

'Tis the Season to Bake and be Merry!

Chocolate Thumbprints Cookies

1/2 cup butter, softened
2/3 cup sugar
1 egg, separated
2 tablespoons milk
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 cup all-purpose flour
1/3 cup baking cocoa
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 cup finely chopped walnuts

FILLING:

1/2 cup confectioners' sugar
1 tablespoon butter, softened
2 teaspoons milk
1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract
26 milk chocolate kisses



Directions

1. In a large bowl, cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in the egg yolk, milk & vanilla. Combine flour, cocoa and salt; gradually add to creamed mixture and mix well. Cover and refrigerate for 1 hr. or until easy to handle.

2. In a small bowl, whisk egg white until foamy. Shape dough into 1-in. balls; dip in egg white, then roll in nuts. Place on greased baking sheets. Using a wooden spoon handle, make an indentation in center of each cookie. Bake at 350° for 10-12 min. or until center is set.

3. For filling, combine the confectioners' sugar, butter, milk and vanilla; stir until smooth. Spoon or pipe 1/4 tsp. into each warm cookie; gently press a chocolate kiss in the center. Carefully remove from pans to wire racks to cool. Yield: 2 dozen.

<http://www.tasteofhome.com/recipes/chocolate-thumbprints-cookies>



Cranberry Orange Truffles



12 ounces bittersweet chocolate, chopped
1/2 cup unsalted butter, cubed
4 large egg yolks, beaten
1 cup dried cranberries, chopped
3 tablespoons thawed orange juice concentrate
1 teaspoon almond extract

COATING:

12 ounces white candy coating, chopped
1 ounce bittersweet chocolate, melted

Directions

1. In a double boiler or metal bowl over simmering water, heat chocolate and butter until melted, stirring frequently. Whisk a small amount of mixture into egg yolks. Return all to the heat, whisking constantly. Cook & stir until mixture reaches at least 160° and coats the back of a metal spoon.

2. Remove from heat; stir in the cranberries, orange juice concentrate and extract. Cool to room temp. stirring occasionally. Refrigerate for 1 hr. or until easy to handle. Shape into 1-in. balls.

3. In a microwave, melt candy coating. Dip truffles in coating; allow excess to drip off. Place on waxed paper-lined baking sheets and drizzle

with bittersweet chocolate. Refrigerate for 2 hr. or until firm. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator. Yield: about 3 dozen.



P.S. You can never have enough lights. ☺



<http://www.tasteofhome.com/recipes/cranberry-orange-truffles>

White Chocolate Cranberry Cookies

Love the simplicity of the directions! ~T

1/3 cup butter, softened
1/2 cup packed brown sugar
1/3 cup sugar
1 large egg
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1-1/2 cups all-purpose flour
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
3/4 cup dried cranberries
1/2 cup white baking chips



Directions

1. In a large bowl, beat butter and sugars until crumbly, about 2 minutes. Beat in egg and vanilla. Combine the flour, salt and baking soda; gradually add to butter mixture and mix well. Stir in cranberries and chips. 2. Drop by heaping tablespoonfuls 2 inches apart onto baking sheets coated with cooking spray. Bake at 375° for 8-10 minutes or until lightly browned. Cool for 1 minute before removing to wire racks. Yield: 2 doz.

<http://www.tasteofhome.com/recipes/white-chocolate-cranberry-cookies>





Toffee-Almond Cookie Slices

- 1 pkg. (17-1/2 oz.) sugar cookie mix
- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup butter, softened
- 1 egg
- 1/3 cup slivered almonds, toasted
- 1/3 cup miniature semisweet chocolate chips
- 1/3 cup English toffee bits or almond brickle chips

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350°. In a large bowl, mix sugar cookie mix, flour, butter and egg to form a stiff dough. Stir in almonds, chocolate chips and toffee bits.
 2. Divide dough in half. On an ungreased baking sheet, shape each portion into a 10x2-1/2-in. rectangle. Bake 25-30 minutes or until light brown. Cool on pans on wire racks 10 minutes.
 3. Transfer baked rectangles to a cutting board. Using a serrated knife, cut diagonally into 15 slices. Place on baking sheets, cut sides down.
 4. Bake 8-10 minutes on each side or until golden brown. Remove from pans to wire racks to cool completely. Store in an airtight container. Yield: 2-1/2 dozen.
- <http://www.tasteofhome.com/recipes/toffee-almond-cookie-slices>

Make it a great week,

~Tricia
Spencer's Fresh Markets
Morro Bav and Santa Maria



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Yummy Cracker Snacks

Reviews indicate using white chocolate candy coating as well, only dip half of cookie/cracker, or only using the peanut butter. Lots of options to make your own version. Have fun. ~Tricia

- 96 Ritz crackers
- 1 cup creamy peanut butter
- 1 cup marshmallow crème
- 2 lb. milk chocolate candy coating, melted
- Holiday sprinkles, optional



Directions

1. Spread half of the crackers with peanut butter. Spread remaining crackers with marshmallow crème; place crème side down over peanut butter crackers, forming a sandwich.
2. Dip sandwiches in melted candy coating, allowing excess to drip off. Place on waxed paper-lined pans; refrigerate for 15 minutes or until set. If desired, drizzle with additional candy coating and decorate with sprinkles. Store in an airtight container. Yield: 4 dozen.

<http://www.tasteofhome.com/recipes/yummy-cracker-snacks>



Funfetti Shortbread Bites

- 1 cup salted butter, cold and diced into 1 Tbsp. pieces*
- 2/3 cup granulated sugar
- 1/2 tsp almond extract
- 2 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 1/2 Tbsp. nonpareils sprinkles (any color), then about 1/2 Tbsp. more for tops if desired

Directions

- Butter a 13 by 9-inch baking dish and line with 2 sheets of parchment paper (one horizontally and one vertically. I butter between parchment sheets so they stick) leaving a 1-inch overhang on all sides, set aside.
 - In the bowl of an electric stand mixer cream together butter and sugar until well combined. Mix in almond extract. With mixer set on low speed slowly add in flour and mix until combined (it will take a while and will appear dry and sandy at first but it will start to come together). Mix and fold in sprinkles. Press dough into an even layer in prepared pan (I did it with my hands first then used the bottom of a flat measuring cup to help smooth it out). Chill dough in refrigerator 20 - 30 min. Meanwhile preheat oven to 350°.
 - Lift dough from pan using parchment overhang on all sides. Cut into 1/2-inch squares using a large sharp knife (it works best to just cut long rows). Sprinkle more sprinkles over the top if desired and gently press into dough. Transfer about 1/3 of the cookies to an unbuttered baking sheet (also do not line pan with parchment or silicone liners) and scatter cookies out spacing cookies 1/2-inch apart. Bake in preheated oven 8-12 min. (keep remaining refrigerated). Repeat process with remaining bites, adding them to a cool baking sheet. Cool completely then transfer to an airtight container and store at room temperature.
- *Unsalted butter will work great too. Simply whisk in 1/2 tsp salt with the flour before adding if using unsalted butter.

<http://www.cookingclassy.com/funfetti-shortbread-bites/>



Christmas Countdown



Strawberry Cheese Ring Appetizer



This appetizer creates a pretty display for a party and guests love it!

- 16 ounces sharp cheddar cheese, grated (4 cups)
- 1 3-ounce package cream cheese, softened
- 3/4 cup mayonnaise
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 1 cup chopped pecans or walnuts
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic salt or powder
- Cayenne pepper to taste
- 1 cup strawberry preserves

Instructions

- Combine all ingredients except preserves in a food processor or electric mixer.
- Mix thoroughly and refrigerate for 2-3 hours.
- Scoop mixture onto a platter.
- Use your hands to mold mixture into a ring formation
- Add strawberry preserves in center of ring and serve with crackers
- *Note: When I make this for parties, I also add chopped nuts all over the surface. Serves 20+

Notes

If you're having a smaller gathering, cut the ingredients in half and make a smaller cheese ring. It looks and taste just as yummy.

<http://betweennapsontheporch.net/strawberry-cheese-ring-appetizer/>



Spiced Rum-Nut Brittle

Brittle with some zing!!

- 1 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup light corn syrup
- 1/2 cup chopped cashews
- 1/2 cup chopped pecans
- 1 teaspoon butter
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- Pinch ground nutmeg
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon rum extract
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract



Directions

- Butter a 15-in. x 10-in. x 1-in. pan; set aside.
- In a 2-qt. microwave-safe bowl, combine sugar and corn syrup. Microwave, uncovered, on high for 3 minutes; stir. Microwave 2-1/2 minutes longer. Stir in the cashews, pecans, butter, cinnamon, cayenne, salt and nutmeg.
- Microwave, uncovered, on high for 2 minutes or until mixture turns a light amber color (mixture will be very hot). Quickly stir in baking soda and extracts until light and foamy. Immediately pour into prepared pan; spread with a metal spatula. Cool completely. Break into pieces; store in an airtight container. Yield: 1 pound.

Editor's Note: This recipe was tested in a 1,100-watt microwave.

<http://www.tasteofhome.com/recipes/spiced-rum-nut-brittle>

Saltine Toffee Bark



- 40 saltines
- 1 cup butter, cubed
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 2 cups (12 oz.) semisweet chocolate chips
- 1 pkg. (8 oz.) milk chocolate English toffee bits

Directions

- Line a 15-in. x 10-in. x 1-in. baking pan with heavy-duty foil. Arrange saltines in a single layer on foil; set aside.
 - In a large heavy saucepan over medium heat, melt butter. Stir in sugar. Bring to a boil; cook and stir for 1-2 min. or until sugar is dissolved. Pour evenly over crackers.
 - Bake at 350° for 8-10 min. or until bubbly. Immediately sprinkle with chocolate chips. Allow chips to soften for a few minutes, then spread over top. Sprinkle with toffee bits. Cool.
 - Cover and refrigerate for 1 hour or until set. Break into pieces. Store in an airtight container. Yield: 2 pounds.
- <http://www.tasteofhome.com/recipes/saltine-toffee-bark>



I made a Gingerbread House for Christmas.

Let me know if you want the recipe.

Peppermint Meltaways

- 1 cup butter, softened
 - 1/2 cup confectioners' sugar
 - 1/2 teaspoon peppermint extract
 - 1-1/4 cups all-purpose flour
 - 1/2 cup cornstarch
- FROSTING:**
- 2 tablespoons butter, softened
 - 2 tablespoons 2% milk
 - 1/4 teaspoon peppermint extract
 - 2 to 3 drops red food coloring, optional
 - 1-1/2 cups confectioners' sugar
 - 1/2 cup crushed peppermint candies



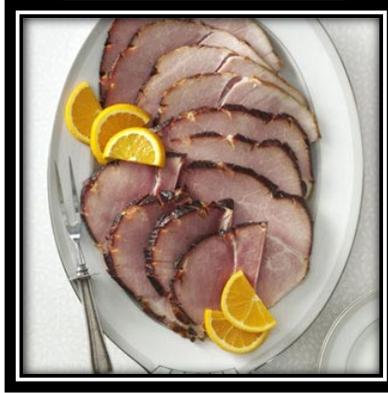
Directions

1. In a small bowl, cream butter and confectioners' sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in extract. In another bowl, whisk flour and cornstarch; gradually beat into creamed mixture. Refrigerate, covered, 30 min. or until firm enough to handle.

2. Preheat oven to 350°. Shape dough into 1-in. balls; place 2 in. apart on ungreased baking sheets. Bake 9-11 min. or until bottoms are light brown.

Remove from pans to wire racks to cool completely.

3. In a small bowl, beat butter until creamy. Beat in milk, extract and, if desired, food coloring. Gradually beat in confectioners' sugar until smooth. Spread over cookies; sprinkle with crushed candies. Store in an airtight container. Yield: about 2-1/2 dozen.
<http://www.tasteofhome.com/recipes/peppermint-meltaways>



Bourbon-Glazed Ham

- 1 fully cooked bone-in ham (8 to 10 lb.)
- 3/4 cup bourbon, divided
- 2 cups packed brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon ground mustard
- 1 tablespoon orange marmalade
- 1/8 teaspoon ground coriander

Directions

1. Place ham on a rack in a shallow roasting pan. Score the surface of the ham, making diamond shapes 1/2 in. deep. Brush with 2 tablespoons bourbon. Bake, uncovered, at 325° for 2 hours.

2. In a small bowl, combine the brown sugar, mustard, marmalade, coriander and remaining bourbon; spoon over ham. Bake 30 minutes longer or until a meat thermometer reads 140°. Let stand for 15 minutes before slicing. Yield: 16 servings.

<http://www.tasteofhome.com/recipes/bourbon-glazed-ham>

A
Partridge
In a Pear Tree
Two Turtle Doves
Three French Hens
Four Calling Birds
Five Gold Rings
Six Geese A Laying
Seven Swans A Swimming
Eight Maids A Milking
Nine Ladies Dancing
Ten Lords A Leaping
Eleven Pipers Piping

TWELVE
DRUMMERS
DRUMMING

Meatball Parm Skewers

- 1 lb. ground beef
- 1/2 c. bread crumbs
- 1 Egg, lightly beaten
- 2 tbsp. chopped parsley
- 4 garlic cloves (divided)
- 1/2 c. finely grated Parmesan, divided
- kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 5-6 mozzarella slices, cut into small squares
- Fresh basil leaves, for serving



Directions

- Mince two cloves of garlic & thinly slice the remaining two cloves.
- In a large bowl, add ground beef, bread crumbs, egg, parsley, minced garlic and 1/4 cup Parmesan. Season with salt and pepper. Mix until just combined. Roll into golf-size balls.
- Heat olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the meatballs and cook to brown on all sides. When the meatballs have developed a nice crust, remove from skillet and wipe skillet clean. Return skillet to stovetop over medium heat. Pour marinara into the skillet. Stir in thinly sliced garlic and remaining Parmesan, bring sauce to simmer then add the meatballs back to the pan. Spoon sauce over the meatballs. Cover the pan with a lid and simmer meatballs for another 10-12 min., or until cooked through.
- Top each meatball with mozzarella. Cover pan with lid and cook until the cheese is melted. Turn off heat. Top each meatball with a whole basil leaf, folded, and pierce with a toothpick to serve.

<http://www.delish.com/cooking/recipe-ideas/recipes/a50410/meatball-parm-skewers-recipe/>



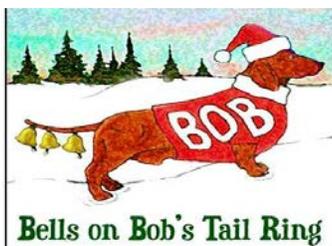
Crab Cake Bites

- 6 oz. lump crab meat
- 6 oz. cream cheese, softened to room temperature
- 1 Egg, lightly beaten
- 3/4 c. Sour Cream, Divided
- 2/3 c. finely grated Parmesan, divided
- 1 1/2 tsp. Old Bay seasoning, divided
- 2 tsp. lemon juice
- 1 tsp. lemon zest
- Pinch cayenne pepper
- 2 tbsp. finely chopped chives, divided
- kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1 c. panko bread crumbs
- 6 tbsp. butter, melted



Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 °. Grease a 24-cup mini muffin pan with nonstick cooking spray.
2. Combine crab meat, cream cheese, egg, 1/3 c Parmesan, 1 tsp. Old Bay, sour cream, lemon zest, 1 tsp. lemon, cayenne and about 1 tbsp. chives in a large bowl. Season with salt and pepper and stir until evenly combined.
3. In a separate bowl, combine remaining cheese, bread crumbs and melted butter. Divide mixture between muffin pan cups and press around the edges of cup to make a crust. Spoon the crab mixture into each cup and bake for 20-25 min. until the edges begin to turn golden brown.
4. Meanwhile, make dipping sauce. Combine sour cream, remaining chives, 1 tsp. lemon juice and remaining Old Bay. Stir to combine.
5. Serve crab cake bites warm or at room temperature.



A special little treat for yourself when the decorating is done, the shopping is finished, the house is clean, the gifts are all wrapped, and

If you wait until you're done with everything, you'll never get to enjoy one! Treat yourself before it all gets done 😊.

Chocolate Peppermint Stick

- 1 1/2 ounce white crème de cacao
- 1 ounce cream
- 1 ounce peppermint schnapps



Shake well with ice. Strain ingredients into chilled martini glasses. Garnish with a small peppermint candy cane (or, optionally, crush the candy cane and sprinkle it on top) and serve. <http://mixthatdrink.com/chocolate-peppermint-stick/>

Slow-Cooker Bourbon Smokies

- 2 lb. cocktail wieners
- 1 c. brown sugar
- 1 c. ketchup
- 1/2 c. bourbon
- 1/3 c. finely chopped shallot (from 1 small)
- 3 cloves garlic, minced



Directions

1. In a small slow cooker, combine cocktail wieners, brown sugar, ketchup, bourbon, shallot, and garlic. Stir to combine and cover.
2. Cook on high until the bourbon smell has cooked off, 6 hours.
3. Serve with toothpicks.

<http://www.delish.com/cooking/recipe-ideas/recipes/a50373/slow-cooker-bourbon-smokies-recipe/>



May your heart and home be warm this Holiday Season!

Merry Christmas!

-Tricia

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