

Leprechaun's Lucky Hat Cheese Ball

It is easy being green when you can serve up a delicious and delightful leprechaun hat cheese ball to celebrate St. Patrick's Day.

For the Cheese Ball

- 2, 8-oz. packages cream cheese, softened
- 3 cups shredded smoked Gouda
- 3 Tbsp. diced chives
- 2 Tbsp. finely chopped parsley
- 1 tsp. fresh ground black pepper

For the Decorations

- 8 oz. sour cream
- Green and yellow food coloring
- 12 cucumber slices, sliced thinly and cut in half to form semicircles
- 3 leaves of green leaf lettuce
- 1 square multigrain cracker
- 1 mini pretzel square
- 1 herb sprig that looks like clover (We used blooming oregano.)



1. In the bowl of an electric mixer, combine cream cheese and smoked Gouda. Mix until well combined; then add chives, parsley and black pepper. Stir until blended.
2. Transfer cheese mixture to a large piece of plastic wrap and form into a tall hat shape. Refrigerate for at least 4 hours or overnight.
3. To create the hat, first make green sour cream. Add drops of green and yellow food coloring into sour cream until you have a bright, St. Pat's green. (We used about 20 drops green and 10 drops yellow.)
4. Arrange lettuce leaves on serving platter in a round shape so you have a nice brim for the hat. Remove the plastic wrap from the cheese mixture and place the cheese in the center of the lettuce leaves. Using an offset spatula, smooth out the surface of the cheese.
5. "Frost" the cheese hat with the green sour cream. Finish the hat with a row of semicircle cucumber slices at the base to make the hatband. Add the cracker and pretzel on top of the band for the buckle. Top the hat off with the herb sprig.

Makes 12-16 servings