

Mr. Food
TEST KITCHEN

Christmas *Celebrations*

5 Holiday-Special Menus with 34 Recipes

"OOH IT'S SO GOOD!!®"



A Free eCookbook from the Mr. Food Test Kitchen



Christmas Celebrations: Free eCookbook from Mr. Food featuring 5 Holiday-Special Menus with 34 Recipes

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Christmas Celebrations: Featuring 5 Holiday-Special Menus with 34 Recipes

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The Mr. Food Test Kitchen logo, consisting of the text "Mr. Food" in a large, white, serif font with a registered trademark symbol, and "TEST KITCHEN" in a smaller, white, sans-serif font below it, all set against a dark blue oval background.

Dear Friends,

The holiday countdown clock is ticking away fast! And we want to make things tasty and hassle-free for you, 'cause no one wants to be stuck in the kitchen during the most festive season of the year.

We've got easy recipes for every Christmas celebration you can imagine, whether you're heading to a holiday appetizer party and need something special to bring, or you're lookin' for the perfect menu to feed your family on Christmas Eve. You'll find it all, from elegant main dishes like Pepper-Crusted Prime Rib and Sherry-Glazed Ham, to quick and easy Sticky Red Wings, Holiday Pinwheels, and so much more. Mmm!

Just wait 'til you see what a cinch it is to dress up your dessert buffet with our Chocolate Wreath Fudge and Pistachio Poinsettia Cake, to name just a few sweet ideas.

Imagine the yummy aromas on Christmas morning from our make-ahead recipes for Jolly French Toast Bake and Holiday Sausage Rollups! All of them and more will make sure you're in and out of the kitchen quicker than a reindeer can fly, so you're free to celebrate along with everyone else!

So feast your eyes on our best and most-requested recipes, and you'll be amazed at how fast you can wrap up your holiday meals, parties, and bring-alongs, leaving you plenty of time to celebrate the season with your family and friends and enjoy all the...

"OOH IT'S SO GOOD!!®"

Mr. Food Kelly Howard Patty

P.S. Enjoy this eCookbook packed with 34 hassle-free holiday recipes sure to make this your best Christmas season yet. Remember, the Mr. Food Christmas Celebrations eCookbook is available FREE with many others also available on www.MrFood.com. Go on, tell your friends to visit MrFood.com, so they too can get their very own FREE copies!



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Santa Spritzer

This holiday-festive refreshing “grown-ups only” drink is as red as Rudolph’s nose and sure to bring loads of cheer! Our pomegranate-infused Santa Spritzers have a splash of rum sure to get everyone in the spirit of the season.

Ingredients

4 cups ice, divided
4 ounces rum, divided
1/4 cup pomegranate juice, divided
4 cups lemon-lime soda, divided
4 teaspoons pomegranate arils (seeds), divided
1 lime, cut into wedges

Serves: 4 Preparation Time: 5 minutes



Directions

1. Fill a large glass with ice. Add 1 ounce rum, 1 tablespoon pomegranate juice, 1 cup lemon-lime soda and 1 teaspoon pomegranate arils. Stir and garnish with a lime wedge.
2. Repeat 3 times with remaining ingredients. Serve immediately.

Notes

For a novel addition to any sparkling drink, add a teaspoon of arils and watch as they magically float up and down in the glass.

Holiday Pinwheels

Finger foods fit holiday festivities, and these easy-to-make Holiday Pinwheels will have your guests doing cartwheels when they savor every creamy, flavorful bite of our tasty filled and rolled flour tortillas.

Ingredients

1 (8-ounce) package cream cheese, softened

1/4 cup raspberry preserves

8 (10-inch) flour tortillas

5 ounces fresh flat-leaf spinach, trimmed

1 pound thinly sliced deli ham or turkey

Makes: 64 pieces Chilling Time: 2 hours



Directions

1. In a small bowl, combine cream cheese and raspberry preserves; mix well. Spread over tortillas and top with spinach leaves then meat slices.
2. Roll up tightly jelly-roll style and wrap each one in a large piece of wax paper, twisting ends to seal. Chill at least 2 hours before serving. Unwrap, cut diagonally into 1-inch slices, and serve.

Open House Dip

Our Open House Dip is an easy and tasty way to welcome family and friends during the holidays, or any time for that matter!

Ingredients

- 1 cup plain yogurt
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1 tablespoon chopped cilantro
- 1 scallion, thinly sliced, with a few pieces reserved for garnish
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon lemon juice
- 1/2 cup pomegranate arils (seeds), with a few reserved for garnish

Makes: 2-1/2 cups **Chilling Time:** 1 hour



Directions

1. In a medium bowl, combine all ingredients; mix well. Cover and refrigerate 1 hour or until ready to serve.
2. Garnish with reserved pomegranate arils and reserved scallions.

Notes We like to serve this with cut up veggies and pita chips.

Deck-the-Halls Chili

Depending on where we celebrate the holidays, there's a good chance the temperature will be a bit on the cool side...maybe even downright freezing! So why not have a slow cooker full of chili to keep spirits up and tummies warm?

Ingredients

2 1/2 pounds lean ground beef
1 1/2 pounds hot Italian sausage, casing removed
2 large onions, chopped
2 garlic cloves, minced
2 (15-ounce) cans dark red kidney beans, undrained
1 (28-ounce) can crushed tomatoes
1/4 cup chili powder
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon black pepper

Serves: 8 Cooking Time: 50 minutes



Directions

1. In a soup pot, brown ground beef, sausage, onions and garlic over high heat 20 to 25 minutes, stirring frequently.
2. Add remaining ingredients; mix well and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer 30 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Notes Serve with all your favorite chili toppings.

Cherry Mint Cookies

Our Test Kitchen's easy recipe for Cherry Mint Cookies will rival anything you can buy at the best bakery. Add your own TLC and these festive cookies will do you proud.

Ingredients

Makes: 48 cookies

Cooking Time: 15 minutes

1 (18.5-ounce) package devil's food cake mix

1/2 cup coarsely chopped chocolate mint parfait thin candies

1/3 cup vegetable oil

1/2 cup coarsely chopped chocolate cherry thin candies

2 eggs

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Coat rimmed baking sheets with cooking spray.
2. In a large bowl, beat cake mix, oil, and eggs until well blended. Stir in chopped candies; mix well.
3. Drop by teaspoonfuls 2 inches apart onto rimmed baking sheets.
4. Bake 9 to 11 minutes, or until firm. Remove to a wire rack to cool completely.

Notes

Before baking, garnish each cookie with some additional coarsely chopped candies -- maybe a few mint and a few cherry.

Brownie BonBons

Want to make a Christmas treat that looks and tastes fancy without fuss and in no time? It can be your little holiday secret that these luscious brownie bonbons are so simple.

Ingredients

1 (19.8-ounce) package brownie mix, batter prepared according to package directions

1/2 cup finely crushed candy canes

Makes: 36 Cooking Time: 40 minutes



Directions

1. Bake brownies according to package directions.
2. Place crushed candy canes in a shallow dish. Remove brownies from oven and allow to sit 5 minutes. While brownies are still warm, use a small ice cream scoop or a spoon to scoop them out; roll into 1-inch balls.
3. Immediately roll in crushed candy canes, coating completely. Allow to cool completely before serving.

Notes

We like to make some of these with traditional candy canes and others with green-and-white ones to get nice color variety for my dessert platters.

Party Mulled Cider

This hot drink is perfect for winter, or anytime you want a warm, cozy treat for all of your senses.

Ingredients

Serves: 12

Cooking Time: 1 hour

1 gallon fresh apple cider	1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
3 (2-inch) cinnamon sticks	1/2 to 1 cup light brown sugar (to taste)
1/4 teaspoon allspice	
16 whole cloves	

Directions

1. Pour cider into a large pot. Place remaining ingredients in a cheesecloth bag and tie closed. Place in pot and simmer about 1 hour. Remove cheesecloth bag.
2. Pour into mugs and serve.

Glazed Meatballs

These flavorful meatballs will have 'em begging for more! A little spicy, a little sweet, and a lot of fabulous!

Ingredients

3 slices white bread
1/2 cup milk
2 eggs, slightly beaten
1 tablespoon prepared horseradish
1 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon black pepper
1 1/2 pounds ground beef
1/2 cup ketchup
1/4 cup pancake syrup
1/4 cup soy sauce
1/2 teaspoon ground allspice
1/2 teaspoon dry mustard

Makes: 48 meatballs **Cooking Time:** 25 minutes



Directions

1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees F. Coat 2 baking sheets with cooking spray.
2. In a large bowl, soak bread in milk until soft. Stir in eggs, horseradish, salt, and pepper. Add beef and mix well. Shape into 1-inch meatballs and place on baking sheets.
3. Bake 10 to 15 minutes or until no pink remains.
4. Meanwhile, in a soup pot, combine the remaining ingredients and 1/4 cup water. Bring to a boil, stirring occasionally. Reduce heat to low, add meatballs, and simmer 5 minutes.

Roasted Red Pepper Dip

Uh oh! Company's almost here! No problem! This healthy roasted red pepper dip goes together in minutes. Don't forget the veggies and crackers for dipping.

Ingredients **Makes:** 1-1/2 cups

1 (8-ounce) package cream cheese, softened
1/2 teaspoon ground red pepper
1 (7.25-ounce) jar roasted red peppers, drained
1/2 salt

Directions

1. In a blender, blend all the ingredients on high speed 1 to 2 minutes, or until well combined and smooth. Serve, or cover and chill; allow to soften slightly before serving.

Notes

Serve with assorted fresh cut vegetables for dipping.

If you want to roast your own peppers, cut 3 medium-sized bell peppers (any color) into 1-inch strips. In a medium bowl, combine 2 tablespoons olive oil and 1/4 teaspoon each of garlic powder, onion powder, salt, and black pepper. Add pepper strips and toss to coat, then place in a 9- x 13-inch baking dish and bake in a preheated 450 degree F oven for 20 to 25 minutes, or until peppers are fork tender.

Cocktail Bundles

Looking for a little something to serve or for a bring-along to another gathering? These mini Cocktail Bundles are a twist on “pigs in a blanket”, but even easier. You’ll look like you fussed, but only you’ll know it was a cinch.

Ingredients

Makes: 48

Cooking Time: 15 minutes

1/3 cup honey mustard

8 (8-inch) flour tortillas

1 (16-ounce) package cocktail franks
cooking spray

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.
2. Spread honey mustard evenly over tortillas. Cut each tortilla into six even strips. Roll a cocktail frank in each strip and place seam side down on a baking sheet.
3. Lightly coat the tortillas with cooking spray and bake 12 to 15 minutes, or until heated through and golden.

Notes

Dipping is the best part, especially when these are served with a honey mustard dipping sauce.

Sticky Red Wings

There are wings and then there are wings! These Sticky Red Wings combine sweet and heat for an amazing taste sensation.

Ingredients

3 pounds chicken wings
1 teaspoon vegetable oil
3 tablespoons minced fresh jalapeno chilies
2 teaspoons minced garlic
1 cup pomegranate juice
1 cup cranberry juice
2 tablespoons cider vinegar
1/3 cup sugar
3 tablespoons pomegranate arils (seeds)

Serves: 6 Cooking Time: 1 hour 20 minutes



Directions

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Coat rimmed baking sheets with cooking spray. Place wings on prepared baking sheets in a single layer.
2. Bake 50 to 60 minutes or until crispy, turning occasionally. Drain and discard fat from wings.
3. In a medium skillet over medium-high heat, combine oil, chilies and garlic; cook 2 to 3 minutes. Stir in remaining ingredients; bring to a boil. Cook 15 to 20 minutes or until mixture is reduced and starts to thicken.
4. Pour sauce over wings, turning to coat wings entirely.
5. Bake an additional 10 to 12 minutes, or until sauce thickens and sticks to wings, turning occasionally.

Notes Adapted from Pomegranate Council

Croquembouche (Cream Puff Tree)

For all the fanciness of the traditional name Croquembouche, this is really just a beautiful cream puff tree! Give our easy version a try. You'll feel like a pastry chef when you display this holiday dessert made from store-bought cream puffs!

Ingredients

Serves: 24

Cooking Time: 15 minutes

2 cups sugar

1 cup light corn syrup

1/2 cup water

100 small cream puffs (see Note)

Directions

1. In a large saucepan, combine sugar, corn syrup, and water; bring to a boil over high heat. Cook 12 to 15 minutes, or until golden, stirring frequently. Remove from heat.
2. On a large serving platter, form a ring with 14 cream puffs. Fill center of ring with additional cream puffs. Drizzle each cream puff on platter with sugar mixture to secure them. Be careful when working with sugar glaze; it is very hot!
3. Form a ring of 12 cream puffs on top of first ring, then fill center with additional cream puffs; drizzle with sugar glaze. Continue building smaller rings, using all but one cream puff; finish the tree by topping with final cream puff. Allow to set before serving.

Notes

Small cream puffs are available at most bakeries, but if you can't get them, you can substitute with glazed donut holes.

Chocolate Wreath Fudge

Not only does this Chocolate Wreath Fudge taste delicious, but it looks beautiful, too. It will add to your table decor until it gets eaten!

Ingredients

2 (14-ounce) cans sweetened condensed milk
1 (12-ounce) package semisweet chocolate chips
1 (12-ounce) package milk chocolate chips
Red and green candies to decorate

Makes: 24 pieces **Chilling Time:** 3 hours



Directions

1. Coat an 8-inch or 9-inch cake pan with cooking spray.
2. In a saucepan over medium heat, bring sweetened condensed milk to a rolling boil. Remove from heat and add semisweet and milk chocolate chips, stirring until smooth.
3. Cover sweetened condensed milk can with plastic wrap and place in center of cake pan. Pour chocolate mixture in pan around can.
4. Chill 3 to 4 hours, or until firm. Remove can, then remove fudge to a plate.
5. Decorate with your favorite red and green candies to look like a wreath.



Spinach Beet Salad

Some people may wrinkle their noses if beets are set down in front of 'em. The kids might even say they're "yucky." But there's nothing "yucky" about this salad. It's got a nice creamy taste, but it's crunchy, too.

Ingredients

Serves: 4

Preparation Time: 5 minutes

1/4 cup mayonnaise	1/4 teaspoon black pepper
2 tablespoons sour cream	1 (10-ounce) package fresh spinach, trimmed
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice	1 (15-ounce) can julienne-sliced beets, drained
Grated peel of lemon	2 tablespoons real bacon bits
1/4 teaspoon salt	



Directions

1. In a large bowl, combine mayonnaise, sour cream, lemon juice, lemon peel, salt, and pepper; mix well. Add spinach and toss until well coated.
2. Place in a serving bowl or on individual salad plates and top with beets and bacon bits. Serve immediately.

Notes

If not serving immediately, prepare dressing mixture in advance and keep chilled until ready to toss, top, and serve.

Quick Rolls

Our homemade Quick Rolls are a cinch. They need no rolling and no proofing but they still give you bragging rights for scratch baking without the hard work.

Ingredients

Makes: 24

Cooking Time: 10 minutes

2 cups self-rising flour
1 cup milk (see Note)
4 tablespoons mayonnaise
1 tablespoon sugar

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 450 degrees F.
2. In a large bowl, stir together all ingredients to form a soft dough. Spoon into a sprayed 12-cup muffin pan, distributing evenly.
3. Bake 10 to 12 minutes, until rolls are golden.

Notes

Be sure to use whole milk only, not a reduced-fat milk.

Pepper-Crusted Prime Rib

This easy yet elegant version of prime rib will rival anything you can find at the fanciest restaurant. Our Test Kitchen made sure that this one is low on work and high on good taste. Perfect for any entertaining or enjoying all year long.

Ingredients

- 1 (4- to 6-pound) boneless beef rib eye or Delmonico roast
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon onion powder
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 2 teaspoons coarsely ground black pepper
- 1 cup dry red wine or water

Serves: 8 **Cooking Time:** 1 hour, 15 minutes



Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. In a large roasting pan, place beef fat side up.
2. In a small bowl, combine remaining ingredients except wine; mix well. Rub spice blend evenly over surface of meat.
3. Place a meat thermometer so that tip is centered in roast. Roast beef 14 to 15 minutes per pound or until the thermometer reaches 140 degrees F for medium-rare, or to desired doneness.
4. Remove pan from oven and transfer beef to a cutting board and let stand 15 to 20 minutes to rest. Meanwhile, add red wine or water to pan. Stir to loosen any particles and return to oven 5 minutes. Once beef is done resting, carve against the grain and serve with pan drippings.

Notes Our Test Kitchen likes to add a couple of tablespoons of peppercorns to the pan before returning sauce to the oven for the last 5 minutes.

Citrus-Honey Carrots

Sometimes the simplest things are the best, like carrots glazed with honey. Why not make 'em and add a twist of lime zest for a nice touch of holiday green? Now that's the best...taken a step further.

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1/4 cup honey
- 2 (14.5-ounce) cans whole baby carrots, drained
- 1 teaspoon grated lime peel

Serves: 4 Cooking Time: 5 minutes



Directions

1. Melt butter in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add honey, and cook 1 to 2 minutes, or until sauce has thickened, stirring frequently.
2. Add carrots and lime peel, and saute 1 to 2 minutes, or until heated through and well coated with sauce. Serve immediately.

Notes For extra zest, grate a bit of additional lime peel over the top just before serving.

Yorkshire Pudding

Yorkshire pudding is a super go-along for juicy prime rib, and this one's done muffin-style, so everyone can enjoy his or her own.

Ingredients

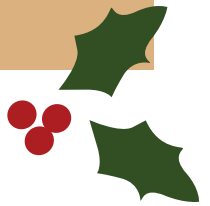
Serves: 6

Cooking Time: 30 minutes

- 2 cold eggs
- 1 cup cold milk
- 1 tablespoon butter, melted
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees F. Coat a 6-cup muffin tin with cooking spray.
2. In a large bowl, combine all ingredients, mixing with a spoon until just blended (a few lumps may remain).
3. Immediately pour into muffin cups, filling each cup three-fourths full. Bake 30 to 35 minutes, or until golden and puffy.
4. Remove from muffin tin and serve immediately.



Perfect Mashed Potatoes

Everyone thinks of meat and potatoes as the all-American meal. Well, we've got a secret to what we think are the Perfect Mashed Potatoes, and once you try them, we bet you'll agree.

Ingredients

Serves: 4

Cooking Time: 35 minutes

2 pounds potatoes, peeled and quartered

1/4 to 1/2 cup reserved potato cooking water

1/4 cup (1/2 stick) butter

Salt to taste

Pepper to taste

Directions

1. Place potato chunks in a large pot, adding enough water to cover; heat to boiling. Reduce heat to medium and cook 25 to 30 minutes or until potatoes are tender.
2. Drain potatoes, reserving 1/4 to 1/2 cup of the cooking water; place potatoes in a large bowl. Beat with an electric mixer or potato masher until smooth. Add butter, salt, pepper, and 1/4 cup of reserved potato cooking water. Continue beating until light and fluffy, adding more of reserved potato water if needed to reach desired consistency. Serve immediately.

Notes Our Test Kitchen thinks Idaho Russet potatoes are the best bet when making mashed potatoes.

Yule Log

After those pre-dinner nibbles and the big dinner, there's still a tiny bit of room left for dessert. Better use it for our easy and tempting Yule Log. Go ahead, chop off a piece and enjoy!

Ingredients

3/4 cup all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1/4 teaspoon salt
3 eggs
1 cup granulated sugar
1/3 cup water
2 teaspoons vanilla extract, divided
Grated peel of 1 orange
2 cups confectioners' sugar, plus more for sprinkling
1/3 cup unsweetened cocoa
1/4 cup (1/2 stick) butter, softened
1/4 cup milk

Serves: 10 Cooking Time: 15 minutes



Directions

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees F. Line a 10- x 15-inch rimmed rimmed baking sheet with aluminum foil and coat with cooking spray. In a small bowl, combine flour, baking powder, and salt; mix well and set aside.
2. In a large bowl, beat eggs until soft peaks form. Gradually beat in granulated sugar, water, 1 teaspoon vanilla, and orange peel until well blended. Gradually beat in flour mixture just until smooth.
3. Pour into rimmed baking sheet and bake 10 to 12 minutes, or until a wooden toothpick inserted in center comes out clean.
4. Sprinkle a clean kitchen towel with confectioners' sugar and invert cake onto towel; carefully peel off aluminum foil. While hot, roll cake and towel up jelly-roll style from narrow end and cool on a wire rack. When cooled, unroll cake, removing towel.
5. In a medium bowl, beat confectioners' sugar, cocoa, butter, milk, and remaining 1 teaspoon vanilla until creamy. Reserve 1/2 cup of frosting and spread remainder over cake. Roll cake up again. Spread reserved 1/2 cup frosting over outside of cake. Lightly score entire length of log with tines of a fork to look like bark.
6. Chill at least 2 hours before slicing and serving.

Notes

Garnish this by making marshmallow mushrooms. Here's how to make each one: Simply flatten a mini marshmallow and attach an unflattened one to it with a bit of icing, as in the photo. Try sprinkling a little cocoa on top and arrange on top of log.

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Creamy Cheesecake with Pomegranate Topping

This traditional dense and rich cheesecake gets its sparkle from the healthy and delicious fresh pomegranate seed topping. Talk about a company-fancy dessert!

Ingredients

Serves: 12 Chilling Time: 6 hours

CRUST

1 cup graham cracker crumbs
2 tablespoons sugar
1/4 cup unsalted butter, softened

FILLING

4 (8-ounce) packages cream cheese, softened
1 1/4 cups sugar
2 eggs
1/2 cup sour cream
3/4 cup all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon vanilla
2 tablespoons lemon juice

TOPPING

1/3 cup pomegranate juice
1/4 cup water
1 teaspoon unflavored gelatin
1/2 cup pomegranate arils (seeds)
2 tablespoons sugar



Directions

1. Preheat oven to 475 degrees F.
2. In a medium bowl, combine crust ingredients and mix well. In a 9-inch springform pan, press mixture evenly over bottom and 3/4 inch up side of pan.
3. In a large bowl, beat cream cheese with sugar until smooth. Beat in remaining ingredients until well combined. Spoon batter into crust and bake 12 to 15 minutes, or until top is golden. Reduce oven temperature to 350 degrees F and bake an additional 30 minutes. Remove cheesecake from oven; let cool 1 hour at room temperature.
4. Meanwhile, in a saucepan combine pomegranate juice and water. Add gelatin and let stand 1 minute to soften. Add sugar and cook over medium heat 5 to 6 minutes or until sugar is dissolved, stirring occasionally. Pour mixture into a bowl and refrigerate 10 to 15 minutes or until mixture is slightly thickened. Stir in pomegranate arils and spoon topping onto cooled cheesecake.
5. Chill at least 6 hours. Remove from springform pan and serve.

Notes Adapted from Pomegranate Council

Pomegranate Sunrise

You'll be the toast of the town when you serve our sparkling and delicious Pomegranate Sunrise refreshers. Whether for a brunch or anytime entertaining, this adults-only drink will win you raves.

Ingredients

- 1 1/4 cups pomegranate juice
- 1 cup orange juice
- 1 cup champagne
- Ice cubes
- 4 teaspoons pomegranate arils (seeds)
- 4 orange slices

Serves: 4 Preparation Time: 5 minutes



Directions

1. In a small pitcher, combine pomegranate juice, orange juice, and champagne. Fill champagne glasses halfway with ice cubes.
2. Fill glasses with pomegranate mixture, stir in a teaspoon of pomegranate arils into each glass and garnish with orange slice. Serve immediately.

Christmas Morning Strata

Christmas Morning Strata won't only be enjoyed for Christmas morning, because we guarantee you'll want it all-year-round.

Ingredients

1 pound ground pork sausage
6 cups cubed French bread
2 cups (8 ounces) shredded Cheddar cheese
3 cups milk
6 large eggs, lightly beaten
2 teaspoons prepared mustard
3/4 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon black pepper
1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg

Serves: 8 **Cooking Time:** 3 hours 30 minutes



Directions

1. Brown sausage in a large skillet over medium-high heat, stirring until it crumbles and is no longer pink; drain well.
2. Place bread cubes in a lightly greased 5-quart slow cooker; sprinkle sausage and cheese over bread.
3. In a medium-bowl, combine milk and remaining 6 ingredients. Pour over bread in slow cooker. Remove insert from slow cooker; cover insert, and chill 8 hours. Return insert to slow cooker, and let it stand at room temperature 20 minutes.
4. Cover and cook on low setting 3 1/2 hours.

Jolly French Toast Bake

Our easy French Toast Bake will leave you feeling jolly as everyone else on Christmas morning. With a holiday-festive taste, and very little fuss, you can enjoy unwrapping your gifts instead of being stuck in the kitchen.

Ingredients

Serves: 8

Cooking Time: 35 minutes

1 loaf French bread, cut into 8 slices	1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
6 eggs	1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg
2 cups (1 pint) half-and-half	1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup sugar	

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees F.
2. Coat a 9- x 13- inch baking dish with cooking spray. Place bread slices in a single layer in baking dish.
3. In a medium bowl, combine remaining ingredients; mix well and pour over bread slices. Cover and chill for 30 minutes, or until liquid has been absorbed.
4. Bake 35 to 40 minutes, or until golden brown.

Notes

Try this simple maple vanilla syrup: In a medium saucepan, combine 1 cup maple syrup, 1/2 cup butter, and 1 teaspoon vanilla extract over low heat and cook for 2 to 3 minutes, or until well combined and heated through, stirring frequently.

Holiday Sausage Rollups

Sure, it's easy to toss doughnuts and bagels on the table, but the gang is probably looking for something a little heartier on this special day. Here you go! A hot out of the oven pull-apart breakfast treat in the shape of a Christmas tree!

Ingredients

- 1 (16-ounce) package mild or spicy country sausage
- 1/2 red bell pepper, diced
- 4 scallions, thinly sliced
- 2 (8-ounce) packages refrigerated crescent rolls (8 rolls each)

Serves: 16 Cooking Time: 25 minutes



Directions

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees F.
2. In a bowl, combine sausage, red pepper, and scallions; mix well. Unroll one package of crescent rolls and press seams together to form one large rectangle. Repeat with second package of crescent rolls.
3. Spread half of sausage mixture evenly over each rectangle; starting from a narrow end, roll up jelly roll-style. Cut each roll into eight equal slices and place on its side on a baking sheet to form a Christmas tree (see photo).
4. Bake 25 to 30 minutes, or until sausage is no longer pink and crust is golden. Serve warm.

Notes

We can get this ready the night before we want to serve it. Keep it covered in the refrigerator until ready to bake and serve. Remember that it may require a few extra minutes in the oven when it is chilled first.

Cinnamon Pecan Muffins

It seems like we're always rushed in the morning! Now, when it comes to breakfast, we can have Cinnamon Pecan Muffins, a yummy combination of cinnamon buns and an old favorite, pecan-topped coffee cake. Did we mention they're ready in minutes?

Ingredients

Makes: 12

Cooking Time: 25 minutes

1/2 cup chopped pecans	1/3 cup granulated sugar
1/3 cup firmly packed light brown sugar	1 egg
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon	2/3 cup milk
2 cups biscuit baking mix	1/4 cup sour cream

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Coat a 12-cup muffin tin with cooking spray.
2. In a large bowl, combine pecans, brown sugar, and cinnamon; mix well. Reserve 1/3 cup of the mixture.
3. Add remaining ingredients to remaining pecan mixture; stir until just moistened. Spoon evenly into muffin cups then sprinkle with reserved pecan mixture.
4. Bake 15 to 18 minutes, or until golden and a toothpick inserted in center comes out clean.
5. Serve warm, or allow to cool slightly then remove to a wire rack to cool completely.

Notes

To fancy these up, top the chopped pecan mixture on each muffin with a pecan half.

Holiday Hot Chocolate

It's great to have this dry mix on hand for mixing up a special hot chocolate drink whenever you need its warm comfort. Sit back and enjoy!

Ingredients

Serves: 8

Preparation Time: 5 minutes

- | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 cup nonfat dry milk | 5 cups water |
| 1/3 cup sugar | 1 teaspoon vanilla extract |
| 1/4 cup unsweetened cocoa | 1/2 cup rum |
| 1/4 cup powdered non-dairy creamer | 1/2 cup creme de cocoa |
| Dash of salt | |

Directions

1. In a large bowl, combine dry milk, sugar, cocoa, creamer, and salt; mix well then set aside.
2. In a large saucepan, bring water to a boil over high heat. Remove from heat then add the vanilla; stir in reserved dry mixture until well combined.
3. Add rum and creme de cocoa; mix well and serve in mugs or heat-proof stemmed glasses.

No Egg Eggnog

Here's a delicious eggnog recipe, that doesn't use any eggs! It's so good, you'll never even miss 'em!

Ingredients

Serves: 4

Preparation Time: 10 minutes

5 1/2 cups milk	3/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg, divided
1 (4-serving size) package instant vanilla pudding and pie filling	2 cups (1 pint) heavy cream
4 teaspoons rum extract	2 tablespoons confectioners' sugar

Directions

1. In a punch bowl, combine milk and pudding mix; mix well. Add rum extract and 1/2 teaspoon nutmeg; mix well and set aside.
2. In a bowl, beat heavy cream and confectioners' sugar until stiff peaks form. Add half of whipped cream mixture to milk mixture; stir until well blended. Dollop remaining whipped cream mixture over top and sprinkle with remaining 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg. Serve immediately.

Notes This recipe can be made ahead, but you may need to add some milk to thin it down just before serving.

Salad Wreath

If you are in charge of making the salad for a party during the Christmas season, this is one you should consider. It's proof that we eat with our eyes.

Ingredients

- 1 (8-ounce) package mixed baby greens
- 12 small cherry tomatoes
- 4 slices American cheese
- 1 medium cucumber, cut into 1/4-inch slices
- 1 large carrot

Serves: 6 Preparation Time: 20 minutes



Directions

1. Place a small bowl in the center of a large round platter and fill with your favorite dressing.
2. Form a wreath by arranging the baby greens around the small bowl. Place the tomatoes in clusters of three on the greens.
3. Using Christmas cookie cutters, cut each slice of cheese into a holiday shape and place over the greens. Arrange the cucumber slices around the edge of the platter.
4. Using a vegetable peeler, peel wide, thick strips from the carrot. Loop the strips to create a bow. Serve, or cover and chill until ready to serve.

Pomegranate Honey-Roasted Game Hens

Pomegranate juice adds flavor and color to these spicy, honey-kissed holiday hens.

Ingredients

1 cup fresh pomegranate juice (see Note)
1/2 cup plus 3 tablespoons honey
1/2 teaspoon ground coriander
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon allspice
1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
6 garlic cloves, smashed
3 game hens, split in half
Salt to taste
Pepper to taste
Pomegranate arils (seeds) for garnish
Chopped, roasted pistachio nuts for garnish

Serves: 6 Cooking Time: 35 minutes



Directions

1. In a bowl, mix pomegranate juice, 1/2 cup honey, ground coriander, cinnamon, allspice, cayenne pepper, and garlic; pour over hens. Marinate, covered, at least 8 hours or overnight in the refrigerator. Turn occasionally.
2. Drain hens, reserving marinade. Simmer marinade in a saucepan, covered, 10 minutes; reserve.
3. Preheat oven to 450 degrees F. Coat roasting pans with cooking spray. Place hens in pans; season with salt and pepper.
4. Bake about 25 minutes or until hens are just firm to the touch, basting frequently with reserved marinade. Remove from oven. Cover with towel and let rest 5 minutes.
5. Brush each half with remaining honey. Garnish with pomegranate seeds and chopped pistachios.

Notes To make 1 cup pomegranate juice, put 1-1/2 to 2 cups of seeds in a blender; blend until liquefied. Pour mixture through a cheesecloth-lined strainer or sieve.

Sherry-Glazed Ham

You'll be the toast of the town when you turn up the flavor on your holiday ham glaze with our special recipe. It's an easy way to turn ho-hum into wow!

Ingredients

- 1 (7- 9-pound) hickory smoked ham
- 1 cup light brown sugar, divided
- 1/2 cup, plus 2 tablespoons sherry cooking wine, divided
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- 1/8 teaspoon nutmeg
- 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- 1/2 cup orange juice
- 1/3 cup golden raisins

Serves: 10 Cooking Time: 1 hour 55 minutes



Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Place ham in a roasting pan.
2. In a small bowl, stir together 1/2 cup brown sugar and 2 tablespoons sherry cooking wine. Brush half the glaze over ham.
3. Roast ham, uncovered, 15 minutes per pound, or until internal temperature is 160 degrees F. Brush remaining glaze over ham halfway through cooking time.
4. Meanwhile, combine remaining 1/2 cup brown sugar, cornstarch, and nutmeg in a medium saucepan; stir until smooth. Stir in remaining 1/2 cup sherry cooking wine, Dijon mustard, orange juice, and raisins; mix well and cook sauce over medium heat until boiling.
5. Reduce heat and cook 4 to 5 more minutes. Serve sauce over sliced ham.

Mashed Potato Stuffing

Here's a variation on our traditional stuffing. Is it stuffing or potatoes? It's both! And it's a real treat 'cause it'll please everybody!

Ingredients

Serves: 8

Cooking Time: 40 minutes

3 cups mashed potatoes	2 tablespoons vegetable oil
1 teaspoon baking powder	1 cup chopped onion
4 cups herb-seasoned stuffing mix (14-ounce package, contains 8 cups)	1/2 cup sliced celery
1/4 cup minced fresh parsley	1/2 teaspoon minced garlic
1/2 teaspoon black pepper	1 cup chicken stock

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.
2. In a large bowl, combine mashed potatoes and baking powder. Add stuffing mix, parsley, and black pepper; mix well.
3. In a large skillet, heat oil over medium heat; add onion, celery, and garlic, and saute 10 to 15 minutes or until the vegetables are tender. Add vegetable mixture to potato mixture; mix well, then add chicken stock and mix well again.
4. Place in a greased 2-quart casserole and bake 30 to 35 minutes, or until top is lightly browned. Remove from oven and keep warm until ready to serve.



Notes

Whether you use the homemade or instant mashed potatoes, there's no need to add salt.

Very Merry Vegetable Medley

Instead of serving the old ho-hum mushy veggies, you can whip up this colorful sauteed veggie medley. Your gang will applaud you for being so creative.

Ingredients

Serves: 4

Cooking Time: 10 minutes

3 tablespoons butter

1 large zucchini, cut into thin strips

3 bell peppers (1 each red, green, and yellow), cut into thin strips

1/2 teaspoon salt

1 onion, thinly sliced

1/4 teaspoon black pepper

1 garlic clove, minced

Directions

1. Melt butter in a skillet over medium-high heat.
2. Add bell peppers, onion and garlic and saute 4 to 5 minutes, or until crisp-tender.
3. Add remaining ingredients and saute 2 to 3 minutes, or until vegetables are tender. Serve immediately.



Pistachio Poinsettia Cake

At holiday time we're bound to see lots and lots of bright red poinsettias. They sure say "Merry Christmas!" So when it comes to our holiday desserts, wouldn't it be nice to serve one that's just as inviting? Well, here it is!

Ingredients

1 (18.25-ounce) package white cake mix
3 (4-serving size) packages instant pistachio pudding and pie filling
1 1/2 cups milk, divided
1/2 cup vegetable oil
1/2 cup water
5 eggs
1 cup heavy cream
1 cup sweetened flaked coconut
1/4 cup sugar
4 large red gumdrops
1 large green gumdrop

Serves: 12 Cooking Time: 30 minutes



Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Coat two 9-inch round cake pans with cooking spray, then flour.
2. In a large bowl, beat cake mix, 2 packages pudding mix, 1/2 cup milk, oil, and water until smooth. Beat in eggs until well combined. Pour equally into cake pans and bake 30 to 35 minutes, or until a wooden toothpick inserted in center comes out clean.
3. Cool 15 minutes then remove to wire rack to cool completely. In a medium bowl, beat heavy cream and remaining 1 cup milk and package of pudding mix until thickened.
4. Frost cake. Sprinkle coconut evenly over top and sides. Sprinkle a cutting board with sugar then place gumdrops on top.
5. Using a rolling pin, roll out each gumdrop to a 3-inch circle, pressing flattened gumdrops into sugar as they become sticky. Using a knife, cut poinsettia leaves out of red gumdrops and stems out of green gumdrop. Form a poinsettia in center of the cake. Cover loosely and chill at least 2 hours before serving.