

I love savory appetizers, and this is a recipe I've used for years from the epicurious website to accommodate the vegetarians in my family. Of course, you could eat this without cheese, its delicious on its own.

-Susan Rodriguez

Fig and Walnut tapenade

20 servings

1 cup chopped stemmed dried
Calimyrna figs
1/3 cup water
1/3 cup chopped pitted Kalamata
olives or other brine-cured black olives
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
1 tablespoon drained capers, chopped
1 1/2 teaspoons chopped fresh thyme
2 5.5-ounce logs soft fresh goat cheese
(such as Montrachet), each cut crosswise
into 1/2-inch-thick rounds
1/2 cup chopped toasted walnuts
1/4 cup toasted walnut halves
Fresh thyme sprigs (optional)
Assorted breads and/or crackers

Step 1

Combine chopped figs and 1/3 cup water in heavy medium saucepan. Cook over medium-high heat until liquid evaporates and figs are soft, about 7 minutes. Transfer to medium bowl. Mix in olives, olive oil, balsamic vinegar, capers, and chopped thyme. Season tapenade to taste with salt and pepper. (Can be made 3 days ahead. Cover and refrigerate. Bring to room temperature before serving.)

Step 2

Arrange overlapping cheese rounds in circle in center of medium platter. Stir chopped walnuts into tapenade; spoon into center of cheese circle. Garnish with walnut halves and thyme sprigs, if desired. Serve with breads and/or crackers.