

Holiday Mints

4 ounce cream cheese

4 cups powdered sugar (plus extra for molding and rolling)

1 Tbsp softened butter

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp peppermint extract (or any flavor you want)

Food coloring of your choice

Mix butter and cream cheese until creamy. Add 2 cups of powdered sugar. Mix well, then add the remaining cups. Will start to look like play dough which is the consistency you want. You don't want it sticking to your hands when you roll it. If it does that, all you have to do is add more powdered sugar, especially if you add food coloring, you may need to. Roll dough out in your palms into teaspoon portions until smooth. Transfer to a waxed paper baking sheet. Dip the tines of fork into powdered sugar and use that gently but firm down on each mint. Allow the mints to dry a few hours, then transfer to an airtight container using wax paper for each layer. Keep mints in the refrigerator.

Crockpot Sausage & Cheddar Potato

Crockpot Pot Creamy Sausage & Potato Cheddar Soup

3 russet potatoes peeled and cut into 1 inch cubes

4 cups sliced sausage sauté until slightly browned (I used

hot sausage)

3 cups vegetable broth

3 cups corn frozen or fresh

1 cup onions diced

4 tsp garlic minced

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp garlic salt

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp garlic pepper or black pepper

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp onion powder

2 cups whole milk

2 tbsp cornstarch

2 cups grated extra cheddar cheese

1 cup sour cream

1lb of cooked bacon crumbles

INSTRUCTIONS

In a 6 qt slow cooker add ingredients through onion powder and cook on low for 6 hours. 30 minutes before soup is done, whisk together cornstarch and milk and pour into soup. Cover and finish cooking.

Once done add grated cheese, bacon and sour cream. Stir to combine and allow a few minutes for cheese to melt. Serve hot with grilled cheese. Amazing to dip it in!

Skinny Chicken Parmesan

- 1 pound penne pasta, protein pasta or whole wheat
 - 1 jar marinara sauce 24 ounce jar, (lower sugar, optional)
 - 15 ounces diced tomatoes
 - 1 pound boneless and skinless chicken breasts cut into bite size pieces
 - 1 cup skim mozzarella cheese shredded
 - 1/2 cup Panko bread crumbs, whole wheat
 - 1/4 cup grated parmesan cheese
 - 1 teaspoon Italian Seasoning optional, ground oregano
 - Cook pasta according to the package directions, and drain. Preheat the oven to 375°. In a 9 x 13-inch casserole dish, combine the cooked pasta, marinara, tomatoes, and chicken. Stir well. Cover and bake for 30 minutes.
 - In the meantime, combine bread crumbs, parmesan cheese, and seasoning.
 - After 40 minutes, remove the casserole and stir in the mozzarella cheese. Sprinkle the breadcrumb mixture evenly over the top. Leave uncovered, return to the oven, and bake an additional 10-15 minutes or until the chicken is cooked through and the top is crispy.
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Christmas Goopy Bars

- 1 egg
- 1 and $\frac{1}{2}$ cups of vanilla cake mix ($\frac{1}{2}$ box of standard cake mix)
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of oil
- 3-4 tablespoon sprinkles, I just red, green and white jimmies
- 7 oz container marshmallow cream
- 3 cups of mini marshmallows
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons butter
- 3 cups crisped rice cereal, I used Sugar Cookie Pebbles

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. To make the first layer, mix together cake mix, egg, sprinkles and oil. Press into greased 9×9 inch pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 10-12 minutes.
3. For the second layer, remove the cake mix layer from the oven and put spoonfuls of the marshmallow cream on top. Allow the marshmallow cream to heat and spread out on its own.
4. While waiting, make the top layer. Microwave $1\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons of butter for 20 seconds in a large bowl, until melted. Add 3 cups of mini marshmallows and stir to coat. Microwave for 45 seconds and stir until smooth. (If the marshmallows aren't completely melted, microwave for an additional 30 seconds.) Mix in 3 cups of crisped rice cereal.
5. Carefully spread the marshmallow cream out evenly. Then, drop the crisped rice mixture by large spoonfuls over the marshmallow cream layer and carefully spread out evenly. Add more holiday sprinkles.
6. Allow the bars to cool and set before cutting them into

squares. They spread once they are cut, so you might want to wait to cut them until right before serving.

Christmas Crunch Cake

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16 Nature Valley crunchy granola bars oats 'n honey, crushed

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup butter, melted

$\frac{2}{3}$ cup sugar

2 (8 oz.) blocks cream cheese, softened

1 (14 oz.) can sweetened condensed milk

1 (8 oz.) container extra creamy whipped topping

1 tbsp. Vanilla

$\frac{1}{3}$ cup Christmas sprinkles

In a large bowl, stir together crushed granola bars, melted butter and sugar until well mixed. Press half of the mixture into a 9 by 9 inch baking pan that has been generously sprayed with nonstick cooking spray.

In mixer, beat cream cheese, condensed milk, whipped topping and vanilla. Fold in sprinkles, reserving about 1 tablespoon for the topping.

Spread whipped mixture on top of crust. Top with remaining granola bar mixture and sprinkle with the rest of the sprinkles. Cover and freeze for 4-6 hours.

Crock-pot Applesauce

3 lbs macintosh apples

3 lbs granny smith apples

1 cup sugar

2 cinnamon sticks

4 Tbsp lemon juice

4 Tbsp butter

Peel apples, slice them and put everything in a greased crock pot except for the butter. Cook on high for 3-4 hours stirring occasionally. Take out cinnamon sticks, then mash everything together and add butter. (You can smooth it out with a hand mixer to make it extra smooth.) Cool, then store in the fridge or freezer.

Pumpkin Bars

For the bars:

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups of flour

1 tsp cinnamon

$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp ground nutmeg

$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp baking soda

$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp salt

1 stick butter, melted

$\frac{2}{3}$ cup light brown sugar

1 large egg

1 tsp vanilla extract

1 cup pumpkin puree

For the frosting:

1 stick of butter, room temp

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup light brown sugar

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp cinnamon

$\frac{1}{8}$ tsp salt

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup powdered sugar, sifted

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp vanilla extract

1 tbsp milk, plus more if needed

Preheat the oven to 350.

In a large bowl, combine flour, spices, baking soda and salt.

In a separate medium bowl, whisk together butter, brown sugar, egg, vanilla, and pumpkin. Add the butter mixture to the flour mixture, stirring until just combined. Pour the batter into a lightly greased 8 by 8 baking pan.

Bake for 25 minutes, or until the knife comes out clean. Be careful to not over bake.

Set on a wire rack and rack and cool completely.

To make icing:

Beat together using an electric mixer the butter and brown

sugar on medium speed until light and fluffy. Add the cinnamon and salt. On low speed, slowly add in the powdered sugar. Add in vanilla and milk and increase speed. Beat until light and fluffy. If it's too runny, add more sugar. If it's too thick, add milk. Spread over bars. Sprinkle with fall sprinkles and store in the refrigerator.

DeViLeD EgGs

The concept is easy:

Hard cook your eggs. Cool the Eggs. Crack the Eggs. Dye the Eggs. Peel the Eggs. Devil the Eggs. Eat the Eggs.

Step One— Boil a dozen eggs as you normally would and let cool.

Step Two— Crack the eggs with the back of a spoon making cracks that look like webbs.

Steps Three— Pour warm water in a pot that will cover all your eggs and add food coloring. I used purple. You want the water pretty dark. Let eggs sit 2-3 hours. You can randomly check on them. Don't let them go too long (like overnight) or the eggs will come out completely covered in the color with darker spots where the cracks were.

Step Four- Peeling. The secret to peeling the dyed eggs easily is to ask someone to help you, and then pretend you have to go to the bathroom. Disappear for at least 27 minutes, claiming food poisoning or lady problems. No one will question this...no one wants to know. (It's worth the peeling though, trust me. Haha!)

Step Five- Deviling. Easiest part of all.

Egg yolks from the eggs, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup mayo & salt and pepper. (I added green food coloring to mine to add to the *sPo0ky* factor.)

Place everything into a bowl and mix it until it's smooth. Add the filling to a piping bag and fill each egg half. And there you have it! Fun, colorful, Deviled Sp0oKy eggs that look great and taste great too. Tiny little spiders I got from Amazon!

Steak Bites & Gnocchi

- 1 pound beef sirloin steak or beef tenderloin
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 tablespoon worcestershire sauce
- 1 tablespoon vinegar
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- 2 pounds dried packaged gnocchi
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 cloves garlic crushed
- 1/4 cup freshly grated parmesan cheese , for serving (optional)
- **Instructions:**
- Dice steak into bite-sized pieces. Trim off any excess fat or sinew. Place steak bites into a gallon-sized resealable plastic bag or a shallow bowl for marinating.
- Add in lemon juice, olive oil, Worcestershire sauce, vinegar, onion powder, garlic powder, salt, and pepper.

Toss to coat, cover or seal, and refrigerate. Let marinate 1 to 8 hours.

- Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat.
 - Cook gnocchi in the boiling water according to package directions. Drain and set aside.
 - Meanwhile, use tongs to add half of the steak to the skillet, leaving the marinating liquid behind. Some liquid is okay, but you don't want to steam your steak. Cook, stirring occasionally, until steak bites are seared and browned. Remove from skillet, set aside, and cook the remaining half of the steak being sure not to crowd the meat. Return previously cooked steak to the skillet.
 - Add butter and crushed garlic to the skillet with the steak. Let garlic toast 1 minute. Add in gnocchi and saute 3 to 5 minutes until gnocchi is lightly browned.
 - Serve hot with grated Parmesan cheese for sprinkling (optional).
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Crockpot Chicken & Biscuits

4 boneless chicken breast (seasoned to your liking)

Chicken Broth

1 can of cream of chicken

1 bag of frozen mixed veggies

Few dollops of sour cream

1 can of Philsbury buttery biscuits

Pour chicken broth just to cover the bottom of the crockpot.

In a crockpot, place seasoned chicken on the bottom of the crockpot.

Place the cream of chicken on top of the chicken, then pour the bag of veggies in.

Cook on high for 4 hours or on low for 6 hours.

Take the chicken out and shred just before you are ready to eat.

Add a few dollops of sour cream (Optional of course!)

Mix well and serve over warm baked biscuits!

My family absolutely loves this. It tasted extra good on a rainy night.

Sheet Pizza Cookie

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2 Pillsbury Ready to Bake Chocolate Chip Cookie Dough

1 can of Pillsbury Funfetti Icing

I used a small cookie sheet and laid all 24 cookies out on the sheet. I pressed down firmly until they were all touching together. I left no holes while making a large square.

Baked for 20-25 minutes. I like my cookies a little under cooked so they are nice and soft.

Let cool, then top with icing and sprinkles.

I made these for the river a few times and they were GONE!

Everyone raved over them. It was so delicious and easy.

Everything doesn't have to be made from scratch, remember that.