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*Recipes excerpted from **Perfect Party Food** by Diane Phillips. Published by Harvard Common Press, Boston, MA. Copyright 2005. Reprinted with permission of the publisher. All rights reserved.*

The Crabbiest of Spreads

This spread is more crab than spread – it includes a pound of lump crabmeat—but it's worth the splurge to hear your guests' oohs and ahhs. This is delicious served on European cucumber rounds, endive leaves, or crackers.

One 3-ounce package cream cheese, softened
1/2 cup mayonnaise
2 scallions (white and tender green parts), finely chopped
2 teaspoons prepared horseradish
2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
2 teaspoons Old Bay seasoning
1 to 2 teaspoons dry white wine or dry vermouth, as needed
1 pound lump crabmeat, picked over for shells and cartilage
1/4 cup chopped fresh Italian parsley
1/4 cup slivered almonds, toasted

1. In a medium-size bowl, beat together the cream cheese, mayonnaise, scallions, horseradish, Worcestershire, Old Bay, and wine until smooth. Gradually fold in the crabmeat, being careful not to break up the lumps too much, but incorporating it into the cream cheese mixture. If the mixture is stiff, thin it with additional wine or some milk.

DIVA DO-AHEAD: At this point, cover and refrigerate for at least 2 and up to 24 hours.

2. Garnish with the parsley and almonds and serve.

Diva Variations: If you would like to serve the dip warm, heat it in a 2-quart saucepan over medium heat until small bubbles form around the side of the pan, about 15 minutes, stirring so it doesn't stick and cook. Transfer to a fondue pot or small slow cooker set on low to keep warm on the table.

Or hollow out a round bread loaf, leaving a layer of bread about 3/4-inch inside the crust. Pour the dip into the bread shell, place on a baking sheet, and bake at 350°F until the dip is bubbling, about 30 minutes. The bread should keep the dip warm for about 1-1/2 hours. Use the bread you removed from inside the loaf for dippers.