

## At-Home Brunch Tips

Written by Joanna Brathwaite

Monday, 31 March 2014 15:51 - Last Updated Monday, 31 March 2014 16:23

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**Easter is the first holiday after Christmas when family and friends sit around the table enjoying one another's company. Make your Easter get-together one that everyone will remember by hosting an at-home brunch. Executive Chefs, Robert Nixon of Wrigley Mansion, Paul McCabe of T. Cook's, and Eugenio Alvarez of Rita's Kitchen share their expertise on creating an elegant brunch in the comfort of your home.**



### Five Main Components of a Successful Brunch

RN: Variety is the key to an irresistible brunch spread. Of course you'll want to serve all the brunch basics, including bacon, sausage (turkey meat substitute works as well), eggs, prime rib and other carved meats. But don't forget delicious sides like fresh fruit salad, and a couple of your favorite bite-sized desserts or pastries.

PM: Variety, seasonality, creativity, and great brunch cocktails.

EA: A selection of fun seasonal foods, unique display of the foods, outdoor location with great views, great music, and an eclectic group of people.

### Appetizing Easter Brunch Menus

RN: Like most holiday dinners, it's all about the main plate. While ham is a staple for Easter brunch, you can mix things up by substituting a roasted prime rib. Or if you have a big family, serve it alongside a traditional ham for a true feast.

PM: A signature egg dish. Whether a tasty eggs benedict, a simple French omelet or a hearty quiche, start with a great egg dish and create your menu from there.

EA: Carved lamb or ham, a unique frittata with fresh seasonal ingredients, and maybe even an ice cream sundae bar

### Add Your Own Special Twist to an At-Home Brunch

RN: Like I mentioned earlier, you'll want to have all the brunch basics covered. But dessert is a perfect way to add a personal touch and give guests something sweet and special to look forward to, like fresh-baked pastries, homemade pie or a unique family recipe.

PM: Seasonality is big. Know what's in season, and check out your local farmers' markets. Your guests will taste the difference.

EA: By mixing together unusual ingredients that you may not use on a daily basis in your kitchen.

### Have Fun with Breakfast and Lunch

RN: The beauty of brunch is that it includes both breakfast and lunch items. So why not give classic breakfast items more of a lunch twist? For example, bacon can work as a side to an omelet or offer it as part of a "DIY BLT" station. Have fun with your offerings and play with how you present them to guests.

PM: Brunch is great because it gives you an opportunity to be more creative. Really anything is game for brunch.

EA: You can be creative by adding blintz with strawberry compote. Sausage can be something other than your everyday pork sausage, such as chicken apple sausage. Unique toppings for French toast.

### Three Drink Pairings That Are Perfect For Any Brunch

RN: You can't go wrong with Champagne or sparkling wine, especially when you enhance it with an array of fresh juice offerings such as orange, pineapple, cranberry, guava or kiwi. These juices also add a unique twist to the standard mimosa. That said, one sparkling wine you won't want to mix is a crisp rosé. Its perfect served slightly chilled. Another fun idea is to pick a theme, like a Mexican fiesta brunch, and serve margaritas, or create a build-your-own Bloody Mary bar with tons of toppings and garnishes.

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PM: I like to mix things up. Do creative takes on the usual Bloody Mary or mimosa, incorporating interesting garnishes or different juices. I also love making a pitcher of fruity sangria – or anything with Pimm's, like a great punch with fresh herbs and spices.

EA: Champagne and mimosas, spicy Bloody Mary—garnished with brown sugar-coated bacon and fresh shrimp—and prickly pear margarita.