

Holiday Entertaining

24
RECIPES

**MAKE-AHEAD
BRUNCH**

**FESTIVE
SNACKS**

**COOKIES
GALORE!**

Baby Citrus
Cheesecakes
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FROM THE
EDITORS OF

Midwest Living[®]

**Family, friends,
glad tidings, good
food ... let the
holiday celebrations
(and eating!) begin.**

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Make-ahead brunch

Give yourself the gift of relaxation. Prep these festive recipes hours or even days in advance.



Cranberry-Raspberry Spritz

PREP 20 minutes COOL 2 hours

- 3 cups sugar
- 2 cups water
- 1 12-ounce package fresh or frozen cranberries
- 1 12-ounce package frozen unsweetened raspberries
- Champagne, carbonated water or lemon-lime carbonated beverage, chilled
- Fresh raspberries and/or cranberries (optional)

1. In a medium saucepan, combine sugar, the water, cranberries and raspberries. Bring to boiling; reduce heat to medium. Simmer, uncovered, about 5 minutes or until all the cranberries have popped. Remove from heat and allow to cool to room temperature. Pass through a fine-mesh sieve, pressing lightly on the fruit with the back of a large spoon. Do not press too hard or your syrup may become cloudy. Transfer syrup to a pitcher or bottle; cover and refrigerate until ready to use. Store syrup in refrigerator for up to 2 weeks.

2. When ready to serve, place about 1 tablespoon of the chilled syrup in a champagne flute or wine glass and top with chilled Champagne. Stir gently and garnish with fresh raspberries and/or cranberries threaded on a skewer, if desired. **Makes 5 cups syrup.**

Nutrition facts per serving: 116 cal, 0 g fat, 0 mg chol, 0 mg sodium, 11 g carbo, 0 g fiber, 0 g pro.



Jolly
holiday
colors

Fruit Brunch Medley

START TO FINISH 25 minutes

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup dried tart cherries
- 1 cup seedless green grapes
- 1 cup seedless red grapes
- 1 Granny Smith apple, cored and cut into bite-size pieces
- 1 Red Delicious apple, cored and cut into bite-size pieces
- 2 kiwifruit, peeled and cut into wedges
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup honey
- 1 teaspoon lime zest
- 2 tablespoons lime juice

1. In a small bowl, pour boiling water over dried cherries. Let stand 15 minutes or until cherries are plump. Drain.

2. In a large bowl, combine grapes, apples, kiwifruit and drained cherries.

3. In a small bowl, combine honey, zest and juice. Pour mixture over fruit and toss to coat. Chill up to 2 hours. Spoon into serving dishes. **Makes 8 servings.**

Nutrition facts per serving: 151 cal, 0 g fat, 0 mg chol, 4 mg sodium, 41 g carbo, 3 g fiber, 1 g pro.

Goat Cheese, Artichoke and Smoked Ham Strata

PREP 30 minutes **CHILL** 2 hours

BAKE 1 hour **STAND** 10 minutes

- 2 cups whole milk
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 1-pound loaf sourdough bread, cut into 1-inch cubes (about 12 cups)
- 5 eggs
- 1½ cups half-and-half or light cream
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic
- 1½ teaspoons herbs de Provence
- ¾ teaspoon ground black pepper
- ½ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- ½ teaspoon dried sage, crushed
- ½ teaspoon dried thyme, crushed
- 8 ounces goat cheese (chèvre), crumbled
- 12 ounces smoked ham, chopped
- 3 6-ounce jars marinated artichoke hearts, drained and halved lengthwise
- 6 ounces Parmesan cheese, finely shredded (1½ cups)
- 4 ounces fontina cheese, shredded (1 cup)

1. In a very large bowl, combine milk and olive oil. Add bread cubes and stir to coat. Let stand 10 minutes.

2. In a large bowl, whisk together eggs, half-and-half, garlic, herbs de Provence, pepper, nutmeg, sage and thyme. Whisk in goat cheese until combined; set aside.

3. Spread half of the bread cube mixture in a greased 3-quart baking dish. Top with half of the ham, artichoke hearts and cheeses. Repeat layers and drizzle the egg mixture over all. Cover and chill for 2 to 24 hours.

4. Uncover and bake in a 350° oven for 1 hour or until set in the center and edges are browned. Let stand 10 minutes before serving. **Makes 8 servings.**

Nutrition facts per serving: 693 cal, 38 g fat, 218 mg chol, 1,661 mg sodium, 47 g carbo, 3 g fiber, 41 g pro.

Nuts About French Toast

PREP 25 minutes **CHILL** overnight

BAKE 1 hour **STAND** 15 minutes

- 12 ounces Italian bread, cut into 1-inch-thick slices
- 8 eggs, lightly beaten
- 2 cups milk
- 2 cups half-and-half or light cream
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- ½ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ½ cup butter, softened
- 1 cup packed brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons dark-color corn syrup
- 1 cup coarsely chopped pecans

- 1.** Arrange bread slices in the bottom of a greased 13x9x2-inch baking dish, overlapping as necessary.
- 2.** In a large bowl, combine eggs, milk, half-and-half, vanilla, nutmeg and cinnamon. Pour egg mixture evenly over bread. Press down lightly with a large spoon. Cover and chill overnight.
- 3.** In a bowl, mix butter, brown sugar and corn syrup; stir in nuts. Spoon small mounds of the nut mixture over the bread in the baking dish.
- 4.** Bake, uncovered, in a 325° oven about 1 hour or until puffed and golden. Let stand 15 minutes. **Makes 10 servings.**

Nutrition facts per serving: 492 cal, 29 g fat, 215 mg chol, 372 mg sodium, 48 g carbo, 2 g fiber, 12 g pro.



Great
for
gifts

Almond-Cranberry Bread with White Chocolate Glaze

PREP 35 minutes **BAKE** 1 hour 15 minutes
COOL 10 minutes **STAND** overnight

- 1½ cups fresh or frozen cranberries
- 2½ cups all-purpose flour
 - 1 cup sugar
 - 1 tablespoon baking powder
 - ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 eggs
 - 1 cup buttermilk
- ⅓ cup butter, melted
- 1 to 1½ teaspoons almond extract
- ⅔ cup chopped almonds, toasted if you like
 - White Chocolate Glaze (recipe follows)
 - Chopped almonds, toasted (optional)

- 1.** Rinse cranberries in cold water; drain. Grease bottom and ½ inch up the sides of one 9x5x3-inch loaf pan. Line bottom of pan with waxed paper; grease. Set aside.
- 2.** In a large bowl, combine flour, sugar, baking powder and salt. Make a well in center of flour mixture; set aside.
- 3.** In a medium bowl, combine eggs, buttermilk, melted butter and almond extract. Add egg mixture all at once to flour mixture. Stir just until moistened (batter should be lumpy). Fold in cranberries and the chopped almonds. Spoon batter into prepared pan, spreading evenly.
- 4.** Bake in a 325° oven about 1 hour 15 minutes, or until a wooden skewer inserted near center comes out clean. Cool in pan on a wire rack for 10 minutes. Remove from pan. Cool completely on wire rack. Wrap and store overnight before slicing.

5. Before serving, unwrap bread. Drizzle with White Chocolate Glaze and, if desired, sprinkle with additional toasted almonds. **Makes 12 servings.**

White Chocolate Glaze: In a small, microwave-safe bowl, microwave $\frac{1}{4}$ cup white baking pieces on 50 percent power (medium) for $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 minutes or until melted and smooth, stirring once or twice. Stir in 3 tablespoons powdered sugar and 1 tablespoon French vanilla liquid coffee creamer. If necessary, stir in additional coffee creamer, 1 teaspoon at a time, until glaze reaches drizzling consistency.

Nutrition facts per serving: 307 cal, 11 g fat, 50 mg chol, 234 mg sodium, 46 g carbo, 2 g fiber, 6 g pro.

Poinsettia Mimosas

START TO FINISH 10 minutes

- 3 to 4 tangerines (optional)
- Maraschino cherries (optional)
- 3 cups cranberry juice, chilled
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup Triple Sec, orange liqueur or orange juice
- 2 tablespoons maraschino cherry juice or grenadine syrup
- 1 750-milliliter bottle Champagne or sparkling apple juice or one 32-ounce bottle carbonated water or lemon-lime carbonated beverage, chilled

1. If you like, use a vegetable peeler or a thin sharp knife to thinly peel the tangerines into 6-inch-long spirals. Place a tangerine-peel spiral into each chilled champagne flute or martini glass. If you like, add one or two maraschino cherries.

2. In a glass pitcher, combine chilled cranberry juice, Triple Sec and

maraschino cherry juice.

3. For each serving, half fill glass with cranberry juice mixture (about 2 ounces). Pour in chilled Champagne and fill almost to the top (about 2 ounces). Gently stir with an up-and-down motion (mixes the drink without destroying the carbonation). **Makes 12 servings.**

Nutrition facts per serving: 103 cal, 0 g fat, 0 mg chol, 3 mg sodium, 15 g carbo, 0 g fiber, 0 g pro.



Drinks and nibbles

'Tis the season for office potlucks and holiday open houses. Raise a toast to our crowd-pleasing recipes, perfect for almost any party.



Spiced Cranberry Brie

PREP 25 minutes **COOK** 15 minutes

BAKE 10 minutes

- 2 cups fresh or frozen cranberries
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup water
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup granulated sugar
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup packed brown sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground ginger
- Dash ground cloves
- Dash ground allspice
- 1 medium Granny Smith apple, peeled, cored and chopped
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup golden raisins
- 2 8-ounce rounds Brie cheese
- Crackers, sliced baguette and/or pear slices

- 1.** Rinse cranberries in cold water; drain.
- 2.** In a small saucepan, stir together the water, granulated sugar and brown sugar. Bring to boiling, stirring to dissolve sugar. Boil rapidly for 5 minutes. Stir in cranberries, cinnamon, ginger, cloves and allspice. Return to boiling; reduce heat. Simmer, uncovered, for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Stir in apple and raisins. Simmer, uncovered, about 5 minutes more or until desired consistency. If you like, cool to room temperature.
- 3.** Meanwhile, place Brie in an oven-safe serving dish. Bake, uncovered, in a 350° oven for 10 to 15 minutes or until cheese is warm and slightly softened.
- 4.** To serve, spoon the cranberry mixture over the warmed Brie. Serve with crackers, baguette slices and/or pears.

Makes 8 servings.

Nutrition facts per serving: 372 cal, 19 g fat, 57 mg chol, 511 mg sodium, 38 g carbo, 2 g fiber, 13 g pro.



Spunky Holiday Shrimp

PREP 45 minutes **MARINATE** 2 hours

1 pound fresh or frozen large shrimp,
peeled and deveined (leave tail
shells on, if you like)

4 cups water

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup tequila

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup finely chopped onion

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup lime juice

2 tablespoons snipped fresh cilantro

2 tablespoons olive oil

Crushed ice

Lime wedges

Dried Tomato Aioli (recipe follows)

1. Thaw shrimp, if frozen, and rinse. In a large saucepan, bring the water and salt to boiling. Add shrimp; return to boiling. Reduce heat. Simmer, uncovered, 2 to 3 minutes or until shrimp turn opaque; drain. Rinse in cold water; drain again.

2. Place the shrimp in a heavy plastic bag set in a shallow dish. Add tequila, onion, lime juice, cilantro and olive oil to the bag. Seal bag and massage gently to combine ingredients. Chill 2 hours, turning bag occasionally.

3. Serve shrimp on ice with lime wedges and Dried Tomato Aioli. **Makes 10 servings.**

Dried Tomato Aioli: In a small bowl, cover $\frac{1}{4}$ cup dried tomatoes (not oil-packed) with boiling water. Let stand 5 minutes. Drain well, discarding water. Finely chop tomatoes. In a small bowl, combine tomatoes, 1 cup mayonnaise, 1 tablespoon snipped fresh cilantro, 1 tablespoon milk, 1 teaspoon minced garlic and $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon salt. Cover and refrigerate until chilled.

Nutrition facts per serving: 209 cal, 19 g fat, 71 mg chol, 294 mg sodium, 3 g carbo, 0 g fiber, 7 g pro.



Red Apple Crisp

PREP 5 minutes

Ice cubes

2 tablespoons spiced rum

1 to 2 tablespoons cranberry juice

1 tablespoon red apple liqueur

2 tablespoons club soda

Red apple slice

Fresh cranberries

Fill a cocktail shaker and a glass with ice. Add rum, cranberry juice and red apple liqueur to cocktail shaker. Cover and shake well. Strain into glass. Top with club soda. Garnish with apple slice and cranberries. **Makes 1 serving.**

Nutrition facts per serving: 133 cal, 0 g fat, 0 mg chol, 7 mg sodium, 10 g carbo, 1 g fiber, 0 g pro.

Ham Sliders

PREP 15 minutes **BAKE** 20 minutes

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup butter, melted

2 tablespoons all-purpose flour

1 cup pineapple-apricot jam,
pineapple jam or apricot jam

24 dinner rolls

$\frac{1}{2}$ pounds very thinly sliced cooked
ham

12 ounces cheddar cheese, thinly
sliced

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

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

4 teaspoons yellow mustard

2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce

1 to $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons poppy seeds

1. In a small bowl, combine $\frac{1}{4}$ cup melted butter, the flour and jam, breaking up any large pieces of fruit; set aside.



2. Cut rolls in half horizontally. Lay roll bottoms, cut sides up, in an even layer in two lightly greased 13x9x2-inch baking pans. Spread each roll bottom with 1 teaspoon of jam mixture. Divide ham and cheese evenly among the roll bottoms. Add roll tops.

3. In a small saucepan, melt the $\frac{1}{2}$ cup butter over medium heat. Remove from heat; stir in brown sugar, mustard and Worcestershire sauce. Using a pastry brush, coat roll tops with topping. Sprinkle roll tops with poppy seeds.

4. Bake sliders in a 350° oven for 20 minutes or until cheese is melted and sliders are heated through. **Makes 24 servings.**

Make-ahead: Once sliders have been assembled, but before topping is made, cover tightly with plastic wrap and refrigerate up to 24 hours. Just before baking, prepare topping. Brush and bake as above.

Nutrition facts per serving: 274 cal, 13 g fat, 45 mg chol, 655 mg sodium, 27 g carbo, 1 g fiber, 12 g pro.

Sweet-Hot Nuts

PREP 15 minutes **COOK** 2 hours **COOL** 1 hour

- 1 cup whole cashews
- 1 cup whole almonds, toasted*
- 1 cup pecan halves, toasted*
- 1 cup hazelnuts, toasted and skins removed*
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup butter, melted
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon ground cloves
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon cayenne pepper



1. Place nuts in a 2- to 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ -quart slow cooker. In a small bowl, combine sugar, butter, ginger, salt, cinnamon, cloves and cayenne pepper. Add to nuts in slow cooker; toss to coat.

2. Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 2 hours, stirring after 1 hour. Stir nuts again. Spread in a single layer on buttered foil; let cool for at least 1 hour. (Nuts may appear soft after cooking but will crisp upon cooling.) Store in a tightly covered container at room temperature for up to 3 weeks. **Makes 22 servings.**

***To toast nuts:** Spread nuts in a single layer in a shallow baking pan. Bake in a 350° oven for 10 to 15 minutes or until light golden brown, watching carefully and stirring once or twice. To remove the papery skin from hazelnuts, rub the nuts with a clean dish towel.

Nutrition facts per serving: 147 cal, 13 g fat, 7 mg chol, 73 mg sodium, 8 g carbo, 2 g fiber, 3 g pro.

Mediterranean Eight-Layered Dip

PREP 45 minutes

Worth
the
effort!

Hummus (recipe follows)*

Tapenade (recipe follows)*

2 medium tomatoes, seeded and chopped

1 cup seeded and chopped cucumber

3 tablespoons snipped fresh Italian (flat-leaf) parsley or curly parsley

4 teaspoons snipped fresh mint

2 teaspoons lemon juice

$\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon kosher salt

$\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon coarsely ground black pepper

12 large pita bread rounds

2 cups shredded fresh spinach

4 ounces feta or soft goat cheese

(chèvre), crumbled or cut up (1 cup)

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup sliced green onions (2)

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup sliced or chopped pitted

kalamata olives or pitted ripe olives

1. Prepare Hummus and Tapenade; set aside along with remaining chopped roasted red sweet peppers (about $\frac{3}{4}$ cup).

2. In a medium bowl, combine tomatoes, cucumber, parsley, mint, lemon juice, salt and black pepper; set aside. Wrap pita rounds in foil and heat in a 350° oven for 15 minutes or until warm.

3. To assemble dip, spread Hummus on a 12-inch serving platter with sides; arrange spinach atop Hummus, leaving a 1-inch border of Hummus. Drain excess liquid from Tapenade, if needed. Spoon Tapenade over the spinach, leaving a 1-inch border of spinach.

4. Drain excess liquid from tomato mixture; discard liquid. Spoon tomato

mixture over Tapenade layer, leaving a 1-inch border of Tapenade. Sprinkle feta over tomato mixture. Top with reserved $\frac{3}{4}$ cup chopped roasted red sweet peppers, green onions and olives.

5. To serve, cut warm pita rounds into wedges. Serve with the dip. **Makes 12 servings.**

Hummus: Rinse and drain one 15- or 16-ounce can garbanzo beans (chickpeas). In a food processor, combine garbanzo beans; $\frac{1}{4}$ cup tahini (sesame paste) or 3 tablespoons creamy peanut butter plus 1 tablespoon sesame oil; 3 tablespoons lemon juice; 2 tablespoons olive oil; 2 cloves garlic, minced; $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon paprika; $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt; and $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon ground cumin. Cover and process until the mixture is smooth, stopping and scraping the sides as necessary. (Or place drained garbanzo beans in a medium bowl; mash with a potato masher or fork until nearly smooth; stir in tahini or peanut butter plus sesame oil, lemon juice, olive oil, garlic, paprika, salt and cumin.)

Tapenade: Drain one 12-ounce jar roasted red sweet peppers. Pat dry with paper towel. Measure $\frac{1}{2}$ cup red sweet peppers to use in the tapenade and chop the remaining for one of the layers in dip; set aside. In a food processor, combine the $\frac{1}{2}$ cup drained red sweet peppers, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup pitted kalamata olives or pitted ripe olives, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup pimiento-stuffed green olives, 2 tablespoons olive oil, 1 tablespoon snipped fresh basil, 1 tablespoon drained capers, 1 teaspoon snipped fresh oregano and $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon



ground black pepper. Cover and process with several on-off turns until coarsely chopped. (Or coarsely chop red sweet peppers, olives and capers by hand. Stir in the oil, basil, oregano and black pepper.)

***Tip:** Short on time? Substitute $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups purchased hummus and $1\frac{1}{3}$ cups purchased tapenade.

Make-ahead: Prepare Hummus and Tapenade 1 week in advance; cover and chill until ready to assemble. Prepare tomato mixture 6 to 24 hours ahead; cover and chill until ready to assemble. Drain as directed above. Assembled dip may be covered and chilled up to 1 hour before serving.

Nutrition facts per serving: 319 cal, 11 g fat, 8 mg chol, 773 mg sodium, 47 g carbo, 5 g fiber, 10 g pro.

Wasabi Almonds and Popcorn

START TO FINISH 15 minutes

- 6 cups air-popped popcorn (unsalted)
- 4 ounces Blue Diamond Bold Wasabi and Soy Sauce almonds, coarsely chopped
- 1 cup sesame sticks or sesame oat bran sticks
- 2 tablespoons butter or margarine
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon garlic powder
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon onion powder
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon curry powder (optional)

In a large bowl, combine popcorn, almonds and sesame sticks. In a microwave-safe glass measuring cup, microwave butter, uncovered, on 100 percent power (high) about 30 seconds or until butter melts. Stir in garlic powder, onion powder and, if you like, curry powder. Drizzle butter mixture over popcorn mixture; toss well to coat and serve immediately. **Makes 12 ($\frac{2}{3}$ -cup) servings.**



Make-ahead tip: Place popcorn mixture in a resealable plastic bag or airtight container. Store at room temperature up to 1 day.

Nutrition facts per serving: 113 cal, 8 g fat, 5 mg chol, 116 mg sodium, 9 g carbo, 2 g fiber, 3 g pro.

Mulled Cranberry Punch

PREP 15 minutes **COOK** 4 hours

- 1 orange
- 8 inches stick cinnamon, broken
- 8 whole cloves
- 4 whole allspice
- 1 32-ounce bottle cranberry juice
- 1 11.5-ounce can frozen white grape-raspberry juice concentrate
- 4 cups water

- 1.** Use a vegetable peeler to remove several 2- to 3-inch-long sections of orange peel from the orange, avoiding the white pith underneath. Juice the orange.
- 2.** For a spice bag, cut a 6-inch square from a double thickness of 100-percent-cotton cheesecloth. Place orange peel, cinnamon, cloves and allspice in the center of the square. Bring the corners together and tie closed with 100-percent-cotton kitchen string.
- 3.** In a $3\frac{1}{2}$ - to 4-quart slow cooker, combine cranberry juice, juice concentrate, the water, orange juice and spice bag.
- 4.** Cover; cook on low-heat setting for 4 to 6 hours or on high-heat setting for 2 to 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ hours. Remove spice bag and discard. Serve immediately or keep warm on low-heat setting for up to 2 hours.

Makes 12 servings.

Nutrition facts per serving: 114 cal, 0 g fat, 0 mg chol, 7 mg sodium, 29 g carbo, 1 g fiber, 0 g pro.



Baby Citrus Cheesecakes

PREP 25 minutes

BAKE 20 minutes **CHILL** 2 hours

- 12 vanilla or chocolate wafers
- 1 8-ounce package cream cheese, softened
- 1 3-ounce package cream cheese, softened*
- ½ 8-ounce carton mascarpone cheese*
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- 1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 2 eggs, lightly beaten
- ½ teaspoon lemon zest
- ½ teaspoon orange zest
- Whipped cream
- Glazed Kumquats (optional; recipe follows)

Cover
recipe!

1. Line twelve 2½-inch muffin cups with paper bake cups. Place a vanilla wafer on the bottom of each bake cup.

2. In a large mixing bowl, beat cream cheese, mascarpone cheese, sugar, flour and vanilla with an electric mixer until combined. Stir in eggs, lemon zest and orange zest.

3. Pour filling into muffin cups, filling two-thirds full. Bake in a 350° oven about 20 minutes or until edges are set.

4. Cool in pan on wire rack (centers will sink slightly). Remove and chill for at least 2 hours. Top each serving with a dollop of whipped cream and, if you like, a Glazed Kumquat. **Makes 12 servings.**

***Substitution:** If you don't have mascarpone, substitute an additional 8-ounce package cream cheese for the 3-ounce package cream cheese and the mascarpone.

Glazed Kumquats: Halve kumquats, removing any seeds with knife point. In a small saucepan, stir together ½ cup sugar and ½ cup water. Heat to simmering, stirring to dissolve sugar. Add kumquats. Cook about 10 minutes or until syrup thickens and kumquats soften. Remove from syrup, allowing excess to drip off, and cool on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper.

Nutrition facts per serving: 232 cal, 18 g fat, 86 mg chol, 122 mg sodium, 15 g carbo, 0 g fiber, 5 g pro.



Merry cookie exchange

For many families, it isn't Christmas without cookies, candies and fudge. Trust us, even Santa will be begging for these recipes.



MWL TIP

Cookie stamps

We used two cool tools to make our cookies. The Home Made stamp presses balls of dough into adorable medallions. The Message on a Cookie gadget comes with letters to spell names or greetings. From \$17 (406/587-0118; fancyflours.com).



Vienna Almond Cutouts

PREP 20 minutes **CHILL** 2 hours

BAKE 8 minutes **COOL** 1 minute

- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup slivered almonds, toasted
- $2\frac{1}{4}$ cups all-purpose flour
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup butter, softened
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon lemon zest
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon almond extract (optional)

1. In a food processor, pulse toasted almonds with on/off turns until finely ground. In a small bowl, combine flour, the ground almonds and salt; set aside.

2. In a large bowl, beat butter and sugar with an electric mixer on medium speed until light and fluffy. Add egg, vanilla, lemon zest and, if desired, almond extract. Beat until combined, scraping sides of bowl occasionally. Beat in as much of the flour mixture as you can with the mixer. Stir in any remaining flour mixture. Divide dough in half. Cover and chill for 2 hours or until dough is easy to handle.

3. On a lightly floured surface, roll half of the dough at a time to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick. Using a $2\frac{1}{2}$ - to 3-inch cookie cutter, cut dough into desired shapes; reroll scraps as necessary (if necessary, chill scraps before rerolling). Place cutouts 1 inch apart on an ungreased cookie sheet.

4. Bake in 350° oven for 8 to 12 minutes or until edges are light brown and centers are set. Cool on cookie sheet for 1 minute. Transfer to a wire rack; cool completely. **Makes 48 cookies.**

Nutrition facts per cookie: 77 cal, 5 g fat, 15 mg chol, 41 mg sodium, 8 g carbo, 0 g fiber, 1 g pro.

Christmas Mice

PREP 1 hour **CHILL** 15 minutes

- 1 12-ounce package semisweet chocolate pieces
- 1 10-ounce jar maraschino cherries with stems, drained and patted dry
- 36 milk chocolate Kisses with stripes
- Sliced almonds

1. Place chocolate pieces in a microwave-safe bowl. Microwave on 100 percent power (high) for 1 minute or until chocolate is melted, stirring twice.

2. Holding by stem, dip cherries, one at a time, in melted chocolate to coat. Place coated cherries on a large baking sheet. Immediately press the flat bottom of a Kiss up against the cherry (forming mouse head). Insert two almond slices between head and body to form ears. Use a toothpick dipped in remaining melted chocolate to make eyes. If you like, dot some of the melted chocolate on tip of Kiss for nose. (Or place remaining melted chocolate in a resealable plastic bag; seal. Snip off a very small piece of one corner and pipe on eyes and nose.) Chill candies in refrigerator for 15 minutes or until chocolate is set. Use a small flat metal spatula or table knife to remove mice from baking sheet.

3. Store mice in a tightly covered container in the refrigerator for up to 2 days.

Makes 36 candies.

Nutrition facts per candy: 81 cal, 5 g fat, 1 mg chol, 5 mg sodium, 10 g carbo, 1 g fiber, 9 g pro.



White-Chocolate Cherry Shortbread

PREP 40 minutes **BAKE** 10 minutes

COOL 1 minute **STAND** 30 minutes

- ½ cup maraschino cherries, drained and finely chopped
- 2½ cups all-purpose flour
- ½ cup sugar
- 1 cup cold butter
- 12 ounces white chocolate baking squares with cocoa butter, finely chopped
- ½ teaspoon almond extract
- 2 drops red food coloring (optional)
- 2 teaspoons shortening
- White nonpareils and/or red edible glitter (optional)

1. Spread cherries on paper towels to drain well.

2. In a large bowl, combine flour and sugar. Using a pastry blender, cut in the butter until mixture resembles fine crumbs. Stir in drained cherries and 4 ounces ($\frac{2}{3}$ cup) of the chopped chocolate. Stir in almond extract and, if desired, food coloring. Knead mixture until it forms a smooth ball.

3. Shape dough into $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch balls. Place balls 2 inches apart on an ungreased cookie sheet. Using the bottom of a drinking glass dipped in sugar, flatten balls to $1\frac{1}{2}$ -inch rounds.

4. Bake in a 325° oven for 10 to 12 minutes or until centers are set. Cool for 1 minute on cookie sheet. Transfer cookies to a wire rack and let cool.

5. In a small saucepan, combine remaining 8 ounces white chocolate and the shortening. Cook and stir over low



heat until melted. Dip half of each cookie into chocolate, allowing excess to drip off. If desired, roll dipped edge in nonpareils and/or edible glitter. Place cookies on waxed paper until chocolate is set. To store, layer cookies between waxed paper in an airtight container. Store at room temperature for up to 3 days or freeze up to 3 months. **Makes 60 cookies.**

Nutrition facts per cookie: 87 cal, 5 g fat, 9 mg chol, 28 mg sodium, 9 g carbo, 0 g fiber, 1 g pro.

Pistachio Cranberry Icebox Cookies

PREP 25 minutes **CHILL** 2 hours

BAKE 10 minutes **COOL** 1 minute

- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup unsalted butter, softened
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup granulated sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon orange zest
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cups all-purpose flour
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup finely chopped pistachio nuts
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup snipped dried cranberries
- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup coarse white decorating sugar

1. In a large mixing bowl, beat the butter with an electric mixer on medium to high speed for 30 seconds. Add the sugar, cinnamon, orange zest and salt. Beat about 3 minutes or until pale and fluffy, scraping sides of bowl occasionally. Reduce speed to low. Beat in as much of the flour as you can, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup at a time, with the mixer. Using a wooden spoon, stir in any remaining flour. Stir in pistachio nuts and cranberries. Using your hands, knead dough until smooth. Divide in half.

2. On waxed paper, shape each half into an $8\frac{1}{2}$ -inch-long log (about $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches across). Lift and smooth the waxed paper to help shape the logs. Wrap each log in plastic wrap or waxed paper. Chill about 2 hours or until dough is firm enough to slice.

3. Line cookie sheets with parchment

paper. Unwrap dough logs; reshape, if necessary. Using a pastry brush, brush the beaten egg over the sides (but not the ends) of each log. Sprinkle coarse white decorating sugar on a separate sheet of parchment or waxed paper. Roll dough logs in sugar and gently press into sugar, coating evenly. Reshape, if necessary.

4. Cut logs into $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch-thick slices. Rotate roll while cutting to prevent flattening. (If dough log gets too soft to slice, freeze briefly until it is firm enough to slice.) Place slices 1 inch apart on prepared cookie sheets.

5. Bake in a 350° oven for 10 to 12 minutes or until edges are firm and just starting to brown. Cool on cookie sheets for 1 minute. Transfer cookies to wire racks; cool. **Makes 60 cookies.**

Nutrition facts per cookie: 48 cal, 3 g fat, 9 mg chol, 11 mg sodium, 5 g carbo, 0 g fiber, 1 g pro.





Date-Orange Bars

PREP 15 minutes **BAKE** 30 minutes

- 2 eggs, slightly beaten
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup orange juice
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup butter, melted
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
- 1 8-ounce package pitted dates, snipped
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup chopped walnuts

Orange Icing (optional; recipe follows)

- 1.** In a medium mixing bowl, combine eggs, orange juice and butter. Set aside.
- 2.** In a large mixing bowl, combine flour, sugar, baking powder and salt. Stir in dates and walnuts. Toss lightly with a fork to coat dates and nuts. Stir in egg mixture until well combined.
- 3.** Spread mixture into a greased 8x8x2-inch baking pan. Bake in a 350° oven about 30 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool in the pan on a wire rack. Cut into bars. If desired, drizzle with Orange Icing. **Makes 16 servings.**

Orange Icing: In a small bowl, stir together $\frac{1}{2}$ cup powdered sugar and 3 to 4 teaspoons frozen orange juice concentrate, thawed, or orange juice. Stir until drizzling consistency.

Nutrition facts per serving: 192 cal, 11 g fat, 43 mg chol, 168 mg sodium, 24 g carbo, 2 g fiber, 3 g pro.

Peppermint Fudge

PREP 10 minutes **COOK** 10 minutes

CHILL 4 hours

- Butter
- 4 cups granulated sugar
- 2 5-ounce cans evaporated milk
($\frac{1}{3}$ cups total)
- 1 cup butter
- 1 12-ounce package semisweet
chocolate pieces (2 cups)
- 1 7-ounce jar marshmallow creme
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon peppermint extract
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup coarsely broken peppermint
candies* (optional)

- 1.** Line a 13x9x2-inch pan with foil, extending foil over edges of pan. Butter foil and set pan aside.
 - 2.** Butter the sides of a heavy 3-quart saucepan. In the saucepan, cook and stir the sugar, evaporated milk and 1 cup butter over medium-high heat until mixture boils. Reduce heat to medium; cook and stir 10 minutes more.
 - 3.** Remove pan from heat. Add chocolate pieces, marshmallow creme and peppermint extract. Stir until chocolate melts and mixture is combined. Beat by hand for 1 minute. Spread into prepared pan. Sprinkle with peppermint candies, if you like. Score into 1-inch pieces while warm. Cover and chill the fudge.
 - 4.** When fudge is firm, use foil to lift it out of the pan. Cut into squares. Store in tightly covered container in the refrigerator. **Makes 96 servings.**
- *Tip:** For a neater appearance, shake the peppermint pieces in a sieve to remove the very small pieces.

Nutrition facts per piece: 83 cal, 3 g fat, 6 mg chol, 26 mg sodium, 14 g carbo, 0 g fiber, 0 g pro.



Oreo Truffles

PREP 20 minutes **FREEZE** 20 minutes

CHILL 15 minutes **STAND** 30 minutes

- 1 15.35-ounce package chocolate sandwich cookies with white filling
- 1 8-ounce package cream cheese, softened
- $1\frac{2}{3}$ cups dark chocolate pieces or white baking pieces (10 ounces)
- 2 tablespoons shortening
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup white baking pieces or dark chocolate pieces (2 ounces)

- 1.** Place one-quarter of the cookies in a food processor. Cover; process until finely crushed. Transfer crushed cookies to a large mixing bowl. Repeat one-quarter at a time with remaining cookies.
- 2.** Beat crushed cookies and cream cheese with an electric mixer on low speed until well combined. Shape the

mixture into 1-inch balls. Place balls on a baking sheet lined with waxed paper and freeze for 15 minutes or until firm.

3. Meanwhile, in a heavy medium saucepan, melt $1\frac{2}{3}$ cups chocolate and the shortening over low heat, stirring until smooth. Remove from heat; cool slightly.

4. Use a fork to dip balls into chocolate mixture, allowing excess chocolate to drip back into saucepan. Return balls to the baking sheet; freeze for a few minutes or chill in the refrigerator about 30 minutes, until firm.

5. In a small heavy saucepan, melt the 2 ounces white baking pieces over low heat, stirring until smooth. Transfer to a resealable plastic bag. Snip corner of bag and drizzle over truffles. Chill for a few minutes until set. Store in refrigerator. Let stand 30 minutes at room temperature before serving. **Makes 40 truffles.**

Nutrition facts per truffle: 126 cal, 8 g fat, 7 mg chol, 74 mg sodium, 14 g carbo, 1 g fiber, 1 g pro.





Fanciful Raspberry Ribbons

PREP 25 minutes **BAKE** 15 minutes
COOL 5 minutes

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 2½ cups all-purpose flour
- ½ cup sugar
- 1 egg, slightly beaten
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- Raspberry jam or jelly
- Powdered Sugar Glaze (recipe follows)

- 1.** In a mixing bowl, beat the butter with an electric mixer on medium to high speed for 30 seconds. Add about half of the flour, the sugar, egg, vanilla and salt. Beat the cookie mixture with electric mixer until thoroughly combined.
- 2.** Beat in remaining flour, mixing until dough sticks together. Gather dough into a ball and knead slightly. Divide dough

into eight equal portions.

3. On a lightly floured surface, roll each portion of dough into a 9-inch-long rope. Place the ropes on an ungreased cookie sheet about 2 inches apart. With the side of your finger or a wooden spoon handle, press a groove down lengths of ropes.

4. Bake in a 375° oven for 10 minutes. Spoon jam into groove and bake about 5 minutes more or until edges begin to brown slightly. Cool on cookie sheet for 5 minutes. Using a large spatula, remove to a cutting board. Drizzle Powdered Sugar Glaze over hot cookies. Cut into 1-inch slices. Cool completely on wire racks. **Makes 72 cookies.**

Powdered Sugar Glaze: In a small bowl, mix ¾ cup powdered sugar, ¼ teaspoon almond extract and 3 to 4 teaspoons milk to make a drizzling consistency.

Nutrition facts per cookie: 62 cal, 3 g fat, 9 mg chol, 33 mg sodium, 9 g carbo, 0 g fiber, 1 g pro.

Seven-Layer Bars

PREP 20 minutes BAKE 25 minutes

- ½ cup butter
- 2 cups finely crushed vanilla wafers (48 wafers) or shortbread cookies (33 cookies)
- 1 14-ounce can sweetened condensed milk
- 1 cup red and green candy-coated milk chocolate pieces, semisweet chocolate pieces, butterscotch-flavored pieces, candy-coated milk caramels (such as Sugar Babies) or snipped vanilla caramels*
- 1 6-ounce package white baking chocolate or white confectionery bars, chopped, or 1 cup white baking pieces
- 1 cup mixed dried fruit bits, coarsely chopped dried apricots, golden raisins, dried cranberries or dried cherries
- 1⅓ cups flaked or shredded coconut
- 1 cup unsalted mixed nuts or lightly salted roasted cashew pieces, coarsely chopped

1. Line a 13x9x2-inch baking pan with foil, extending the foil over the edges of the pan. Place butter in prepared pan; place in a 350° oven about 5 minutes or until butter is melted. (Leave oven on.) Tilt pan to coat bottom evenly. Sprinkle with crushed wafers.
2. Drizzle crust evenly with sweetened condensed milk. Sprinkle with red and green candy-coated milk chocolate pieces, chopped white chocolate, fruit bits, coconut and nuts. Press down firmly with the back of a spoon.
3. Bake 25 minutes or until edges are

lightly browned. Cool in pan on a wire rack. Use foil to lift it out of pan. Cut into bars. (To store, place bars in a single layer in an airtight container. Store in the refrigerator for up to 3 days or freeze for up to 3 months.) **Makes 30 servings.**

***Tip:** Use kitchen scissors to snip vanilla caramels into smaller pieces. To prevent sticking, lightly coat scissors with nonstick cooking spray.

Nutrition facts per serving: 247 cal, 13 g fat, 13 mg chol, 94 mg sodium, 29 g carbo, 1 g fiber, 2 g pro.

