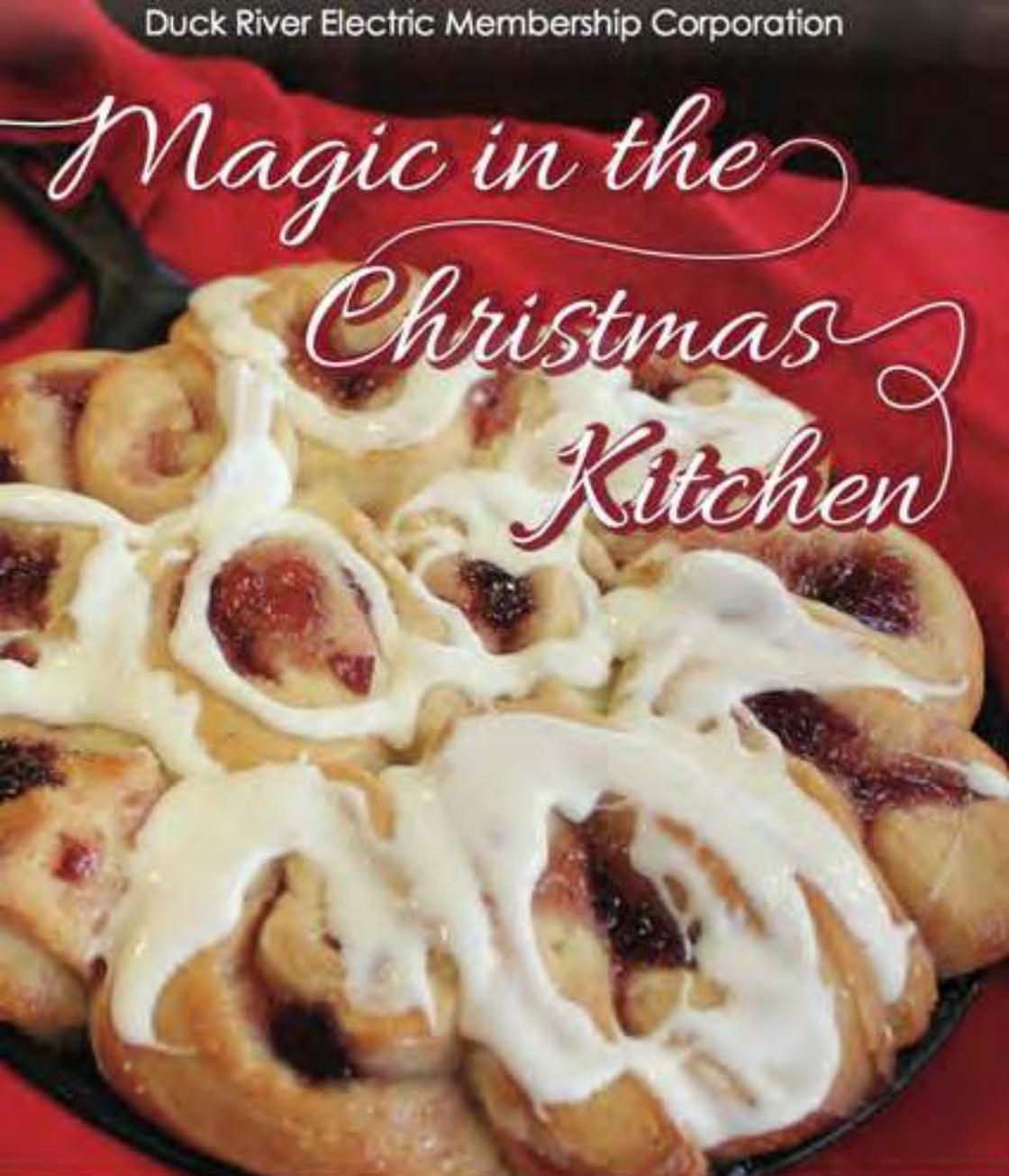


Duck River Electric Membership Corporation



*Magic in the
Christmas
Kitchen*

2015 Favorite Recipes for Gifting
and Entertainment from Ann Throneberry

*Magic
in the
Christmas Kitchen*

**Recipes from
Ann Throneberry's
Christmas Kitchen**

2015

**Duck River Electric
Membership Corporation**

Beverages

Fruit Tea

24 ounces pineapple juice
2/3 cup frozen orange juice concentrate
2/3 cup frozen lemonade concentrate
1 gallon fresh brewed tea
3 cups sugar

Mix all ingredients together in a large container and stir until well blended. Serve with ice and enjoy.

Yield: 1 1/2 gallons

Hot Cranberry Apple Cider

4 quarts apple juice
2 quarts cranberry juice
1 bag cinnamon red hots
1/4 cup brown sugar
1 tablespoon whole cloves
3 sticks cinnamon

This can be made in a percolator or in a pot. If using a percolator, place juices in bottom and remaining ingredients in top. If using a pot, tie red hots, brown sugar, cloves and cinnamon in a piece of cloth and place in juices in pot. Simmer until sugar dissolves and serve. Leftovers can be refrigerated and reheated a cup at a time for a quick hot beverage.

Yield: 30 servings

Kool-Aide Christmas Punch

3 cups sugar
2 cups boiling water
2 packs strawberry Kool-Aid mix
1 large can pineapple juice
1 cup lemon juice

In a gallon jug, dissolve sugar in water. Mix in remaining ingredients. Add enough water to fill rest of gallon. Chill.

Yield: 20 servings

Watermelon Lemonade Slushy

4 cups pureed and strained watermelon
4 cups ice cubes
2/3 cup frozen lemonade concentrate
1 cup cold water

To make watermelon juice, puree watermelon meat (seeds removed) in a blender then strain through a mesh strainer. Measure 4 cups and return to blender. Add ice, lemonade concentrate and water and blend on medium speed until ice breaks down.

Yield: 10-12 servings

Fresh Berry Punch

1 (12 ounce) bag fresh cranberries
3 cups water
1 envelope raspberry drink mix
1 can frozen pineapple juice, concentrate, thawed
1 lemon, sliced
1 (2 liter) bottle ginger ale

Puree 2 cups cranberries. Combine pureed cranberries, remaining whole cranberries, and water in a large saucepan. Cook over high heat until cranberries begin to pop; remove from heat. Stir in remaining ingredients except ginger ale. Freeze mixture about 12 hours, stir and refreeze. To serve: Puree slush in a food processor, spoon into punch bowl, and mix in ginger ale.

Yield: 16 servings

Appetizers

Bacon Crispies

¾ cup butter, softened
1½ cups all-purpose flour
Salt and pepper to taste
½ cup Cheddar cheese, grated
6 ounces finely chopped bacon

Heat oven to 325 degrees. Beat butter, flour, and salt and pepper until smooth. Add grated cheese and ⅔ of bacon and mix well. Drop by teaspoonfuls onto greased baking sheet, sprinkling with remaining bacon. Bake for 30 minutes or until lightly browned. Cool and store in an airtight container.

Yield: 28-30 appetizers

Cottage Guacamole Dip

1 ripe avocado, halved, pitted
8 ounces low-fat cottage cheese
¼ cup chopped fresh parsley
1 small onion, quartered
1 tablespoon fresh lime juice
1 teaspoon garlic salt

Scoop out avocado pulp; discard skin. Combine pulp with remaining ingredients in blender or food processor, using the steel blade. Process until smooth. Cover and chill until serving time. (serve surrounded with raw red and green bell pepper squares to be used for dipping, if desired)

Yield: 2 cups

Spicy Corn Dip

2 (8 ounce) packages cream cheese, softened
1 (15 ounce) can whole-kernel corn, drained
¼ cup finely chopped jalapenos
1 (2.25 ounce) can sliced black olives
½ cup hot sauce

Combine all ingredients in a crockpot. Cook on medium, stirring occasionally, until cheese is melted and hot. Serve with corn chips.

Yield: 16 servings

Savory Pinwheels

8 ounces Neufchatel or low calorie, low-fat cream cheese
¼ cup plain low fat yogurt or skim milk
1 tablespoon prepared horseradish
12 stuffed green (Spanish) olives, finely chopped
Salt and pepper to taste
1 pound lean ham, sliced

Beat cream cheese, yogurt and horseradish together. Fold in olives. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Spread on ham slices and roll up. Secure with toothpicks. Refrigerate several hours, until firm. Slice into pinwheels.

Yield: 32 pinwheels

Swedish Meatballs

2 pounds ground chuck
1 cup bread crumbs
½ cup milk
Salt and pepper to taste

Sauce:

2 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
1 cup ketchup
2 tablespoons vinegar
Dash Tabasco sauce
Dash nutmeg
1 onion, finely chopped
2 tablespoons horseradish

Mix meatball ingredients together and shape into small balls. Place in ungreased casserole dish. Mix sauce ingredients together and pour over meatballs. Bake at 350 degrees for 1 hour.

Yield: 10 servings

Cranberry-Pecan Cheese Wafers

1½ cup chopped pecans
1½ cups coarsely chopped sweetened dried cranberries
2 cups butter, softened
4 cups (16 ounces) freshly shredded extra-sharp Cheddar cheese
1½ teaspoon salt
1½ teaspoon ground red pepper
4 cups all-purpose flour
Parchment paper

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Bake pecans in a single layer in a shallow pan 8-10 minutes or until toasted and fragrant, stirring half way through. Cool completely (about 15 minutes). Meanwhile, soak cranberries in boiling water to cover 15 minutes; drain and pat dry with paper towels. Beat butter and next 3 ingredients at medium speed with a heavy-duty electric stand mixer until blended. Gradually add flour, beating just until combined. Stir in cranberries and pecans. Shape dough into 4 (12 inch long) logs; wrap each in plastic wrap. Chill 8 hours to 3 days. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Cut each log into ¼ inch thick slices; place on parchment paper-lined baking sheets. Bake 13-15 minutes or until lightly browned. Remove from baking sheets to wire racks and cool completely (about 20 minutes).

Yield: 120 wafers

Pumpkin Pie Cheesecake Spread

1 (8 ounce) package cream cheese, softened
2 tablespoons packed brown sugar
½ teaspoon pumpkin pie spice
¼ teaspoon maple flavoring
Vanilla wafers

In a bowl, beat cream cheese until light and fluffy. In a small bowl, combine brown sugar and pumpkin pie spice; stir into cream cheese. Stir in maple flavoring. Serve immediately with vanilla wafers.

Yield: 6 servings

Cream Cheese Sausage Balls

1 pound hot sausage, uncooked
1 (8 ounce) package cream cheese, softened
1¼ cup Bisquick
½ cup Cheddar cheese, shredded

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Mix all ingredients until well combined. Roll into 1 inch balls. Bake for 20-25 minutes, or until brown. Sausage balls may be frozen uncooked. If baking frozen, add a few minutes to the baking time.

Yield: 36

Pecan Stuffed Dates

1 (8 ounce) box pitted dates
30 pecan halves
12 slices bacon

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Stuff each date with a pecan half. Cut each slice of bacon into 3 pieces. Wrap 1 piece around each stuffed date and secure with a toothpick. Bake until bacon is crisp, 12 to 15 minutes. Drain and serve.

Yield: 30

Garlic Cheese Spread

1 (8 ounce) package cream cheese
1 (8 ounce) jar Cheez Whiz
¼ teaspoon garlic powder
⅛ teaspoon seasoned salt
⅛ teaspoon pepper

Combine all ingredients and beat with mixer for 2 minutes or until smooth. Serve with freshly toasted French bread.

Yield: 2 cups

Breads

Red Velvet Waffles

2 cups all-purpose flour
1 tablespoon cocoa powder
¼ cup sugar
4 teaspoons baking powder
¾ teaspoon salt
1¾ cups buttermilk
¼ cup (4 tablespoons) butter, melted
2 eggs
1 tablespoon vanilla
½ ounce red food coloring

Topping:

Confectioners' sugar
Whipped cream
Fresh berries
Maple syrup

Preheat and lightly grease a waffle iron. Whisk together the flour, cocoa powder, sugar, baking powder and salt and set aside. In a large bowl, whisk together the buttermilk, melted butter, eggs, vanilla and food coloring until well blended. Add the dry ingredients and whisk until just combined. Cook in preheated waffle iron according to the manufacturer's directions. Let waffles cool slightly; add topping of your choice.

Yield: 8 servings

Country Ham Biscuits

2 cups self-rising flour
1 cup chopped country ham
1 cup sour cream
1 cup shredded Cheddar cheese
¼ cup cooking oil
½ cup buttermilk

Mix all ingredients together and drop by spoonful on greased baking sheet. Bake 450 degrees until golden brown.

Yield: 12 servings

Loaded Bacon Cheddar Bread

6 cups all-purpose flour
3¾ cups warm water
2 teaspoons instant yeast
2 teaspoons salt
2 teaspoons sugar
2 ¾ cups Cheddar cheese, fresh grated not bagged
10 strips cooked thick cut bacon, chopped and divided
Fresh ground black pepper to taste

In a large mixing bowl combine water, yeast, salt and sugar. Allow mixture to sit for several minutes. Add flour, two cups of cheese, ½ of the bacon and fresh ground black pepper. Stir with spoon until combined. Cover with a towel and allow to rise in a warm place for an hour. After an hour, turn dough out onto a floured board and knead for a few minutes. It does not need to be completely smooth. Just knead it long enough to come together. Divide dough into two equal halves and place in standard loaf pans. Cover loaves with remaining cheese and bacon. Cover with towel and allow to rest for thirty minutes. Bake at 400 degrees for 15 minutes. Cover loosely with foil and reduce heat to 350 degrees and continue baking for another 35 minutes. Remove foil and allow to bake for another 10 minutes.

Yield: 10 servings

Amazing Miniature Biscuits

2 stick butter, softened
3 (8 ounce) packages cream cheese, softened
3 cups self-rising flour

With an electric mixer, beat butter and cream cheese for 2 minutes; add flour. Drop by spoonful on ungreased cookie sheets.

Yield: 3 dozen

Yogurt Honey Muffins

4 tablespoons butter
5 tablespoons honey
1 cup plain Greek yogurt
1 egg
Grated rind of one lemon
¼ cup lemon juice
1 cup all-purpose flour
1 cup whole wheat flour
½ cup chopped walnuts
1½ teaspoons baking soda
Pinch grated nutmeg

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Grease 12 muffin pans, or use paper liners. In a sauce pan, melt the butter and honey. Remove from heat and set aside to cool slightly. In a bowl, beat together the yogurt, egg, lemon rind and juice. In another bowl, sift together the dry ingredients. Fold the dry ingredients into the yogurt mixture just to blend. Fill the prepared muffin pans two-third full. Bake for 20-25 minutes, until tops spring back when touched lightly. Allow to cool in the pan for 5 minutes before removing.

Yield 12 muffins

Apple-Fritter Bread

½ cup brown sugar
2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
¾ cup granulated sugar
½ cup butter, softened
2 eggs
1½ teaspoons vanilla extract
1½ cups all-purpose flour
1¾ teaspoons baking powder
½ cup milk
2 apples, peeled and chopped, any kind

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Sprinkle apples with 2 tablespoons granulated sugar and 1 teaspoon cinnamon; set aside. Spray a 9X5 inch loaf pan with non-stick cooking spray. Mix brown sugar and cinnamon together in a bowl and set aside. Beat granulated sugar and butter together using an electric mixer until smooth

and creamy. Beat in eggs, one at a time, until blended; add vanilla extract. Whisk flour and baking powder together and add into creamed butter mixture. Stir until blended. Mix milk into batter until smooth. Pour half the batter into loaf pan; add half of apples and brown sugar mixture; repeat layers. Swirl brown sugar through apples using a knife or spoon. Bake for 45 minutes. Cool 10 minutes in pan before removing, add glaze when cool.

Old-Fashion Crème Glaze

½ cup confectioners' sugar
1-3 tablespoons milk or cream

Mix milk and confectioners' sugar together, stirring until desired consistency is achieved.

Yield: 8 servings

Maple Muffins

2 cups bran-flake cereal with raisins
1 cup whole milk
2 large eggs
½ cup maple syrup
3 tablespoons vegetable oil
½ cup whole-wheat flour
½ cup all-purpose flour
1½ teaspoons baking soda
¼ teaspoon salt
½ cup chopped pecans

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Line muffin cups with paper liners. Spray liners with nonstick cooking spray. Set aside. In a small bowl, combine cereal and milk. Let stand 5 minutes. In another bowl, whisk, together eggs, syrup, and oil. Add to cereal mixture, stirring well. In a large bowl, stir together flours, baking soda, and salt. Make a well in the center of dry ingredients; stir in cereal mixture just until moistened. Fold in pecans. Spoon batter into prepared muffin cups, filling three-fourth full. Bake 18 minutes. Immediately remove from pan and let cool.

Yield: 1 dozen

Soups & Salads

Onion Sausage Soup

½ pound pork sausage links, cut into ½ inch pieces
1 pound sliced fresh mushrooms
1 cup sliced onion
2 cans (14½ ounces) beef broth
4 slices Italian bread
½ cup shredded part-skim mozzarella cheese

In a large saucepan, cook sausage over medium heat until no longer pink; drain; add mushrooms and onion; cook for 4-6 minutes or until tender. Stir in the broth. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; simmer, uncovered, for 4-6 minutes or until heated thoroughly. Ladle soup into four 2-cup oven proof bowls. Top each with a slice of bread; sprinkle with cheese. Broil until cheese is melted.

Yield: 4 servings

Kale Stew

1 pound chopped kale
1 garlic clove, chopped
1 tablespoon oil
1 (16 ounce) package ground hot sausage
1 (32 ounce) can chicken stock
1 (32 ounce) can diced tomatoes
1 bay leaf
Salt and pepper to taste

Bring a large pan of water to boil. Add kale and blanch about 2 minutes. Remove from water and set aside. Sauté' garlic in oil for 1 minute. Crumble sausage into pan. Cook thoroughly; drain excess oil from pan. Combine sausage, kale, chicken stock, tomatoes and bay leaf in a stockpot and simmer for 45 minutes until hot and flavors combine. Add salt and pepper to taste.

Yield: 6 servings

Chicken Taco Soup

1 (14 ounce) can chicken broth
1 (16 ounce) jar mild thick chunky salsa
1 (15 ounce) can ranch style beans
1 (15 ounce) can whole kernel corn
1 (12 ounce) can chicken breast

In a medium stew pot, combine all ingredients. Cover and cook over medium heat for 20 minutes. Reduce heat to low and simmer 10 minutes. Remove from heat and serve.

Yield: 6 servings

Crockpot Cheeseburger Soup

1½ pound lean ground chuck
1 medium onion, diced
1 large russet potato, peeled and chopped into small pieces
1 cup frozen corn
½ cup celery, diced
3 garlic cloves, minced
¾ cup cherry tomatoes, chopped
1 (8 ounce) package cream cheese
2 (14.5 ounce) cans beef broth
¾ cup tomato sauce
1 teaspoon each salt, dried basil, dried parsley & garlic powder
Pepper to taste
¼ cup all-purpose flour
1 cup milk
2 cups shredded sharp Cheddar cheese

Brown ground beef with onion in a large skillet and drain. Add to crockpot along with potato, celery, corn, garlic, cream cheese, tomatoes, beef broth, tomato sauce and spices. Stir all together. Cook over low heat for 6-8 hours or high for 4 hours; just before serving, whisk together milk and flour. Add to crockpot along with the shredded cheese. Cook for 30 more minutes until cheese has melted and soup has thickened.

Yield: 8 servings

Garden Pasta Salad

¼ cup sherry vinegar
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 tablespoon whole-grain mustard
¼ teaspoon salt & ground black pepper
¼ teaspoon celery seed
½ (16 ounce) package whole wheat rotini pasta,
cooked according to package directions
1 bunch asparagus, trimmed
¼ cup water
1 pint cherry tomatoes, quartered
1 cup chopped yellow bell pepper
¼ cup thinly sliced shallot
1 tablespoon minced fresh dill

In a large bowl, whisk together vinegar and next 5 ingredients; stir in pasta. In a shallow microwave safe dish, combine asparagus and ¼ cup water. Cover with plastic wrap, venting 1 corner and microwave on HIGH for 5 minutes or until asparagus is tender. Drain well, and let cool. Cut asparagus into 1 inch pieces. Stir asparagus, tomatoes, and all remaining ingredients into pasta mixture until well combined. Cover and refrigerate for up to 2 days.

Yield: 8 servings

Banana Split Fluff Salad

1 (3.4 ounce) box instant banana pudding
1 (20 ounce) can crushed pineapple (do not drain)
1 (8 ounce) container Cool Whip
1 cup miniature marshmallows
½ cup finely chopped walnuts + 2 tablespoons for garnish
½ cup mini chocolate chips
2 ripe bananas, sliced
1 (10 ounce) jar maraschino cherries, halved

Stir together pudding mix and pineapple until dissolved and thickened. Fold in the Cool Whip. Gently stir in the marshmallows, nuts, chocolate chips, bananas, and cherries. Refrigerate at least 1 hour to chill.

Yield: 10 servings

Apricot Salad

1 (15 ounce) can apricots, drained and chopped finely
1 (15 ounce) can crushed pineapple, drained
2 packages orange Jell-O
1 cup pineapple juice
¾ cup miniature marshmallows

Chill fruit while preparing Jell-O. Bring 2 cups water to a boil; add Jell-O and stir to dissolve. Add pineapple juice and mix well. Refrigerate until slightly congealed. Fold in chilled fruit and marshmallows.

Topping

½ cup sugar
3 tablespoons flour
1 egg, slightly beaten
1 cup pineapple juice
2 tablespoons butter
½ (8 ounce) carton whipped topping
Shredded cheese to taste

Combine sugar and flour in a saucepan. Blend in beaten egg. Stir in fruit juice; mix well. Cook over low heat until thick. Remove from heat and add butter. Cool. Fold in whipped topping. Spread over gelatin mixture. Top with grated cheese.

Yield: 12 Servings

Carrot Ambrosia Salad

1 pound carrots, scraped, and shredded
1 (8 ounce) carton sour cream
1 (20 ounce) can crushed pineapple, drained
¾ cup golden raisins
¾ cup flaked coconut
¾ cup mini marshmallows
2 tablespoons honey

Combine all ingredients, tossing well. Cover and chill at least 2 hours.

Yield: 6 servings

Harvest Apple Salad

4¾ cups unpeeled, diced Red Delicious apples
(about 4 medium)
1 tablespoon lemon juice
½ cup chopped celery
½ cup seedless green grapes, halved
½ cup chopped walnuts
¼ cup raisins
½ cup salad dressing
1 tablespoon sugar
½ teaspoon lemon juice
½ cup whipped cream
½ cup flaked coconut
½ cup mini marshmallows

Combine apple and 1 tablespoon lemon juice in a large bowl; toss gently. Add celery, grapes, walnuts and raisins; toss gently to combine. Set aside. Combine salad dressing, sugar and ½ teaspoon lemon juice in a medium bowl; stir well. Set aside. Beat whipping cream at high speed of an electric mixer until soft peaks form. Gently fold whipped cream into reserved apple mixture, stirring gently to combine. Stir in flaked coconut and marshmallows. Cover salad and chill thoroughly.

Yield: 8-10 servings

Raspberry Salad

1 (10 ounces) package frozen raspberries,
thawed
2 (3 ounce) packages raspberry gelatin
2 cups boiling water
1 pint vanilla ice cream
1 (6 ounce) can frozen lemonade, thawed
½ cup chopped pecans

Drain raspberries. Reserve syrup. Dissolve gelatin in boiling water. Add ice cream and stir until melted. Stir in lemonade and reserved syrup. Chill until slightly set. Add raspberries and chopped pecans. Turn into a 6 cup ring mold.

Yield: 8-10 servings

Wild Rice Salad with Dried Cherries

1 (6.2 ounce) package fast-cooking long-grain
and wild rice mix
1 medium unpeeled apple, chopped (1 cup)
1 medium green bell pepper, chopped (1 cup)
1 medium stalk celery, chopped, (½ cup)
½ cup dried cherries, chopped
2 tablespoons soy sauce
2 tablespoons water
2 teaspoons sugar
2 teaspoon cider vinegar
½ cup dry-roasted peanuts, toasted

Cook rice mix as directed on package, except omit butter. Spread rice evenly in a thin layer on a large ungreased cookie sheet. Let stand 10-12 minutes, stirring occasionally until cool. Mix apple, bell pepper, celery and cherries in a large bowl. Mix soy sauce, water, sugar and vinegar in a small bowl, until sugar is dissolved. Add rice and soy sauce mixture to apple mixture. Gently toss until coated. Add peanuts, toss gently.

Yield: 7 servings

Easy Cheesy Vegetable Soup

6 ounces reduced fat Cheddar cheese, cubed
2½ cups fat-free skim milk
½ teaspoon chili powder
2 cups cooked rice (brown or white)
1 (16 ounce) bag frozen cauliflower, carrots and
asparagus (or other combination), thawed &
drained

Heat cheese and milk in a 3 quart saucepan over low heat, stirring occasionally, until cheese is melted. Stir in chili powder. Stir in rice and vegetables; cook 30 minutes.

Yield: 5 servings

Sides

Baked Cauliflower Tots

2 cups cauliflower florets
1 large egg
½ cup onion, minced
¼ Cheddar cheese, shredded
¼ cup Parmesan cheese
¼ cup breadcrumbs
¼ cup minced cilantro or parsley
¼ teaspoon garlic salt
Salt and pepper to taste
Olive oil

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Spray a non-stick cookie sheet with cooking spray or lightly grease with oil. Set aside. Steam cauliflower in hot water for 3-5 minutes, drain and chop with a knife or blend in a food processor (just a few seconds) In a medium bowl, combine all the ingredients and season with salt and pepper to taste. Spoon about 1 tablespoon of mixture in your hands and roll into small oval shaped tots. Place on prepared cookie sheet ½ inch apart; bake for 20 minutes, turning halfway through cooking time until golden brown.

Yield: 4 servings

Apple Cheese Casserole

2 cans sliced apples
1 stick butter
1 cup sugar
¾ cup self-rising flour
8 ounces Velveeta cheese, cut up

Spray a large casserole dish with cooking spray. Place apples in dish. In a separate bowl, combine margarine, sugar, flour, and Velveeta cheese. Put mixture in microwave on high for 30 seconds at a time, stirring after each time until mixed well. (usually takes about 2 minutes) Pour over apples and bake at 350 degrees for 20 minutes.

Yield: 6 servings

Jalapeño Corn

4 (11 ounce) cans white shoe peg corn
1 stick butter, melted
1 (8 ounce) cream cheese, cubed
⅓ cup jalapeño peppers, diced

Place corn in casserole dish. Add melted butter and cream cheese. Stir well and add peppers. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes.

Yield: 6 servings

Turnip Green Casserole

1 package frozen turnip greens, cooked and drained well
½ cup mayonnaise
½ can cream of mushroom soup
2 eggs, beaten
1½ tablespoons white vinegar
1 teaspoon horseradish
Salt and pepper to taste
Shredded Cheddar cheese, enough to cover top

Combine all ingredients, except cheese. Bake at 350 degrees for 1 hour. During the last 5 minutes, sprinkle cheese on top.

Yield: 6 servings

Green Tomato Casserole

6 medium green tomatoes, sliced in rounds
Salt and pepper to taste
1 cup cracker crumbs, divided
1 cup shredded Cheddar cheese, divided
6 tablespoons butter, divided

Layer half of tomatoes in a greased shallow dish. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Add ½ cup cracker crumbs and ½ cup cheese. Dot with 3 tablespoons butter, repeat layer with remaining tomatoes, cracker crumbs, cheese and butter. Bake covered at 350 degrees for 30 minutes. Uncover and bake 10 minutes or until brown.

Yield: 6 servings

Entrees

Mexican Lasagna

- 1 pound ground chuck
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 1 green bell pepper, chopped
- ¼ teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 (16 ounce) box lasagna noodles
- 1 (24 ounce) jar picante sauce
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1 (4.25 ounce) can chopped ripe olives
- 2 cup shredded Monterey Jack and Cheddar cheese

Brown ground beef, onion, bell pepper and spices; drain. Line a pan with lasagna noodles. Add layer of ground beef mixture. Repeat second layer. Pour picante sauce on top and add ½ cup water. Cover with aluminum foil and bake at 300 degrees for 1 hour. Remove from oven and spread sour cream, ripe olives, and cheese on top. Continue to cook until cheese is melted, about 5 minutes.

Yield: 6 servings

Coca-Cola Pork Loin

- ¼ cup soy sauce
- 1 cup Coca-Cola
- ½ cup dark brown sugar
- 2 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 3 tablespoons oil
- 2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- ½ cup ketchup
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon dry mustard
- 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 1 teaspoon ginger
- 1 teaspoon thyme, crushed
- 5 pound pork loin roast, boned

Combine all ingredients except the meat to form a marinade. Place pork roast in a plastic

bag with zip-type seal, pour in the marinade and seal the bag. Let stand for 24 hours or overnight in the refrigerator, patting and turning the bag every few hours to ensure the meat marinates evenly. Remove roast and discard the marinade. Place roast, fat side up on a rack in a roasting pan. Insert a meat thermometer so the bulb is centered in the thickest part. Do not add water. Do not cover. Roast in a slow 325 degree preheated oven until the thermometer reaches 175 degrees. Allow 30-40 minutes per pound for roasting, so for a 5 pound loin roast you would be roasting 2½ to 3 hours. During last ½ hour of cooking time, brush with glaze. Remove from oven and out of pan onto a platter; cover with foil tent to seal, steam and rest meat for 15 minutes before slicing.

Coca-Cola Glaze

- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- ½ teaspoon dry mustard
- 2 tablespoons butter
- ½ cup balsamic vinegar
- ⅔ cup Coca-Cola
- Sea salt and fresh ground pepper

Mix together all ingredients in a sauce pan; simmer and stir to thicken. Brush or spoon glaze on meat frequently during cooking. You may also serve any remaining sauce with the sliced pork if you like.

Yield: 10 servings

Crockpot Cube Steak and Gravy

2 pounds cube steak
2 (10¾ ounce) cans cream of mushroom soup
1 (1.25 ounces) envelope onion soup mix
¾ cup water
Salt and pepper to taste

Place all ingredients in a crockpot. Cook 8 hours on low. Serve over rice, noodles, mashed potatoes or with your favorite side dishes.

Yield: 6 servings

Chicken Cordon Bleu Casserole

1 pound Penne Pasta
3 chicken breasts, cooked and cubed
1 cup ham, cooked and cubed
1½ cups milk
1 (8 ounce) cream cheese, softened
2 tablespoons dried minced onion
2 cups Swiss cheese, shredded
Salt and pepper
Cayenne pepper (optional-add to cheese mixture)
1 cup Panko bread crumbs
½ cup butter, melted

Bring a large pot of water to a boil over medium-high heat. Salt it and add pasta; cook about 11 minutes. Drain and return to pot. Add chicken and ham and toss to combine. Preheat the broiler. In a medium saucepan, combine milk, cream cheese and minced onion over low-medium heat. Cook, stirring frequently until it becomes a smooth texture (about 5 minutes) Stir into pasta mixture. Stir in the Swiss cheese and season with salt and pepper to taste. Transfer pasta to a baking dish and top with Panko bread crumbs. Pour butter over crumbs and broil until browned, approximately 5 minutes.

Yield: 6 servings

Lemon-Honey Chicken

½ cup all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon pepper
6 chicken breast halves
½ cup butter, melted and divided
¼ cup honey
¼ cup lemon juice
1 tablespoon soy sauce

Combine flour, salt and pepper; stir well. Dredge chicken in flour mixture. Place chicken breast, skin-side up, in a 9X13 inch baking dish. Drizzle ¼ cup butter over chicken. Bake uncovered, at 350 degrees for 30 minutes. Combine remaining ¼ cup melted butter, honey, lemon juice, and soy sauce in a small saucepan; cook over medium heat 3 minutes or until mixture is thoroughly heated. Pour sauce over chicken. Bake, uncovered, an additional 20-30 minutes or until chicken is done, basting frequently with honey mixture.

Yield: 6 servings

Bundt Cake Breakfast

1 cup ham, diced
2 cups tater tots, frozen
1 dozen eggs, whisked
1 (8 ounce) can Grands biscuits, diced
2 cups grated Cheddar cheese
¼ cup milk

Mix all ingredients. Put in a greased Bundt pan. Bake at 400 degrees for 45 minutes. When done flip onto platter. Cut and serve.

Yield: 10 servings

Desserts

Luscious Lime Angel Squares

- 1 (.3 ounce) package sugar free lime gelatin
- 1 cup boiling water
- 1 prepared angel food cake, cut into 1 inch cubes
- 1 (8 ounce) reduced-fat cream cheese, cubed
- ½ cup sugar
- 2 teaspoons lemon juice
- 1½ teaspoons grated lemon peel
- 1 (8 ounce) carton reduced-fat whipped topping, thawed, divided

In a small bowl, dissolve gelatin in boiling water. Refrigerate until mixture just begins to thicken, about 35 minutes. Place cake cubes in a 9X13 inch dish coated with cooking spray; set aside. In a small bowl, beat cream cheese until smooth. Beat in the sugar, lemon juice and peel. Add gelatin mixture; beat until combined. Fold in 1½ cups whipped topping. Spread over top of cake, covering completely. Refrigerate for at least 2 hours or until firm. Cut into squares; top with remaining whipped topping.

Yield: 15 servings

Cranberry-Carmel Tart

Crust

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- ¾ cup confectioners' sugar
- ½ cup toasted pecans
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ cup unsalted butter, cubed and softened

Filling

- 1 cup sugar
- ½ cup water
- ½ cup unsalted butter, softened
- ¾ cup heavy whipping cream, warmed
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 cups chopped pecans
- 2 cups frozen cranberries
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. For crust, in the work bowl of a food processor, pulse together flour, confectioners' sugar, pecans and salt until finely ground. With processor running, gradually add butter. Turn processor off when dough comes together. Press dough evenly into bottom and up sides of a 9 inch removable-bottom tart pan. Bake 20 minutes or until brown. Let cool on a wire rack. For filling, in a medium saucepan, combine sugar and ½ cup water. Cook over medium heat, whisking often until a candy thermometer reads 340 degrees and mixture is amber in color, approximately 10 minutes. Remove from heat. Carefully whisk in butter until melted (mixture will boil vigorously). Add cream and vanilla, whisking until smooth. Stir in pecans, frozen cranberries and salt. Spoon mixture into prepared crust. Bake until bubbly, 20-25 minutes. Let cool to room temperature. Refrigerate at least 30 minutes before slicing.

Yield: 8 servings

Magic Christmas Fruit Cake

- 1 box Spice cake mix
- ½ cup applesauce
- 8 ounces candied fruit
- 1 cup pecans, chopped

Prepare cake mix as directed on box. Add applesauce. Fold in candied fruit and nuts. Grease and flour Bundt pan. Add cake batter and bake for 40 minutes. Allow to cool 10 minutes in pan.

Yield: 12 servings

Fruitcake Pie

Pastry for single-crust pie (9 inches)
1 cup pecan halves, divided
¾ cup red candied cherries, divided
½ cup chopped dates
¼ cup chopped candied pineapple
6 tablespoons butter, softened
½ cup packed brown sugar
3 eggs, lightly beaten
½ cup light corn syrup
¼ teaspoon each ground cloves, ginger & nutmeg

Line a 9 inch pie plate with pastry; set aside. Chop ½ cup pecans; set remaining halves aside. Chop ½ cup cherries; halve remaining cherries and set aside. Combine the dates, pineapple, chopped pecans and cherries; sprinkle over crust. In a small bowl, cream butter and brown sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in eggs, corn syrup, cloves, ginger and nutmeg. Pour over fruit mixture. Top with reserved pecans and cherry halves. Bake at 350 degrees for 35-40 minutes. Cool on a wire rack. Refrigerate leftovers.

Yield: 8 servings

Classic Caramel Cake

1 cup butter
2 cups sugar
4 eggs
3 cups self-rising flour
1 cup buttermilk
2 teaspoons vanilla extract

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Prepare three 9 inch cake pans by greasing and adding parchment paper. Beat butter until light and fluffy and add sugar beating 5 more minutes. Add eggs, 1 at a time, and mix well after each. Add flour and buttermilk, alternately, beginning and ending with flour and mix well after each. Add vanilla and beat well. Divide among the pans and bake for 25-30 minutes until set. Turn pans onto cooling racks and allow to cool completely.

Caramel Frosting

2 cups sugar
1 cup buttermilk
½ cup Crisco
½ cup butter
1 teaspoon baking soda

Mix all ingredients in a 3-4 quart cast iron Dutch oven. Swirl pan to keep ingredients moving in the pan. Cook to softball stage: 235-245 degrees on a candy thermometer or when tested in a cup of cold water. Remove from heat and beat with a wooden spoon until creamy and ready to spread. Spread between cake layers and on top. Garnish with pecans.

Yield: 12 servings

Blackberry Spice Emergency Cake

1 (20 ounce) can blackberry pie filling
1 box spice cake mix
4 eggs

Grease and flour a 9X13 inch cake pan. Blend ingredients until well mixed. Pour into cake pan. Bake for 40-45 minutes. Top with vanilla ice cream or whipped cream.

Yield: 20 servings

Date Torte

4 egg whites
½ cup sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
¼ teaspoon salt
1 cup chopped pecans
1 cup chopped dates
½ cup vanilla wafer crumbs
1 cup heavy cream, whipped

Beat egg whites until stiff; fold in sugar gradually. Add vanilla extract and salt. Fold in pecans and dates. Pour into greased 8 inch pan lined with cookie crumbs. Bake at 325 degrees for 45 minutes. Top with whipped cream.

Yield: 6 servings

Butterfinger Pie

- 4 (2.1 ounce) Butterfinger candy bars, crushed (reserve ¼ cup)
- 1 (8 ounce) package cream cheese, softened
- 1 (8 ounce) container whipped topping
- 1 graham cracker crust

With an electric mixer, combine all filling ingredients (except reserved Butterfinger crumbs). Pour into pie crust. Top with reserved candy. Chill overnight before serving.

Yield: 6 servings

Pecan-Cheese Pie

- 1 (8 ounce) package cream cheese, softened
- ½ cup sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 unbaked 9 inch pastry shell
- 1½ cup chopped pecans
- 1 cup light corn syrup
- ¼ cup sugar
- 3 eggs, beaten
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Combine cream cheese and ½ cup sugar in a large bowl; beat at high speed of an electric mixer until fluffy. Add 1 egg, 1 teaspoon vanilla, and salt; blend well. Pour into pastry shell; sprinkle with pecans. Set aside. Combine corn syrup and remaining ingredients, stirring well. Pour over cream cheese mixture. Bake at 375 degrees 35-40 minutes or until set. Let cool completely. Chill until ready to serve.

Yield: 8 servings

Rocky Road Fluff

- 1 (3.9 ounce) package instant chocolate pudding
- 1 cup milk
- 1 (8 ounce) container whipped topping
- 1½ cup miniature marshmallows
- ½ cup mini chocolate chips
- ¾ cup pecans

In a large bowl whisk the pudding mix and milk until thickened. Fold in remaining ingredients. Chill until ready to serve.

Yield: 8 servings

Apple-Pecan Cobbler

- 8 cups thinly sliced apple, such as Braeburn
- 1½ cups sugar, divided
- ½ cup golden raisins
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ⅛ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- ¾ cup chopped pecans, divided
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 large egg, lightly beaten
- ½ cup evaporated milk
- ½ cup unsalted butter, melted

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Spray a 9X13 inch baking pan with nonstick cooking spray. Place apples in an even layer in prepared pan. In a medium bowl, stir together ½ cup sugar, raisins, cinnamon, nutmeg and ½ cup pecans. Sprinkle mixture evenly over apples. In another medium bowl, stir together flour and remaining 1 cup sugar, baking powder and salt. In a small bowl, whisk together egg, evaporated milk and melted butter. Add milk mixture to flour mixture, whisking until smooth. Pour batter over apples, sprinkle with remaining ½ cup pecans. Loosely cover with aluminum foil. Bake 35 minutes. Uncover and bake until topping is lightly browned, 5-10 minutes more.

Yield: 10 -12 servings

Easy Cake

- 3 large eggs
- 1 box cake mix (flavor of your choice)
- 2 cans pie filling (flavor of your choice)

Mix all together and pour in greased a 9X13 inch pan. Bake 35 minutes.

Yield: 24 servings

Cookies and Bars

Caramel Apple Pie Cookies

- 1 package refrigerated pie crust (2 crusts)
- 5 ounces caramel topping
- 1 (10 ounce) can apple pie filing
- 1 egg
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon nutmeg
- ¼ cup sugar

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Spray cookie sheet with nonstick cooking spray and set aside. Allow crusts to warm slightly to make them easier to work with. Dust work area with flour and slightly roll out crust. Spread a thin layer of caramel on one of the crusts. Use a knife to chop pie filling into smaller pieces and spread over caramel. Cut other crust into ½ inch strips. Using strips create a lattice top over covered crust. Cut out circles and transfer to prepared baking sheet. Beat egg in a bowl until well blend. Mix together sugar, cinnamon and nutmeg. Brush lattice with egg wash and sprinkle with sugar mixture. Bake 20-25 minutes or until golden brown.

Yield: 8 servings

Cinnamon-Sugar Pinwheels

- ½ cup butter, softened
- 3 ounces cream cheese, softened
- 1 egg yolk
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- ¼ cup butter, melted
- ⅓ cup sugar
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon
- ½ cup nuts, finely chopped
- Garnish: confectioners' sugar

Combine butter and cream cheese, blend until smooth. Stir in egg yolk and flour, mix well. Cover and chill for 30 minutes. Divide dough in half; roll very thin, about ⅛ thick into 6X8 rectangles. Brush with melted butter; set aside. Combine sugar, cinnamon and nuts; sprinkle over dough. Roll up jelly-roll style beginning at the long edge. Slice rolls into ½ inch slices, arrange on ungreased baking sheet. Repeat with remaining dough. Bake at 350 degrees for 15 minutes or until golden brown. Remove to wire rack to cool. Sprinkle with confectioners' sugar.

Yield: 3 dozen

Chocolate Coconut Cookies

- 1 (14 ounce) can sweetened condensed milk
- 3 ounces unsweetened chocolate
- 2 cups shredded coconut
- 1 cup pecan pieces
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- Dash of salt

Preheat oven to 300 degrees. Grease cookie sheets. Heat the sweetened condensed milk and the chocolate together in a double boiler over simmering water until chocolate has melted. Remove from the heat and stir in remaining ingredients. Arrange by teaspoonful on the cookie sheet and bake for about 15 minutes, taking care the bottoms do not burn.

Yield: 3 dozen

Divine Cookies

- 1 stick butter
- 1 cup sugar
- 3 tablespoons water
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 8 ounces chopped dates
- 2½ cup Rice Krispies cereal
- 1 cup chopped pecans
- 3½ ounces flaked coconut

Boil butter, sugar, water, vanilla and dates for 5 minutes. Remove from heat. Stir in Rice Krispies and pecans. Spread in flat, greased 6X9 inch pan. Sprinkle with coconut and cut with cookie cutters.

Yield: 10 servings

Thick and Chewy Brownies

1½ sticks butter, plus some for greasing pans
1 cup all-purpose flour, plus more
2 cups sugar
4 ounces semi-sweet chocolate, chopped
2 ounces unsweetened chocolate, chopped
1 teaspoon instant espresso powder
¼ teaspoon salt
4 large eggs
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
1 cup chopped walnuts

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease a 9 inch square baking pan with 1 tablespoon butter, then dust it with flour, tapping out the excess. Melt the butter in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Add the sugar, stirring until it has the consistency of very soft slush and just begins to bubble around the edges, 1-2 minutes. Remove the pan from the heat; add both chocolates, the espresso and the salt, stirring until the chocolate melts and the mixture is smooth. Put the eggs in a large mixing bowl and beat with a mixer on medium speed. Gradually add the warm chocolate mixture, about ¼ cup at a time, beating constantly until smooth. Stir in the vanilla. Add the flour and walnuts, if using, stirring until just combined. Pour the batter into the prepared pan. Bake until a toothpick inserted in to the center comes out clean, 45-60 minutes. Let the brownies cool in the pan on a rack, then cut into squares.

Yield: 16 servings

Jeweled Christmas Trees

1½ cups all-purpose flour
½ cup butter, chopped
3 tablespoons sugar
1 egg white
2 tablespoons orange juice
8 ounces colored fruit candies
Colored ribbons to decorate

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper. Sift flour into

mixing bowl. Combine the butter with the flour until the mixture resembles fine bread crumbs. Stir in the sugar, egg white and enough orange juice to form soft dough. Knead on a lightly floured surface until smooth. Roll out thinly and stamp as many shapes as possible using a floured Christmas tree cutter. Transfer the shapes to the prepared baking sheets, spacing them well apart. Knead the trimmings together. Using a ½ inch round cutter or end of a large plain pastry nozzle stamp out and remove six rounds from each tree shape. Cut each candy into three and place a piece of candy in each hole. Make a small hole at the top to thread through the ribbon. Bake for 15-20 minutes, until the cookies are slightly golden in color and the candies have melted and filled the holes. Cool on the baking sheets. Repeat until you have used up the remaining cookie dough and candies.

Yield: 12 trees

Iced Pecan Tea Cookies

1 cup all-purpose flour
2 tablespoons granulated sugar
¼ cup butter, softened
3 eggs
1½ cups brown sugar, packed
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 cup chopped pecans
½ cup flaked coconut
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 tablespoons, butter melted
1½ cup confectioners' sugar
2 tablespoons evaporated milk

In a bowl, sift flour and sugar. Blend in butter until dough is smooth. Pat into greased 9 inch square pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 10-12 minutes. Beat together eggs, brown sugar, flour and baking powder. Stir in pecans, coconut and vanilla. Pour over baked crust and bake 25 minutes. To prepare frosting combine melted butter, confectioners' sugar and milk. Spread over cooled pan mixture. Cut into 1½ inch squares.

Yield: 12 servings

Refrigerator Cookies

1 stick butter
1 teaspoon vanilla
 $\frac{2}{3}$ cup brown sugar
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup granulated sugar
1 egg
 $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups all-purpose flour
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon cream of tartar
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt

Cream the butter and vanilla together, then beat in both sugars and add the egg. Mix the flour, cream of tartar and salt together; add to the first mixture and combine well. Shape in a roll about 2 inches in diameter. Wrap in foil and store in refrigerator until ready to bake; dough will keep well for at least a week. Before baking, preheat oven to 400 degrees. Using a sharp knife, slice in rounds $\frac{1}{8}$ – $\frac{1}{4}$ thick. Bake on ungreased cookie sheets for about 8 minutes, until crisp and lightly browned.

Yield: 60 cookies

Carrot-Raisins Cookies

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup butter, softened
1 cup packed brown sugar
2 teaspoons baking soda
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 teaspoon ground ginger
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt
1 egg
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup unsweetened applesauce
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 cups whole wheat flour
1 cup finely shredded carrots
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup raisins
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup finely chopped walnuts

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. In a bowl beat butter with a mixer on medium for 30 seconds. Add the next five ingredients (through salt); beat until combined. Beat in egg, applesauce, and vanilla. Beat in flour; stir in the remaining ingredients. Drop by teaspoons 2 inches apart onto ungreased cookie sheets. Bake 8-9

minutes or until edges are firm. Remove; cool on wire racks.

Yield: 3 dozen

Salty Peanut Squares

1 (10 ounce) package corn chips, slightly crushed, divided
1 cup unsalted peanuts, divided
1 cup light corn syrup
1 cup sugar
1 cup peanut butter
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup milk chocolate chips, melted

Place half the corn chips and peanuts in a greased 9X13 inch pan; set aside. In a sauce pan, bring the corn syrup and sugar to a boil. Stir in peanut butter until blended. Drizzle half over the corn chip mixture in the pan. Add remaining corn chips and peanuts to remaining syrup; stir until combined. Spoon over mixture in pan; press down slightly. Drizzle with melted chocolate. Cool before cutting.

Yield: 2 dozen

Christmas Waffle Cookies

2 sticks butter; melted and cooled
4 eggs, beaten
1 cups sugar
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup brown sugar, packed
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon vanilla extract
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon baking soda
 $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon salt
 $4\frac{1}{2}$ cups all-purpose flour
Garnish: Christmas sprinkles

In a large bowl, mix butter with eggs, sugars and vanilla. Stir in baking soda, salt and enough flour to make stiff dough. Roll into walnut sized balls. Place in a preheated greased waffle iron and bake about 2 minutes or until golden. Cool. Dip one side in thinned powder sugar icing and sprinkle with Christmas sprinkles.

Yield: 4 dozen

Snowy Christmas Cookies

1/3 cup walnuts, toasted and chopped
1/3 cup golden raisins
3 tablespoons orange marmalade
2 teaspoons ground ginger
1/8 teaspoon salt
2 cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 tablespoon confectioner's sugar
1/8 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup butter plus 2 tablespoons
2 tablespoons canola oil
1/4 cup milk
1/2 cup powdered sugar

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Combine walnuts, raisins, marmalade, ginger and salt in a food processor. Pulse until evenly combined (1-2 minutes). Set aside. Sift together flour, baking powder, confectioner's sugar and salt in a bowl. Add butter, oil and milk. Combine until dough comes together. It will be damp. Roll into 20 balls. Press and pat each ball into 2 1/2 inches rounds of dough. Place rounded teaspoons of filling in center of each and pull sides up around filling. Seal edges. Roll each cookie with your hands until smooth and round. Flatten cookie slightly. Place seamed side down on a parchment-lined baking sheet. Bake for 25-30 minutes until slightly golden. Dust with confectioner's sugar. Cool and dust again.

Yield: 20 cookies

Crispy Treats

1 stick butter
1 cup sugar
1 cup dates, chopped
1 egg, beaten
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 1/4 cups crispy rice cereal
1 cup confectioner's sugar

In a large saucepan, melt butter over low heat. Remove from heat and add sugar and dates. Mix well. Return to heat and cook, stirring constantly, for 4-5 minutes. To achieve best

result, keep heat low and stir vigorously. Add egg and cook, stirring constantly, for 4 minutes. Add vanilla and cereal. Remove from heat and stir until all dry ingredients are well incorporated. Take dough in spoonful and roll into balls. Roll in confectioner's sugar and cool for 20 minutes. Store in refrigerator.

Yield: 30 cookies

Chocolate Banana Bars

1 stick butter, softened
1 cup sugar
1 egg
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
5 ripe bananas, mashed
1 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
1/4 cup cocoa powder
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup walnuts, chopped

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a large bowl, cream butter with sugar until creamy. Add egg and vanilla. Beat until fluffy. Add bananas. Stir well. In a separate bowl, sift together flour, cocoa powder, baking powder, baking soda, and salt. Add in portions to creamed mixture, stirring until all dry ingredients are incorporated. Add walnuts and stir until well distributed. Turn batter into a greased 9X13 inch baking pan. Bake for 25-30 minutes. Cool completely before cutting into bars.

Yield: 14 bars

Christmas Snowballs

2 cups white chocolate chips
1/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons heavy cream
1 cup finely ground pecans
1 1/2 cups sweetened flaked coconut

Place chips and 1/4 cup cream in saucepan. Stir constantly until melted and smooth. Stir in additional cream and almonds. Spread mixture in a lightly greased 8X8 pan. Chill until firm. Cut into 1 inch squares and roll into balls, then in coconut.

Yield: 4 dozen

Confections

Dark Chocolate Banana-Nut Pops

4 teaspoons peanut butter
1 banana, cut into 12 equal slices
4 (6-8 inch) white round paper lollipop sticks
2 ounces dark chocolate or semi-sweet chocolate, melted
2 tablespoons finely chopped unsalted dry-roasted peanuts

Line a baking sheet with waxed paper. Spoon ½ teaspoon of the peanut butter onto each of the eight banana slices. Stack half of the peanut butter topped banana slices to make 4 stacks with peanut butter between and on top. Top with remaining four banana slices. Push a lollipop stick all the way through the center of each banana stack. Place melted chocolate in a shallow dish. Place banana stack in the melted chocolate. Use a thin metal spatula to spread the chocolate in an even layer over the stacks. Immediately roll in the chopped nuts. Place on prepared baking sheet. Freeze pops about 30 minutes or until firm.

Yield: 4 servings

Crunchy Chocolate and Peanut Clusters

2 cups semi-sweet chocolate pieces
12 ounce vanilla almond bark
¼ cup creamy peanut butter
3 cups puffed corn cereal
1 cup lightly salted dry-roasted peanuts

Line two trays or a large baking sheet with waxed paper. In a large heavy saucepan heat and stir the first three ingredients over medium-low heat until melted and smooth. Stir in cereal and peanuts until well coated. Drop cereal mixture by teaspoons onto the prepared trays. Chill about 15 minutes or until set. Layer clusters between sheets of waxed paper in an airtight container; cover. Store in the refrigerator up to 1 week or freeze up to 3 months.

Yield: 48 pieces

White Chocolate Crunch

4 cups Honeycomb cereal
4 tablespoons melted butter
¼ cup granulated sugar
2 tablespoons ground cinnamon
½ cup melted white almond bark

Preheat oven to 350 degrees and line a large baking sheet with parchment paper. Place cereal in a large mixing bowl. Drizzle butter over top and stir to combine. Stir in cinnamon and sugar until well coated. Bake for 15 minutes and remove from oven. Drizzle melted white chocolate over the top and let set up. When chocolate is hardened, place in serving bowl.

Yield: 8 servings

Almond-Amaretto Turtles

3 cups whole almonds, toasted
1 (14 ounce) package caramels
1 teaspoon water
5 teaspoons amaretto
1 (7 ounce) bar mildly sweet dark chocolate, chopped
6 ounces chocolate candy coating, chopped

On a greased baking sheet, place 4 almonds with ends touching to form a cross. Repeat with remaining almonds. Combine caramels and water in top of a double boiler over simmering water; stir until smooth. Stir in amaretto. Leave caramel mixture over warm water; drop ½ a teaspoonful over center of each almond cluster. Melt chocolate and candy coating in top of double boiler over hot, not simmering water. Remove from heat. Spoon about 1 teaspoonful chocolate over each caramel candy. Chill candies 30 minutes or until chocolate hardens. Store in an airtight container in a cool place.

Yield: 6 dozen

Pecan Pie Truffles

1 package pecan shortbread cookies
4 ounces cream cheese, room temperature
¼ cup maple syrup
1 package vanilla almond bark
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
About 16 pecan halves

In a large food processor, crush the pecan shortbread cookies until finely ground crumbs appear. Pour the cookie crumbs into a large bowl. Using a rubber spatula, spoon or your hands, combine the cookie crumbs, cream cheese and maple syrup until a soft dough has formed and no more crumbs remain along the bottom of the bowl. With a cookie scoop, scoop tablespoon-sized balls of dough and place them on a foil-lined cookie sheet, rolling them with your palm to smooth if needed. Repeat with remaining dough, and then freeze the truffles for 20-30 minutes or until firm. Prepare the vanilla almond bark according to package directions; stir in the cinnamon. Dip each truffle, coating it completely. Gently remove the truffle with a fork and carefully slide it off of the fork and back onto the cookies sheet. You may use a toothpick to ease the truffle off the fork. Immediately top each truffle with a pecan half and allow the shell to harden before serving.

Yield: 30 truffles

Mocha Almond Fudge

1 (12 ounce) bag dark chocolate chips
1 (14 ounce) can sweetened condensed milk
1 cup toasted almonds, chopped
2 tablespoons butter, room temperature
2 teaspoons instant espresso powder
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
½ teaspoons almond extract
⅛ teaspoon salt

Line a 9 inch square baking dish with parchment paper, leaving a 2 inch overhang on both sides. In a medium saucepan over medium heat, combine chocolate chips with butter and

condensed milk, stirring constantly; cook until mixture is totally melted and smooth, 4-7 minutes. Once smooth, stir in vanilla and almond extract, and espresso powder and salt. Fold in toasted almonds and pour mixture onto lined baking sheet. Place in refrigerator and let set at least 3 hours before removing from baking dish and cutting into squares.

Yield: 20 servings

White Chocolate Cranberry Toffee

54 saltine crackers
1 cup unsalted butter
1 cup firmly packed light brown sugar
1 (14 ounce) can sweetened condensed milk
1 cup chopped pecans
6 (1 ounce) squares white chocolate, finely chopped
1 cup chopped pecans
1 cup chopped sweetened dried cranberries

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Line a 15X10 inch jelly roll pan with heavy duty foil; spray with nonstick cooking spray. Arrange saltines in an even layer on prepared pan. In a medium saucepan, bring butter and brown sugar to a boil over medium-high heat; cook 2 minutes. Remove from heat. Stir in condensed milk. Pour mixture over crackers. Bake 10 minutes. Sprinkle with white chocolate, let stand 1-2 minutes to soften. Using a small spatula, spread softened chocolate evenly over baked crackers. Sprinkle with pecans and cranberries. Let cool completely. Break into cracker-size pieces. Store in an airtight container up to 5 days.

Yield: 4 dozen pieces

Butterscotch-Pecan Pretzel Brittle

5 cups mini-pretzel twists
⅔ cup butterscotch morsels
1 cup chopped pecans, divided
¼ cup unsalted butter
¼ cup maple syrup
¼ cup sugar

Preheat oven to 350. Line an 18X13 rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper. Place pretzel twist, butterscotch morsels and ⅔ cup pecans in a medium bowl. Combine butter, syrup and sugar in a small saucepan. Cook, stirring constantly, over medium heat 3-4 minutes or until butter melts and sugar dissolves. Pour over pretzels, tossing to coat. Place mixture in an even layer on prepared pan (pretzels will overlap). Sprinkle with remaining ½ cup pecans. Bake at 350 degrees for 12 minutes or until lightly brown. Cool completely (about 30 minutes). Break into pieces.

Yield: 1 pound

Buckeye Bark

1 package chocolate almond bark
2 cups creamy peanut butter
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 cup confectioners' sugar

Melt chocolate according to package directions. Pour half the melted chocolate onto a parchment lined baking sheet. Using a spatula, spread chocolate to create a large chocolate slab. Place in freezer for 10 minutes to solidify. Mix together peanut butter and vanilla then stir in confectioners' sugar until smooth and creamy. Spread peanut butter mixture over chilled chocolate slab to cover entirely. Pour remaining melted chocolate over top of peanut butter layer. Carefully spread to the edges to completely cover peanut butter. Return to freezer for 5-10 minutes to set top layer. Cut bark into desired pieces and enjoy. Store in an air tight container.

Yield: 20 servings

Chocolate-Oat Fudge

½ cup milk
2 cups sugar
½ cup butter
¼ cup baking cocoa
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
½ cup creamy peanut butter
2 cups quick cooking oats, uncooked

In a saucepan over medium heat, mix together milk sugar, butter and cocoa. Bring to a boil; boil for 5 minutes, stirring frequently. Stir in remaining ingredients. Pour into a greased 11X8 glass baking pan. Let cool before cutting into squares.

Yield: 16 pieces

Cookies and Cream Candies

2 packages (12 ounces each) vanilla baking chips
26 chocolate sandwich cookies, coarsely chopped

Place about 5 ½ dozen paper candy cups on baking sheets. Melt baking chips in top of a double boiler over hot, simmering water. Reserving 3 tablespoons fine cookie crumbs to sprinkle on top of candies, fold remaining cookie pieces into melted baking chips. Drop by rounded teaspoonful of mixture into candy cups. Sprinkle reserved cookie crumbs over candies before coating hardens. Chill about 15 minutes or until coating hardens. Store in an airtight container in a cool place.

Yield: 5½ dozen

Gifts

Maple Popcorn

- 1 cup maple syrup
- 3 tablespoons butter
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- 2 quarts popped popcorn

Combine syrup and butter in a saucepan over medium heat. Cook and stir until mixture reaches the soft crack stage or 270 degrees on a candy thermometer. Remove from heat; add vanilla and pour over popcorn and cool completely.

Yield: 2 quarts

Savory Snack Mix

- 1 (1 ounce) package Ranch salad dressing mix
- 2 tablespoons dill weed
- 6 cups assorted bite-sized cereal squares
- 1 (10 ounce) package oyster crackers
- 1 (6 ounce) package pretzel sticks, broken
- 1 cup bagel chips, broken
- ½ cup oil
- ¼ cup butter, melted

Mix together dressing mix and dill weed in a large bowl. Add cereal, crackers, pretzels and bagel chips; mix well. Combine oil and butter; drizzle over cereal mixture tossing to coat well. Place mixture in a large paper bag; let stand 2 hours, gently shaking from time to time. Store in airtight containers.

Yield: 17-18 cups

Homemade Salted Caramel Sauce

- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 6 tablespoons salted butter, cut up
- ½ cup heavy cream
- 1 teaspoon salt

Heat granulated sugar in a medium saucepan over medium heat, stirring constantly with wooden spoon. Sugar will form clumps and eventually melt into a thick brown, amber-colored liquid as you continue to stir. Be careful not to burn. Once sugar is completely melted, immediately add butter. Be careful in this step because caramel will bubble rapidly when butter is added. Stir the butter into the caramel until it is completely melted, about 2-3 minutes. Very slowly, drizzle in the ½ cup heavy cream while stirring. Allow the mixture to boil for 1 minute. It will rise in the pan as it boils. Remove from heat and stir in 1 teaspoon of salt. Allow to cool down before using. Cover the caramel tightly and store up to 2 weeks in the refrigerator. Warm the caramel up for a few seconds before using in a recipe. Package in jar, stack 2 apples on top and tie with a clear plastic wrap. Tie with ribbon and share with friends. Perfect for cakes, pies, cupcakes, cookies, ice cream, cheese cake, and sweet breads.

Yield: 1 cup

Cinnamon Cream Syrup

- 1 cup sugar
- ½ cup light corn syrup
- ¼ cup water
- ¾ teaspoons ground cinnamon
- ½ cup evaporated milk

Combine first 4 ingredients in a small saucepan, stirring well. Bring to a boil over medium heat, stirring constantly; boil 2 minutes. Remove from heat, and let cool 5 minutes. Stir in evaporated milk, until smooth. Serve syrup with apple pie, ice cream, pancakes or waffles.

Yield: 1½ cups

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