ball in the chopped pecans. Refrigerate covered until ready to serve. Serve with crackers and enjoy!

Janice McEntyre, Houston County

Bruschetta Cheese Ball with Panko Coating

15.2 oz. Boursin Garlic & Fine Herbs Cheese	½ cup finely chopped fresh herbs
1 (8 oz.) pkg. cream cheese, room temperature	1 Tbsp. balsamic vinegar
¼ cup sour cream	¼ tsp. crushed red pepper flakes
1 cup mozzarella cheese, shredded	¼ tsp. salt
½ cup finely grated parmesan cheese	1/8 tsp. pepper
2 Roma tomatoes, seeded and chopped	

Add all of ingredients together in large bowl and mix until well combined. Drop mixture onto large piece of plastic wrap, cover tightly, and shape into ball. Chill in refrigerator overnight.

¾ cup panko breadcrumbs	1 tsp. dried basil
1 Tbsp. butter	

Melt butter in medium skillet over medium heat. Stir in crumbs and basil. Continue to stir constantly until panko crumbs are golden. Remove from heat and cool completely.

When ready to serve, remove cheese ball from refrigerator and roll in toasted panko mixture, pressing to adhere and evenly coat. Serve with bagel chips or toasted baguette slices.

Polly McClure, Jefferson County

Charleston Cheese Ball

2 blocks of cream cheese	1 cup shredded sharp white cheddar cheese
½ cup mango chutney	1/8 tsp. cayenne pepper
1/3 cup finely sliced green onions	½ cup pecan pieces
1 tsp. Old Bay seasoning	2 ½ cup pecans for garnish

In a bowl, combine cream cheese, chutney, onion and old bay seasoning. Blend until smooth. Add cheddar cheese and pecans until well blended. Scoop cheese mixture into a plate lined with wrap and press with hand to get shape. Refrigerate for 8 hours. Unwrap the cheese ball and let stand at least 20 minutes. To mimic a pineapple use pecans in an overlapping tile fashion and garnish with rosemary springs for the crown. Use the 2 ½ cups of pecans for garnish.

Melissa Brooks, Lauderdale County

Cheese Ball

2 (8 oz.) pkgs. cream cheese, softened	1 packet "Raven's Nest Garden Mix"
¼ cup water	1 oz. chopped dried beef

Mix spice with water and let stand 5 minutes. Add cream cheese and blend well. Add chopped dried beef and mix well. Chill for 2 hours. Shape into ball. Garnish with nuts, olives and parsley. Serve with crackers, bagels or celery stalks.

Jamie Lazenby, Lee County

Hawaiian Cheese Ball

2 (8 oz.) pkgs. cream cheese, softened	3 Tbsps. Finely chopped green onion
1 (8 oz.) can crushed pineapple, well drained	2 tsps. Seasoned salt
2 Tbsps. Chopped green pepper	2 cups chopped pecans divided
2 Tbsps. Chopped red pepper	Kale and pepper rings for garnish

In a large bowl, mix 1 cup pecans with cream cheese, pineapple, green and red peppers, onion and seasoned salt until well combined. Shape into a ball. Place the remaining 1 cup pecans on a plate and roll the ball in the pecans covering well. Refrigerate until ready to serve. Garnish with pepper rings and kale. Serve with crackers (Wheat things, Ritz or Triscuits work well).

Jenny Usery, Limestone County

Chick Cheese Ball

2-3 slices cooked bacon	2 cups shredded mild cheddar cheese, divided
1 (8 oz.) pkg. cream cheese, softened	1 small carrot
2 tsp. Worcestershire sauce	1 black olive, cut in half
½ pkg. dry ranch seasoning mix	1 Ritz cracker, cut in half
3 Tbsp. chopped jalapeno peppers (canned)	

Cook bacon until crisp, crumble. Beat cream cheese, Worcestershire sauce, ranch dressing mix, jalapeno peppers, 1 cup cheddar cheese and bacon with mixer until blended. Refrigerate about 1 hour or until firm. Shape into a ball; roll in remaining cup of cheddar cheese. Cut carrot into pieces for the beak and feet of the chick. (I used two small triangles for the beak and two small pieces with three little indentations for the feet) add the olive pieces for the eyes and the Ritz cracker for the wings. Serve with crackers or vegetables of your choice.

Teresa Ellis, Marshall County

Pecan Date Cheese Ball

1 tsp. ground mustard	1/8 tsp. ground cinnamon
1 tsp. water	¼ tsp. ground nutmeg
2 (8 oz.) pkgs. cream cheese, softened	2 cups shredded cheddar cheese
1 Tbsp. butter, softened	1 cup chopped pecans
¼ cup mayonnaise	1 cup chopped dates

In a small bowl, dissolve mustard in water and let stand for 10 minutes. Beat cream cheese, mayonnaise and butter until smooth. Add nutmeg, cinnamon and mustard mixture. Stir in cheddar cheese and dates. Chill for 30 minutes. Shape into a ball and roll in chopped pecans. Chill. Serve with crackers.

Maxine Wahl, Mobile County

Pineapple Cream Cheese Ball

1 (8 oz.) pkg. cream cheese, room temperature	1 tsp. celery salt
1 (8 oz.) can crushed pineapple, drained	1 cup finely chopped pecans

Cream pineapple and cream cheese together. Add celery salt. Mix and shape into a ball. Roll in pecans until fully covered. Refrigerate 4 hours and serve.

Martha Jordan, Monroe County

Party "Cupcake" Cheese Balls

1 (8 oz.) pkg. cream cheese, softened	½ tsp. vanilla extract
½ cup unsalted butter, softened	½ tsp. almond extract
1 ½ cups boxed white cake mix	Dash of salt
1 cup powdered sugar	2/3 cup rainbow sprinkles

Beat cream cheese and butter together. Slowly mix in cake and powdered sugar. Add extracts and salt. Beat until well blended. Pipe or scoop into cupcake liners. Generously top with sprinkles. Serve after refrigerating at least 2 hours. Optional, refrigerate until fairly stiff. Shape into a ball and roll in sprinkles. Cheese ball may be frozen and thawed to serve later. Serve with pretzels, graham crackers or vanilla wafers. Recipe makes 20 mini cupcakes or 4 regular cupcakes.

Patsy Davis, Montgomery County

Peanut Butter Cheese Ball

2 cups peanut butter	2 Tbsps. Water
8 oz. cream cheese	12 oz. milk chocolate chip morsels
½ cup confectioner sugar	1 cup graham cracker crumbs

Combine first 4 ingredients and form ball. Chill then roll in chocolate covered graham cracker crumbs. Then melt chocolate morsels and dip ball. Serve with graham crackers.

DiAnn Townley, Randolph County

Sausage Cheese Ball with Red Pepper Jelly

1 lb. browned ground pork sausage, drained	1 cup finely shredded cheddar cheese
2 (8 oz.) pkgs. cream cheese, softened	10.5 oz. jar of red pepper jelly

In a large bowl, mix the cream cheese and cheddar cheese with an electric mixer on medium speed. Fold in the ground sausage until well mixed. Form into a ball and refrigerate at least an hour or until mixture is firm. When ready to serve, place on serving tray and cover with red pepper jelly. Serve with crackers or corn chips.

Judy Rudd, Russell County

Pimento Cheese and Bacon

For the Pimento Cheese

8 oz. of cream cheese at room temperature	¼ tsp. ground cayenne pepper
¼ cup mayonnaise	8 oz. extra sharp cheddar cheese, grated
½ tsp. Dijon mustard	1 (4 oz.) jar of pimentos, drained
½ tsp. garlic salt	Salt and pepper to taste

In a large bowl, mix cream cheese with a mixer until smooth. Beat in mayonnaise and spices. Mix cheese and pimentos until well combined. Salt and pepper to taste. Refrigerate 4 hours or until firm.

Cheese Ball Coating

18 oz. of cooked until crisp bacon, finely diced, or bacon bits (1 ½ cups)	½ to 1 jalapenos, minced (seeds and membranes removed)
1 ½ cups pecans, toasted and finely chopped	

In a medium bowl, combine bacon, pecans and jalapenos. Roll cheese ball into coating. Refrigerate until ready to serve.

Emily Taylor, St. Clair County

Dang Cheese Ball

2 (8 oz.) blocks cream cheese
1 cup shredded cheddar cheese
1 packet dry ranch dressing mix
Chopped pecans – (enough to cover cheese ball)

In a large bowl, soften cream cheese, add shredded cheddar cheese and dry ranch dressing mix. I usually roll this in a ball and put in some wax paper in the refrigerator for about 30 minutes to firm up before rolling in the pecans. Enjoy with your favorite crackers. I use Ritz crackers. Tip: I use my handy chopper for the pecans.

Vickie Watkins, Tallapoosa County

Pineapple Surprise Cheese Ball

1 (8 oz.) pkg. Philadelphia cream cheese	1 tsp. minced onion
1 (8 oz.) pkg. Kraft Sharp Cheddar Cheese – shred with small side of grater	½ tsp. lemon juice
1 tsp. minced bell pepper	1 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
1 cup finely chopped pecans	½ cup crushed pineapple, drained

Mix all ingredients, except pecans, with mixer. Shape mixture into a ball; roll ball in pecans. Serve with Stacy's chips. Serves 10-12 as an appetizer.

Donna Anders, Tuscaloosa County