Crispy Cranberry Brie Puff Pastry Bites with Rosemary



Christmas Leftover Series | Turn leftover cranberry sauce into an elegant, bite-size holiday appetizer.

Got leftover cranberry sauce from Christmas dinner? Give it a delicious second life with these flaky puff pastry bites! Each little pastry cup holds creamy melted brie, sweet-tart cranberry sauce, crunchy toasted pecans, and fragrant rosemary. They look beautiful on a party platter but require very little preparation.
Perfect for December 26 gatherings, holiday visitors, or a cozy New Year's Eve celebration.
Yield: 24 bites (approximately 12 servings, 2 bites per person)
Prep Time: 10 minutes
Cook Time: 13–15 minutes
Total Time: Approximately 25 minutes
Oven Temperature: 375°F (190°C)

YOU'LL NEED

Equipment

- Standard 24-cup mini muffin tin
- Baking sheet or clean work surface
- Rolling pin
- Sharp knife or pizza cutter
- Small spoon
- Pastry brush or cooking spray
- Cooling rack or serving platter

Ingredients

- 1 sheet frozen puff pastry (from a 17.3-ounce package), thawed according to package directions
- All-purpose flour, for lightly dusting the work surface
- 8 ounces brie cheese, chilled and cut into 24 small cubes
- ½ cup thick, chilled whole-berry cranberry sauce
- ⅓ cup chopped pecans or walnuts, lightly toasted (optional)
- 1 tablespoon fresh rosemary, finely chopped
- Flaky sea salt, for finishing
- Small fresh rosemary sprigs, for garnish (optional)
- Nonstick cooking spray or a little butter, for greasing the muffin tin

ALL YOU HAVE TO DO

1. Prepare the oven and muffin tin.
Preheat the oven to 375°F (190°C). Lightly grease all 24 cups of a mini muffin tin with nonstick cooking spray or butter.

2. Prepare the puff pastry.
Thaw the frozen puff pastry according to the package directions. It should be pliable but still cold. Lightly flour your work surface and unfold the pastry. Gently roll it just enough to smooth the creases and form an approximately 10-by-12-inch rectangle.

3. Cut the pastry squares.
Using a sharp knife or pizza cutter, cut the pastry into 24 equal squares, approximately 2 inches each. Work quickly to keep the pastry cool.

4. Fill the muffin cups.
Gently press one pastry square into each mini muffin cup, allowing the corners to extend slightly above the edges. Place one cube of cold brie in the center of each pastry cup.

5. Add the cranberry topping.
Spoon approximately 1 teaspoon of chilled cranberry sauce over each piece of brie. Sprinkle with chopped pecans, if using, and a little finely chopped rosemary. Avoid overfilling, as the cheese and cranberry sauce may bubble over during baking.

6. Bake until golden and crisp.
Bake for 13–15 minutes, or until the pastry is puffed and golden brown and the cheese is melted. Baking time may vary slightly depending on your oven and the temperature of the pastry.

7. Cool and garnish.
Allow the bites to rest in the muffin tin for 3–5 minutes. Carefully lift them out and transfer to a serving platter. Finish with a small pinch of flaky sea salt and fresh rosemary sprigs, if desired. Serve warm.

Flavor & Texture

- Puff pastry: Light, buttery, crisp, and golden.
- Brie: Soft, creamy, and rich.
- Cranberry sauce: Sweet-tart with a fruity flavor.
- Rosemary: Adds a gentle, fragrant herbal note.
- Pecans or walnuts: Provide an optional toasted crunch.

Serving Suggestions

Arrange the bites on a festive serving board and serve warm alongside:

- Sliced Honeycrisp apples
- Fresh grapes
- Toasted pecans or walnuts
- Sparkling apple cider
- A simple selection of crackers and fresh fruit

They make a lovely addition to a Christmas leftovers buffet or New Year's Eve appetizer spread.

Before You Begin: Using Christmas Leftovers

Leftover cranberry sauce: Use thick, chilled cranberry sauce left from Christmas dinner. Whole-berry cranberry sauce works especially well because the berries add little bursts of flavor.
No leftover cranberry sauce? You can make a quick batch by simmering 1 cup fresh or frozen cranberries with ¼ cup sugar, ¼ cup water, and a little orange zest for about 10–12 minutes, until the berries burst and the mixture thickens. Cool completely before using. This makes more than you need, so refrigerate the extra for another meal.
Using store-bought sauce: Whole-berry canned cranberry sauce is also suitable. Chill it before filling the pastry cups. If it is particularly runny, drain off excess liquid so the pastry stays crisp.
Brie: Purchase a fresh wedge and keep it refrigerated until ready to cut. The rind is edible, so removing it is optional.

Helpful Kitchen Tips

- Keep puff pastry cold: If it becomes too soft or sticky while working, refrigerate it for 10–15 minutes before continuing.
- Use thick cranberry sauce: Excess liquid can make the pastry soggy.
- Don't overfill: A small amount of cheese and cranberry sauce is enough for each cup.
- Keep the brie chilled: Cold cheese helps the pastry bake before the cheese melts too quickly.
- Watch the oven: Puff pastry can brown quickly, so check the bites near the end of baking.

Easy Substitutions

- No brie? Use Camembert for a similar creamy texture.
- No pecans? Try chopped walnuts or omit the nuts entirely.
- No fresh rosemary? Use a small pinch of dried rosemary.
- Cranberry sauce is gone? Use thick fig jam or pepper jelly for a different sweet-savory flavor.
- Want a little citrus? Add a small amount of finely grated orange zest to the cranberry topping.
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Make-Ahead, Storage & Reheating

Make ahead: Cut the pastry squares and prepare the filling ingredients in advance. You can assemble the bites in the muffin tin up to 6 hours ahead, cover, and refrigerate. Bake directly from the refrigerator, checking for doneness and allowing a little extra time if needed.
Refrigeration: Store baked leftovers in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 2 days.
Reheating: Reheat in a 325°F oven for approximately 5–8 minutes, until warmed through and crisp again. Avoid microwaving if you want to preserve the flaky pastry texture.
Food safety: Refrigerate perishable leftovers within 2 hours. Do not leave the filled bites sitting at room temperature for extended periods.

Cook's Confidence Cue

Your pastry should look puffed and golden, with crisp edges. The brie should be soft and melted without completely spilling out of the pastry cups. Let the bites rest briefly before removing them from the tin so the cheese can settle.

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