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Smoked Salmon with Crispy Shallots & Dilled Cream

Serves 4 to 6

Easy to put together, this has a big wow factor. The smoked salmon, crispy sweet shallots, and dilled cream sauce come together for a dish that is more than the sum of its parts. These bites are great for a romantic party, but they are also an elegant addition to a cocktail party.

1/2 cup sour cream or crème fraîche
1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh dill weed
1-1/2 teaspoons fresh lemon juice
Salt and freshly ground white pepper

1/4 cup olive oil
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
8 medium shallots, thinly sliced

12 French baguette slices or Carr's water biscuits
6 slices good-quality smoked salmon, each halved lengthwise

1. To make the sauce: Combine the sour cream, dill, and lemon juice in a small bowl and stir to blend well. Season with salt and pepper and set aside.

2. Heat the olive oil and butter in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the shallots and sauté for 3 to 5 minutes, or until crisp and golden brown, stirring the shallots to make sure they don't burn. Drain on paper towels and then transfer to a small bowl and set aside.

3. Arrange the bread or crackers on a platter. Place a small spoonful of dilled sauce on each. Arrange a salmon slice, rolled up to look like a rose, on top of each bread slice or cracker. Top with a dollop of the dilled sauce and sprinkle with the crispy shallots. Serve immediately.

Party Prep . . .

This may be prepared through Step 2 up to 2 hours ahead. Refrigerate the sauce and leave the shallots at room temperature.