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TIKI TO GO-GO

Throw a Polynesian-style beach bash!

Beach parties are among summer's sweetest pleasures, especially when you boost their fun factor with a creative theme. And what could be more fun than tiki? Tiki is a male figure from Polynesian mythology, but in the fifties and sixties, the word described a popular South Seas decor and cuisine heavy on kitsch—bamboo-clad walls, Hawaiian shirts, flaming cocktails. It's fashionable again, thanks in part to the Hollywood blockbuster *Pearl Harbor*. Our beach party retains some lighthearted elements that made tiki so much fun (who can resist a paper parasol or two?), but we reinterpret it with style—and so can you. Its vivid Polynesian colors and flavors will curry favor with the tiki gods. ▷

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lifestyle

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WELCOME GUESTS to your paradise beach party with fragrant leis, thirst-quenching fruity drinks and irresistible *pupu* (Hawaiian for appetizers) platters. We dreamed up the perfect menu of easy dishes with exotic Pacific-Island flavors to whisk your gang to Fiji, Tonga, Bora Bora and Tahiti. Begin with Vegetable Spring Rolls (like egg rolls but made with rice wrappers) With Ginger Dipping Sauce. Asian foods and seasonings such as noodles, stir-fries, fresh ginger, wasabi (Japanese horseradish) and soy sauce contribute largely to the cultural melting pot of Polynesian cuisine.

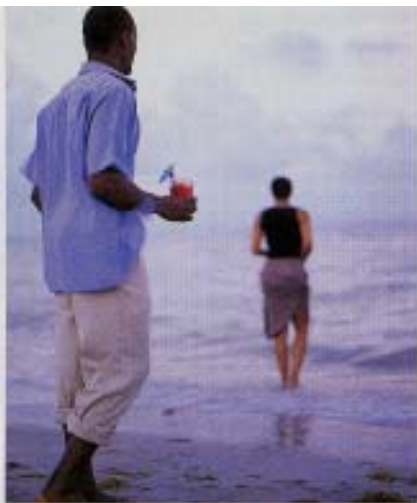
For more fantasy-island appetizers, serve Coconut Shrimp and Sweet-and-Sour Chicken Kebabs gorgeously displayed on bamboo trays lined with banana leaves. We chose Grilled Mahi-mahi with Pineapple-Kiwi Salsa as the centerpiece of our buffet menu. Ahi tuna, swordfish and wahoo are other seafood treasures from the pristine South and Central Pacific waters that you may find in your vicinity. Tropical fruits and vegetables that flourish on the sun-drenched islands round out the meal. Use pineapples, mangoes, papaya and kiwis in savory as well as sweet dishes and drinks (even for table decorations). Chop and sprinkle macadamia nuts on almost any dish. Add a tossed green salad with Maui onions from the Hawaiian island of that name. Find these sweet, juicy onions in supermarkets in their peak season of April to July.

As the sun sets and spirits rise, light your torches and raise glasses of Sparkling Guava-Passion Punch to toast good friends and good times. >

Center left: Vegetable Spring Rolls With Ginger Dipping Sauce served on a ginger leaf. Bottom right: Buffet table with traditional Polynesian dishes. Bottom left: The tiki torch, an essential accessory. Opposite page: Tiki gods guard a table set with tropical colors and textures.







SOUTH SEAS STYLE

■ **Grasses and palms** are staples of island architecture and decor. We bordered our tables with inexpensive grass hula skirts, available at costume and magic shops, then added other Polynesian textures by layering on batik textiles, coco-twig runners (on the buffet) and mats woven of pangaw, a grass-like fiber (dining table).

■ What's tiki without **bamboo**? There's a world of bamboo accessories out there, such as the appetizer tray we used from looseends.com and the faux-bamboo flatware from Alain Saint-Joanis.

■ Add **hot tropical colors** to the natural textures. (We used Chateau X's cotton-and-silk-blend napkins and bright glass tumblers and trays from Fire & Light.)

■ **Oil torches** are essential accents at any tiki event. They come in many styles, from inexpensive versions available at K-mart and Target to upscale models like our antiqued brass ones from Aristo (see Shop). Via Motif's string of vetiver cones nicely matches the natural South Seas textures and imparts a citrusy scent when lit.

■ Offering guests **fresh-flower leis**—available at your local florist—is a lovely traditional form of welcome in locales like Hawaii and Tahiti. They're usually made with orchids or fragrant blossoms of oleander or frangipani. You can string your own using a needle and floss.

■ Use **tropical blossoms and fruits** inventively. Our buffet centerpiece was a still life of tropical fruits (some split open or cored to hold ginger blossoms), a miniature pineapple, birds of paradise and anthurium. The dining-table centerpiece was a simple wooden bowl spilling with exotic bougainvillea blooms and sitting on a bed of heliconia.

■ A great source for **natural Polynesian-style decorative accents** (coco-twig runners, pangaw mats, jute net curtains) is looseends.com. If you choose the inexpensive route (silk-flower leis, synthetic palm trees, plastic tiki tumblers), Oriental Trading mail-order catalog, (800) 228-2269 or oriental.com, and mcphee.com are fab sources for kitschy tiki. ■

Sweet-and-Sour Chicken Kebabs and Macadamia Stir-fried Rice (center) feature Pacific Rim flavors. Scoop fruit into coconut-shell bowls from our Tropical Melon Bowl (bottom right and opening page). Vetiver cone lights (bottom left) add an evening glow.

Some



snacks



have



all the



Fun

lifestyle recipes



- Vegetable Spring Rolls With Ginger Dipping Sauce
 - Sweet-and-Sour Chicken Kebabs
 - Bora Bora Coconut Shrimp
 - Grilled Mahi-mahi With Kiwi-Papaya Salsa
 - Macadamia Stir-fried Rice
 - Tropical Melon Bowl
 - Sparkling Guava-Passion Punch
- Guests enjoy the sun, great food and Sparkling Guava-Passion Punch.

TASTES OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC

BY JONELL NASH

VEGETABLE SPRING ROLLS WITH GINGER DIPPING SAUCE (appetizer)

- 4 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 2 cups packed, finely sliced napa cabbage (Chinese cabbage)
- 1 small scallion, chopped
- ½ cup chopped mushrooms
- 1 small carrot, shredded
- 1 cup chopped bean sprouts
- 2 tablespoons chopped cilantro
- 16 spring-roll rice-paper wrappers

Dipping sauce:

- 2 tablespoons lime juice
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon grated fresh ginger
- 1 teaspoon toasted sesame seeds

To make spring rolls: In deep skillet, heat oil over high heat. Add cabbage, scallion, mushrooms, carrot and bean sprouts; cook, stirring frequently, just until tender, about 1 minute. With slotted spoon, transfer to bowl. Add

cilantro; mix well. In bowl with hot water, soak rice wrappers just until soft, about 10 seconds; dry with paper towels. Add about 1 tablespoon mixture to bottom of each spring-roll wrapper. Fold bottom of wrapper over filling. Fold sides of wrapper toward center. Roll upward to enclose filling. Use small amount of water to seal ends. In small dipping bowl, combine lime juice, soy sauce, ginger and sesame seeds. Serve sauce with rolls. Makes 16 spring rolls. *Per roll: 79 calories, 1 gram protein, 4 grams fat, 11 grams carbohydrate, 129 milligrams sodium, 0 milligrams cholesterol.*

SWEET-AND-SOUR CHICKEN KEBABS (appetizer)

Sweet-and-sour sauce:

- ½ cup white vinegar
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- ¼ cup packed light brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 150]

HOW MUCH DO YOU NEED? For overall healthy eating, use these Food and Drug Administration labeling guidelines to help monitor your daily intake: **Calories:** 2,000 **Protein:** about 50 grams **Total fat:** less than 65 grams **Carbohydrate:** 300 grams (1,200 calories) **Sodium:** less than 2,400 milligrams **Cholesterol:** less than 300 milligrams.