

Smart Snacking

Healthy Treats, Crackling With Good Taste

(NAPSA)—Crackers are a staple in most households, equally good for everyday snacks and informal get-togethers. They're versatile and convenient and, when you shop smart, anything but ordinary.

One great brand to look for is Sesmark, which makes a wide variety of healthful crackers that happen to taste delicious.

These all-natural crackers are made from healthy grains, are completely free of trans fats and hydrogenated oil...and have been since they were formulated 25 years ago. The rice crackers, in particular, are ideal for people who are allergic to wheat products.

These crackers are delicious as a stand-alone snack or accompaniment to a soup or salad, or topped with your favorite spread.

And, when family and friends gather, it's great to have the makings of a no-fuss treat on hand. For an impressively easy dish, sprinkle a round of Brie with an aromatic mix of parsley, orange peel and garlic, surround it with different cracker varieties and pop it in the oven. You can count on these crackers to stay crisp and delicious after warming in the oven.

For another simple yet appealing snack, serve a warm dip of seasoned goat cheese, topped with a savory mixture of tomatoes and black olives and surrounded with an assortment of crackers. Other clever ideas:

- Choose several varieties of crackers, such as the brown rice thins or wheat thins flavored with onion or garlic and sesame. Spread each one with scallion cream cheese and top with a smoked salmon strip.

- Start with a base of red pepper hummus on crackers. Garnish some with thin, seedless cucumber slices and others with black olive slivers.

- Make "nacho crackers" by spreading refried beans on crack-



This Brie and cracker combo is ready after 15 minutes in the oven.

ers, topping each with a triangle of Jack cheese and a dab of salsa. Toast just until the cheese melts.

For more great recipes and serving ideas, visit sesmark.com.

BAKED BRIE WITH CRISP CRACKERS

- 1 wheel (about 8 ounces) Brie (6-inch diameter)
- 1 tablespoon chopped parsley
- 2 teaspoons grated orange peel
- ½ teaspoon minced garlic
- Assorted Sesmark Crackers

Preheat oven to 325° F. Cut Brie horizontally in half, to create two rounds; place one round, rind down, in an 8-inch shallow baking dish or pie plate (wrap remaining cheese; refrigerate for another use). Combine parsley, orange peel and garlic; sprinkle over the cut surface of the Brie. Stand crackers, overlapping, around the side of the cheese. Bake until cheese melts slightly and crackers are warm, 13 to 15 minutes. Serve with additional crackers.

YIELD: 6 to 8 servings.

To bake the whole Brie: Cut the rind off the top of the Brie. Place cheese in an 8-inch shallow baking dish or pie plate. Bake until melted slightly, 15 minutes. Surround with crackers; bake 4 minutes.

YIELD: 12 or more servings

WARMED MEDITERRANEAN GOAT CHEESE WITH CRACKERS

- 2 logs (4 ounces each) flavored goat cheese such as herbed or peppered
- 2 tablespoons chopped seeded tomatoes
- 2 tablespoons quartered pitted black olives
- Assorted Sesmark Crackers

Preheat oven to 325°F. Cut each log of cheese in half lengthwise then horizontally into thin slices. Randomly arrange slices in a shallow 1-quart baking dish. Sprinkle with tomatoes and olives. Place Sesmark crackers around the edge, moving any tomato pieces away from the crackers. Bake until warm, 13 to 15 minutes. Serve with additional crackers.

YIELD: 8 to 12 servings.