Bennu Bash: How to host a watch party with OSIRIS-REx-themed music, food and more

University Communications
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The delivery of a sample from the asteroid Bennu will be a scientific achievement decades in the making. While NASA and University scientists celebrate the successful mission from a desert in Utah, you can join the fun no matter where in the universe you are (as long as it has Internet access and a kitchen).

If you happen to be in Arizona, mark your calendar for 7:42 a.m. on Sunday, Sept. 24, which is when OSIRIS-REx will return its sample capsule. Then make plans for a watch party, with NASA as the DJ and the University's culinary team as the designers of a delicious menu full of space-themed food.

For some pre-party preparations, read up on the work University scientists and staff have undertaken throughout the mission and check out the NASA videos and animations that have chronicled the spacecraft's journey. For your younger guests, break out the crayons and colored pencils and print out some pages from the OSIRIS-REx coloring book.

Next, set the mood with some music from NASA's Third Rock Radio, which aims to "bring young adults closer to science, engineering and technology" through a blend of art and science. Billing itself as "America's Space Station," Third Rock Radio will feature OSIRIS-REx-themed playlists – such as "ROAD TRIP!" and "GIVÉ ME THE ROCK!" – and radio shows throughout sample delivery week.

You can listen on the Third Rock Radio website or on TuneIn.

Presumably, your OSIRIS-REx Kooky Craftable decorations are already up, and your new OSIRIS-REx postage stamps are ready for post-party thank-you notes for your guests, and you've got the livestream on a big screen. So now, it's time to get your space-centered spread ready.

Cosmic cooking

The task to create an OSIRIS-REx-themed menu landed on Michael Omo, senior executive chef and director of culinary excellence, and his team.

"When we first got this opportunity, we started looking at words that went with the theme – rockets, astronauts, space," Omo said. "We had fun with the words, then worked food around them."

The result is a full brunch menu of beverages, snacks, main dishes and desserts with names like Mission Control Siphon Coffee, Cruciferous Capsule Salad, Eggs Bennu-dict and Asteroid Belt Bacon. The recipes incorporate science-themed presentation features such as petri dishes, mini parachutes and liquid nitrogen. The menu is all about enhancing a special occasion with food, Omo said.

"Food creates memories. Almost every type of memorable moment you've had, there's food involved," Omo said.

The full menu and recipes are available on the University's OSIRIS-REx website. Some selections are below.

**Signature Cocktail: Always Sunny in Tucson**

**Ingredients**

- 2 ounces orange juice
- 2 ounces Long Drink (canned alcoholic beverage available at many grocery stores)
- 2 ounces pomegranate juice
- 2 sprigs of fresh mint
- 1 orange slice

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- 1 orange slice
1 ounce Campari (to create a flaming cocktail)

Instructions: Mix orange juice, pomegranate juice, Long Drink and one sprig of fresh mint and muddle. Fill a 10-ounce highball glass with ice. Strain the mixture into the glass. Garnish with sliced orange and fresh mint.

If you want to create a flaming cocktail, pour the Campari into a Misto can and use the pump to move the cap up and down and create air pressure. Spray the Campari over the drink and use a lighter to create a flame. This is an optional step. "You can omit this step and the drink will be great or use this step to make this drink out of this world," Omo said.

Chocolate-Coated Asteroid Belt with Space Dust Molecules

Ingredients

- 16 ounces white chocolate
- 4 ounces dark chocolate
- 1 pound thick-sliced bacon
- 1 jar powdered peanut butter

Instructions

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Lay the bacon in a single layer on a parchment- or foil-lined sheet pan and bake on the center rack for about 20 minutes. No need to turn. After 20 minutes, check every two minutes until crispy. Once done, drain the fat. While the bacon is in the oven, melt the chocolates over a hot water bath on the stove, keeping the colors separate. Once melted, pour the white chocolate into a skinny container. Drizzle some of the dark chocolate on top of the white chocolate (do not stir) and dip the bacon in it. Shake the bacon gently over an extra plate and you will see a light striping. Place the coated bacon on another sheet pan to dry. Repeat with each strip, tilting the container when the chocolate level gets low and adding more dark chocolate as needed. Chill the chocolate-covered bacon for a few hours. Sprinkle liberally with powdered peanut butter to serve.

Sample Returns (almond and pistachio financier cakes)

Ingredients
16 ounces (454 grams) butter
16 (500 grams) large egg whites
3/4 cup (180 grams) almond meal
3/4 cup (180 grams) all-purpose flour
1 pound (450 grams) powdered sugar
1/3 pound (150 grams) pistachio paste or ground pistachios

Instructions
Melt the butter and let it cool. Whip the egg whites lightly, then mix in all the additional items (add the butter last). Grease mini-cupcake pans and scoop about 12 grams in each form. You can also scoop them into mini cupcake liners. Non-stick spray is not needed. Bake at 325 degrees for 7-10 minutes. Let the cakes cool, put each in a small plastic bag or similar packaging package them and attach to a mini parachute.

Rocket Pops

Ingredients
12 chocolate cupcakes
12 lollipop sticks
16 ounces dark chocolate
1 teaspoon chipotle powder or puree
1 ounce coconut oil
Edible dust (often called luster dust)

Instructions

Mash cupcakes in a bowl until they're pasty, then form rocket shapes. Stick a lollipop stick inside each form and freeze until firm. While the pops are freezing, melt chocolate in a water bath, stir in the chipotle and add the coconut oil. Stir so the oil doesn't separate from the chocolate. Dip the frozen pops into the chocolate and let the excess chocolate drop off. Decorate with edible dust.