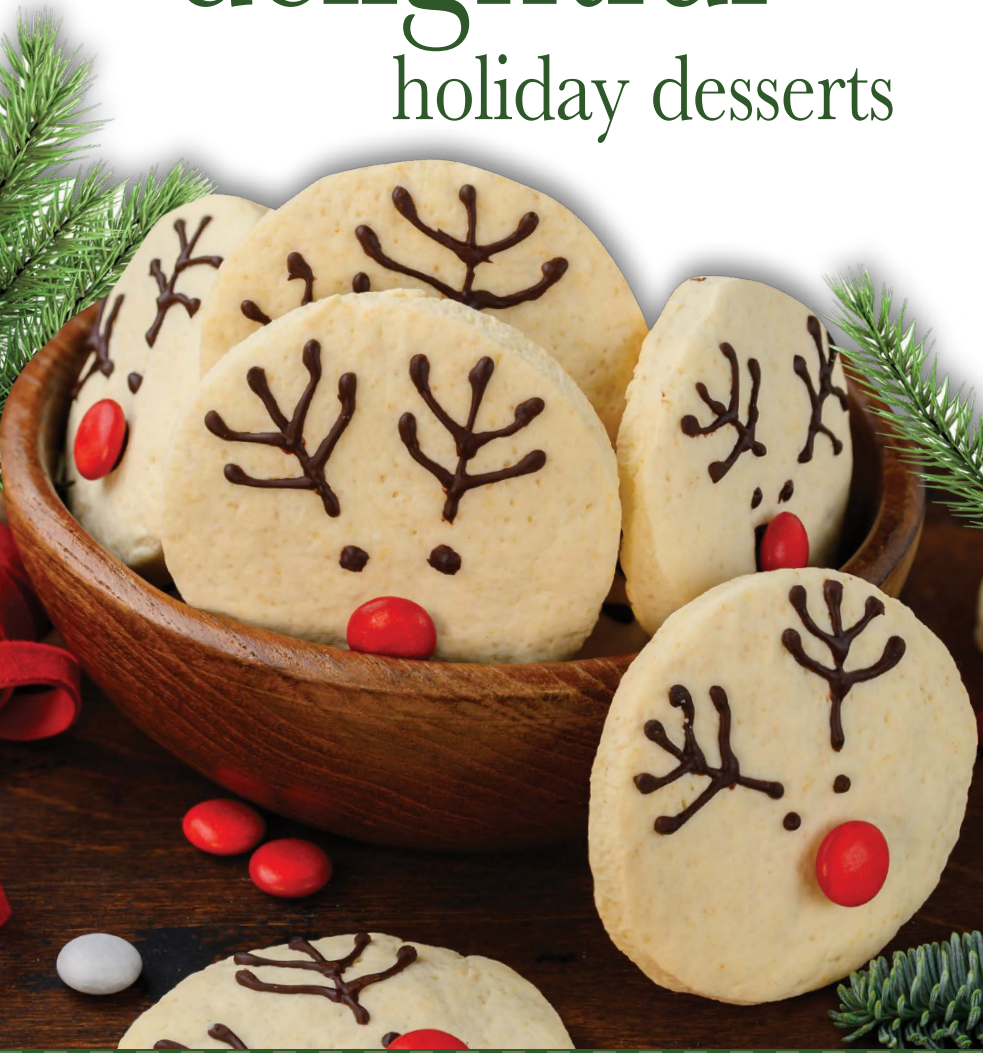
Chef express

NorCal Community Media

delightful holiday desserts



delightful
holiday desserts

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Publishers
Simon St.John Bailey

Digital Content Manager
Christian G Bailey

Editing
Isabel Toyos

Compilation
Sofia Toyos

Design and lay out
Natalia Canet

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introduction

The holiday season brings with it the magic of togetherness, warmth, and an abundance of delicious treats that make every celebration extra special. Holiday desserts are a joyful highlight, often embodying the festive spirit through rich flavors, unique textures, and seasonal ingredients.

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- The holiday season brings with it the magic of togetherness, warmth, and an abundance of delicious treats that make every celebration extra special. Holiday desserts are a joyful highlight, often embodying the festive spirit through rich flavors, unique textures, and seasonal ingredients. Festive Fruitcake with Nuts and Spices is a timeless holiday classic. Dense and aromatic, it's packed with dried fruits, crunchy nuts, and a medley of warm spices like cinnamon and nutmeg, evoking cherished memories of celebrations past.

- For a playful and nostalgic treat, Holiday Candy Apples offer a whimsical combination of crisp, juicy apples encased in a glossy, candy-like shell. Coated in vibrant red or adorned with holiday sprinkles, these apples make a perfect edible centerpiece that's as delicious as it is eye-catching. Meanwhile, for lovers of all things cool and creamy, the Holiday Mint Chocolate Chip Ice Cream Cake is a decadent showstopper. This refreshing dessert layers mint chocolate chip ice cream with a chocolate cookie crust and is perfect for adding a refreshing note to your holiday dessert lineup.

- Spiced Cranberry Pecan Tart brings a sophisticated blend of tart cranberries, buttery pecans, and a hint of holiday spices. Encased in a flaky crust, this tart strikes a beautiful balance between sweet and tart, perfect for those who crave complexity in their holiday desserts. Finally, for a bite-sized indulgence, Almond Joy Truffles deliver an irresistible combination of rich dark chocolate, sweet coconut, and crunchy almond centers. They're simple to make yet luxurious, adding a touch of elegance to any holiday dessert table.

- Together, these delightful holiday desserts capture the essence of the season, blending classic comfort with playful, modern creations. They're guaranteed to impress guests, spark joy, and create delicious memories that will linger long after the holiday season has passed.

Difficulty scale

■□□ | Easy to do

■■□ | Requires attention

■■■ | Requires experience

classic
gingerbread cookies

■■□ | Preparation time: 20 minutes - Cooking time: 10-12 minutes

ingredients

- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon ground ginger
- 1 tablespoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon ground cloves
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¾ cup unsalted butter, softened
- ¾ cup brown sugar, packed
- ½ cup molasses
- 1 large egg
- Red and white icing for decoration

method

1. In a bowl, whisk together flour, ginger, cinnamon, baking soda, cloves, and salt.
2. In a large mixing bowl, beat softened butter and brown sugar until fluffy. Add molasses and egg, mixing until well combined.
3. Gradually add the dry ingredients to the wet mixture, mixing until a dough forms.
4. Wrap the dough in plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 1 hour.
5. Preheat the oven to 350°F (175°C). Roll out the dough on a floured surface and cut into desired shapes. Place on a baking sheet and bake for 10-12 minutes. Let cool before decorating.

Serves 12 -16 cookies

tip from the chef

Have a family gingerbread decorating party and let everyone decorate their own cookies!

peppermint brownies

■■□ | Preparation time: 15 minutes - Cooking time: 25-30 minutes

method

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F (175°C). Grease a 9x13-inch baking pan.
2. In a saucepan, melt the butter over low heat. Remove from heat and stir in the sugar until combined.
3. Add the eggs one at a time, mixing well after each addition. Stir in the vanilla extract.
4. In a separate bowl, whisk together flour, cocoa powder, and salt. Gradually fold the dry ingredients into the wet mixture until just combined.
5. Pour the batter into the prepared pan and spread evenly. Bake for 25-30 minutes. Once cooled, drizzle the white icing over the brownies and sprinkle with crushed peppermint candies before cutting into squares.

Serves 12-16 brownies

ingredients

- **1 cup unsalted butter (2 sticks)**
- **2 cups granulated sugar**
- **4 large eggs**
- **1 teaspoon vanilla extract**
- **1 cup all-purpose flour**
- **1 cup unsweetened cocoa powder**
- **½ teaspoon salt**
- **White icing (for topping)**
- **¼ cup crushed peppermint candies (for topping)**

tip from the chef

Use different colored crushed candy canes for a variety of colors!

eggnog cheesecake

■■□ | Preparation time: 15 minutes - Cooking time: 40-45 minutes

ingredients

For the Crust:

- **1½ cups graham cracker crumbs**
- **½ cup unsalted butter, melted**
- **¼ cup granulated sugar**

For the Cheesecake Filling:

- **2 (8 oz) packages of cream cheese, softened**
- **1 cup granulated sugar**
- **2 large eggs**
- **1 cup eggnog**
- **1 teaspoon vanilla extract**
- **½ teaspoon ground nutmeg**

method

1. Preheat the oven to 325°F (165°C). Grease a 9 inch round baking pan.
2. In a bowl, combine graham cracker crumbs, melted butter, and sugar. Press the mixture firmly into the bottom of the prepared pan. Bake for 10 minutes and let cool.
3. In a large mixing bowl, beat softened cream cheese and sugar until smooth. Add eggs one at a time, mixing well after each addition. Stir in eggnog, vanilla extract, and nutmeg.
4. Pour the cheesecake filling over the cooled crust, spreading it evenly.
5. Bake for 30-35 minutes, or until the center is set. Let cool to room temperature, then refrigerate for at least 4 hours before serving.

Serves 10-12 Slices

tip from the chef

Decorate with mini marshmallows, fresh cranberries and a sprig of fresh rosemary!

cranberry
orange almond cake

■■□ | Preparation time: 15 minutes - Cooking time: 50-55 minutes

method

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F (175°C). Grease a 9-inch round cake pan and line the bottom with parchment paper.
2. In a bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt. Set aside.
3. In a large mixing bowl, cream together softened butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add eggs one at a time, then stir in vanilla extract and orange zest.
4. Gradually add the dry ingredients to the wet mixture, alternating with orange juice. Fold in chopped cranberries, sliced almonds and pistachios.
5. Pour the batter into the prepared pan and smooth the top. Bake for 50-55 minutes, or until a toothpick comes out clean. Allow to cool in the pan for 10 minutes before transferring to a wire rack.

Serves 12 slices

ingredients

- **1½ cups all-purpose flour**
- **1 teaspoon baking powder**
- **½ teaspoon baking soda**
- **¼ teaspoon salt**
- **½ cup unsalted butter, softened**
- **1 cup granulated sugar**
- **2 large eggs**
- **1 teaspoon vanilla extract**
- **Zest of 1 orange**
- **½ cup fresh or frozen cranberries, chopped**
- **¼ cup sliced almonds**
- **¼ cup pistachios**
- **½ cup orange juice**
- **Extra cranberries, almonds and pistachios for garnish (optional)**

tip from the chef

This cake makes a great centerpiece for a holiday brunch!

spiced
apple cider donuts

■■□ | Preparation time: 15 minutes - Cooking time: 15-20 minutes

ingredients

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 cup apple cider
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- ½ teaspoon ground ginger
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- 2 large eggs
- ¼ cup unsalted butter, melted

method

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F (175°C) and grease a donut pan.
2. In a bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger, salt, and sugar.
3. In another bowl, mix apple cider, eggs, and melted butter until well combined.
4. Gradually add the wet ingredients to the dry ingredients, stirring until just combined.
5. Fill each donut cavity about 2/3 full and bake for 15-20 minutes. Let cool in the pan for a few minutes before transferring to a wire rack.

Serves 12 donuts

tip from the chef

Top with your favorite apple crumble recipe when you take the donuts out of the oven.

chocolate
peppermint truffles

■■□ | Preparation time: 15 minutes - Cooking time: 15 minutes (plus chilling)

method

1. In a small saucepan, heat the heavy cream over medium heat until it just begins to simmer. Remove from heat.
2. Add the chopped semisweet chocolate to the hot cream and let it sit for 1-2 minutes. Stir until smooth and fully combined.
3. Stir in the peppermint extract until well-mixed.
4. Pour the chocolate mixture into a bowl, cover it, and refrigerate for about 2 hours, or until firm.
5. Use a small scoop or your hands to form the chocolate mixture into balls. Coat each truffle with the melted white chocolate, then sprinkle each truffle with the crushed peppermint candies. Store in the refrigerator until ready to serve.

Serves 24 truffles

ingredients

- **8 oz semisweet chocolate, chopped**
- **½ cup heavy cream**
- **1 teaspoon peppermint extract**
- **¼ cup crushed peppermint candies (for coating)**
- **Melted white chocolate (for coating)**

tip from the chef

These truffles make great hostess gifts! Just fill a holiday treat bag and tie it with ribbons!

pecan pie cheesecake

■■□ | Preparation time: 20 minutes - Cooking time: 60-70 minutes

ingredients

For the Crust:

- 1½ cups chocolate graham cracker crumbs
- ½ cup unsalted butter, melted
- ¼ cup granulated sugar

For the Cheesecake Filling:

- 2 (8 oz) packages of cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 3 large eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup pecans, finely chopped

For the Pecan Pie Topping:

- 1 cup light corn syrup
- ½ cup brown sugar, packed
- ¼ cup unsalted butter, melted
- 2 large eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup pecans, whole or chopped

method

1. Preheat the oven to 325°F (165°C). Grease a 9-inch springform pan.
2. In a bowl, mix graham cracker crumbs, melted butter, and sugar. Press the mixture firmly into the bottom of the pan. Bake for 10 minutes and let cool.
3. In a large bowl, beat cream cheese and sugar until smooth. Add eggs one at a time, mixing well. Stir in vanilla extract and the finely chopped pecans. Pour the filling over the cooled crust.
4. Bake for 40-50 minutes, or until the center is set. Let it cool for 10 minutes.
5. In a separate bowl, whisk together corn syrup, brown sugar, melted butter, eggs, and vanilla. Stir in pecans, then pour over the cheesecake. Bake for an additional 20 minutes. Allow to cool completely before refrigerating for at least 4 hours.

Serves 12 slices

tip from the chef

Drizzle with additional store bought caramel sauce before serving!

holiday sugar
cookie cutouts

■■□ | Preparation time: 20 minutes - Cooking time: 10-12 minutes

method

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F (175°C). Line baking sheets with parchment paper.
2. In a bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, and salt. Set aside.
3. In a large mixing bowl, beat the softened butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add the egg, vanilla extract, and almond extract, mixing until combined.
4. Gradually add the dry ingredients to the wet mixture, mixing until a dough forms. Divide the dough into two disks, wrap in plastic, and refrigerate for at least 1 hour.
5. Roll out the chilled dough on a floured surface to about ¼ inch thick. Cut into desired shapes and place on prepared baking sheets. Bake for 10-12 minutes, or until the edges are lightly golden. Cool completely before decorating.

Serves 24 cookies

ingredients

- **3 cups all-purpose flour**
- **1 teaspoon baking powder**
- **½ teaspoon salt**
- **1 cup unsalted butter, softened**
- **1½ cups granulated sugar**
- **1 large egg**
- **1 teaspoon vanilla extract**
- **1 teaspoon almond extract (optional)**
- **Colored sprinkles and icing (for decoration)**

tip from the chef

Enjoy your festive holiday sugar cookies!

pumpkin spice whoopie pies

■■□ | Preparation time: 20 minutes - Cooking time: 10-12 minutes

ingredients

For the Cookies:

- 1½ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- ½ teaspoon ground ginger
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ cup unsalted butter, softened
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 cup canned pumpkin puree
- 1 large egg
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

For the Filling:

- 1 cup cream cheese, softened
- ½ cup unsalted butter, softened
- 2 cups powdered sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

method

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F (175°C). Line baking sheets with parchment paper.
2. In a bowl, whisk together flour, baking soda, cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger, and salt. Set aside.
3. In a large bowl, beat the softened butter and granulated sugar until light and fluffy. Add pumpkin puree, egg, and vanilla, mixing until well combined.
4. Gradually add the dry ingredients to the wet mixture, stirring until just combined. Drop spoonfuls of batter onto the prepared baking sheets.
5. Bake for 10-12 minutes, or until the edges are firm. Let cookies cool completely.
6. For the filling, beat cream cheese, butter, powdered sugar, and vanilla until smooth. Spread filling between two cookies to form whoopie pies.

Serves 12 whoopie pies

tip from the chef

Save some of the cream filling and put a dollop on top of each pie with some holiday sprinkles!

maple walnut
shortbread cookies

■■□ | Preparation time: 15 minutes - Cooking time: 15-18 minutes

method

1. Preheat your oven to 350°F (175°C) and line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. In a bowl, cream together the softened butter, maple syrup, and vanilla extract until smooth and creamy.
3. Gradually add the flour and salt to the mixture, mixing until fully combined. Stir in the chopped walnuts.
4. Form the dough into small 1-inch balls and slightly flatten them onto the prepared baking sheet.
5. Bake for 15-18 minutes, or until the edges are lightly golden. Cool on a wire rack before serving.

Serves 12-16 cookies

ingredients

- **1 cup unsalted butter, softened**
- **½ cup pure maple syrup**
- **2 cups all-purpose flour**
- **½ cup finely chopped walnuts**
- **½ tsp vanilla extract**
- **¼ tsp salt**
- **Brown icing and cinnamon red candy dots for decorating**

tip from the chef

Enjoy these cute Rudolph cookies with your favorite hot chocolate!

cinnamon roll cupcakes

■■□ | Preparation time: 20 minutes - Cooking time: 20-25 minutes

ingredients

For the cupcakes:

- 1½ cups all-purpose flour
- 1½ tsp baking powder
- ½ tsp baking soda
- ¼ tsp salt
- ½ cup unsalted butter (room temperature)
- ¾ cup granulated sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- ½ cup milk
- Store bought cinnamon frosting
- Star anise and cinnamon sticks for decorating

For the cinnamon swirl:

- ¼ cup unsalted butter (melted)
- ⅓ cup brown sugar
- 1½ tsp ground cinnamon

method

1. Preheat your oven to 350°F (175°C) and line a 12-cup muffin tin with cupcake liners.
2. In a bowl, whisk flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt. In a separate bowl, beat butter and sugar until fluffy. Add eggs, vanilla, and milk. Gradually mix in the dry ingredients.
3. Mix the melted butter, brown sugar, and cinnamon in a small bowl. Fill the cupcake liners halfway with batter, add a spoonful of the cinnamon mixture, and swirl it gently with a toothpick.
4. Bake for 20-25 minutes or until a toothpick inserted comes out clean. Let the cupcakes cool.
5. Frost the cupcakes with the cinnamon frosting and decorate with the star anise and cinnamon sticks.

Serves 12 cupcakes

tip from the chef

Use a cupcake tree stand for a great centerpiece!

gingerbread
house decorating kit

■■■ | Preparation time: 30 minutes - Cooking time: 12-15 minutes

method

1. In a bowl, whisk flour, ginger, cinnamon, cloves, baking soda, and salt. In another bowl, beat butter and brown sugar until creamy. Add egg and molasses. Gradually mix in the dry ingredients to form a dough. Chill for 30 minutes.
2. Preheat the oven to 350°F (175°C). Roll out the dough to ¼-inch thickness. Cut out house shapes (walls, roof, etc.) using templates or a gingerbread house cookie cutter set. Bake for 12-15 minutes or until firm. Cool completely.
3. Beat powdered sugar, egg whites (or meringue powder + water), and lemon juice until thick and smooth to make the glue. Add more sugar if necessary for a stiff consistency.
4. Use the royal icing to "glue" the walls and roof pieces together. Hold each piece in place for a few minutes until set. Let the house sit for 1 hour to dry fully.
5. Use royal icing to attach candy, chocolate, and other decorations. Get creative and have fun!

Serves 1 large house

ingredients

For the gingerbread dough:

> 3 cups all-purpose flour
> 1 tbsp ground ginger
> 1 tbsp ground cinnamon
> ½ tsp ground cloves
> 1 tsp baking soda
> ¼ tsp salt
> ¾ cup unsalted butter (room temperature)
> ¾ cup brown sugar
> 1 large egg
> ½ cup molasses

For royal icing (glue):

> 3 cups powdered sugar
> 2 egg whites (or 2 tbsp meringue powder + 2 tbsp water)
> 1 tsp lemon juice

For decorating:

> Assorted candy (gumdrops, candy canes, sprinkles, etc.)
> Chocolate chips, pretzels, mini marshmallows

tip from the chef

Enjoy your festive gingerbread house decorating with friends and family!

red velvet cake
with cream cheese frosting

■■□ | Preparation time: 20 minutes - Cooking time: 25-30 minutes

ingredients

For the cake:

> 2½ cups all-purpose flour
> 1½ cups granulated sugar
> 1 tsp baking soda
> 1 tsp cocoa powder
> 1 tsp salt
> 1 cup buttermilk
> 1½ cups vegetable oil
> 2 large eggs
> 1 tsp white vinegar
> 2 tsp vanilla extract
> 2 tbsp red food coloring
> Red sugar sprinkles for decorating

For the cream cheese frosting:

> 8 oz cream cheese (softened)
> ½ cup unsalted butter (softened)
> 4 cups powdered sugar
> 1 tsp vanilla extract

method

1. Preheat your oven to 350°F (175°C). Grease and flour two 9-inch round cake pans.
2. In a bowl, whisk flour, sugar, baking soda, cocoa, and salt. In another bowl, mix buttermilk, oil, eggs, vinegar, vanilla, and food coloring. Gradually combine the wet and dry ingredients until smooth.
3. Divide the batter evenly between the prepared pans. Bake for 25-30 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted comes out clean. Let the cakes cool completely before frosting.
4. Beat cream cheese and butter until creamy. Gradually add powdered sugar and vanilla, and mix until smooth.
5. Spread a layer of frosting between the two cake layers, then frost the top and sides of the cake. Sprinkle the red sugar on the top of the cake.

Serves 10-12 slices

tip from the chef

Top with small chocolate santa candies for a festive red velvet cake!

caramel pecan turtle bars

■■□ | Preparation time: 15 minutes - Cooking time: 20-25 minutes

method

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F (175°C). Line an 8x8-inch baking pan with parchment paper. Mix flour, butter, and brown sugar until crumbly, then press into the pan. Bake for 10-12 minutes until lightly golden.
2. In a saucepan, melt butter over medium heat. Stir in brown sugar and cream. Bring to a boil, and cook for 2 minutes, stirring constantly.
3. Remove the caramel from the heat, and stir in the chopped pecans. Pour the mixture evenly over the baked crust.
4. Return to the oven and bake for 12-15 minutes, until the caramel is bubbly. Let it cool completely.
5. Melt chocolate chips and drizzle over the cooled bars, or use the caramel sauce. Once set, cut into squares and enjoy!

Serves 8-10 bars

ingredients

For the crust:

- **1 cup all-purpose flour**
- **½ cup unsalted butter (softened)**
- **¼ cup brown sugar**

For the caramel topping:

- **¾ cup unsalted butter**
- **½ cup brown sugar**
- **2 tbsp heavy cream**
- **1½ cups chopped pecans**

For the chocolate or caramel drizzle:

- **1 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips**
- **1 cup store bought caramel sauce**

tip from the chef

Perfect for a rich, sweet treat!

snowflake
sugar cookies

■■□ | Preparation time: 20 minutes (plus 1 hour chilling) - Cooking time: 8-10 minutes

ingredients

For the cookies:
- 2¾ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- ¼ tsp salt
- 1 cup unsalted butter (softened)
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 large egg
- 2 tsp vanilla extract

For royal icing:
- 2 cups powdered sugar
- 1 egg white (or 2 tbsp meringue powder + 2 tbsp water)
- 1-2 tbsp water
- Blue or white food coloring (optional)
- Extra powdered sugar for dusting

method

1. In a bowl, whisk flour, baking powder, and salt. In another bowl, cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add egg and vanilla, then gradually mix in the dry ingredients. Chill dough for 1 hour.
2. Preheat the oven to 350°F (175°C). Roll out the dough to ¼-inch thickness and cut out snowflake shapes using cookie cutters. Place on a lined baking sheet.
3. Bake cookies for 8-10 minutes until edges are lightly golden. Let them cool completely.
4. Beat powdered sugar and egg white (or meringue powder + water) until smooth. Add water, a little at a time, to reach desired consistency. Optionally, tint with food coloring.
5. Use icing to pipe snowflake patterns on the cookies and dust with powdered sugar. Let them dry before serving.

Serves 12-16 cookies

tip from the chef

Serve in a Christmas decorated tin box!

eggnog pound cake

■■□ | Preparation time: 15 minutes - Cooking time: 60-70 minutes

method

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F (175°C). Grease and flour a 9x5-inch loaf pan.
2. In a bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, salt, and nutmeg.
3. In another bowl, beat butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add eggs one at a time, followed by vanilla.
4. Gradually add dry ingredients to the butter mixture, alternating with eggnog, starting and ending with flour. Mix until smooth.
5. Pour batter into the prepared pan and bake for 60-70 minutes, or until a toothpick comes out clean. Let it cool before garnishing it with the tangerine slices and section.

Serves 10-12 slices

ingredients

- **2½ cups all-purpose flour**
- **½ tsp baking powder**
- **½ tsp salt**
- **1 cup unsalted butter (softened)**
- **2 cups granulated sugar**
- **4 large eggs**
- **1 tsp vanilla extract**
- **1 cup eggnog**
- **¼ tsp ground nutmeg**
- **Tangerine slices and sections for garnish**

tip from the chef

This Eggnog Pound Cake is perfect for a holiday brunch!

peppermint meringues

Preparation time: 15 minutes - Cooking time: 1 hour 15 minutes (plus cooling time)

ingredients

- 3 large egg whites (room temperature)
- ¾ cup granulated sugar
- ¼ tsp cream of tartar
- ¼ tsp peppermint extract
- Optional: Red and green food coloring (for swirl effect)

method

1. Preheat the oven to 225°F (110°C) and line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. In a clean bowl, beat egg whites and cream of tartar on medium speed until soft peaks form. Gradually add sugar, 1 tablespoon at a time, until stiff, glossy peaks form. Beat in peppermint extract.
3. If desired, add a few drops of red or green food coloring and swirl it gently into the meringue.
4. Use a piping bag or spoon to form small meringue rounds (about 1 inch wide) onto the prepared baking sheet.
5. Bake for 1 hour 15 minutes, then turn off the oven and let the meringues cool inside for another hour. Store in an airtight container.

Serves 15 to 20 meringues depending on size of rounds

tip from the chef

After step two, divide the meringue into three separate bowls and add different food coloring to each bowl to make a variety of different colored Meringues!

coconut

snowball cookies

■□□ | Preparation time: 15 minutes - Cooking time: 15-18 minutes

method

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F (175°C) and line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Cream butter and powdered sugar together until light and fluffy. Add vanilla extract. Gradually mix in flour and salt, then fold in shredded coconut.
3. Shape the Cookies: Roll dough into 1-inch balls and place them on the prepared baking sheet.
4. Bake for 15-18 minutes, or until the edges are lightly golden. Let them cool for a few minutes.
5. While still warm, roll the cookies in powdered sugar to coat them fully. Let them cool completely and roll them in sugar again if desired.

Serves 12-16 cookies

ingredients

- **1 cup unsalted butter (softened)**
- **½ cup powdered sugar**
- **1 tsp vanilla extract**
- **2¼ cups all-purpose flour**
- **¼ tsp salt**
- **1 cup sweetened shredded coconut**
- **½ cup powdered sugar (for rolling)**

tip from the chef

Enjoy your soft and sweet coconut snowball cookies!

festive fruitcake
with nuts and spices

■■□ | Preparation time: 20 minutes - Cooking time: 1 hour 30 minutes

ingredients

- 1½ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- ½ tsp ground nutmeg
- ¼ tsp ground cloves
- ½ cup unsalted butter (softened)
- ¾ cup brown sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- ½ cup orange juice
- 1½ cups mixed dried fruits (raisins, cranberries, apricots, etc.)
- 1 cup mixed nuts (walnuts, pecans, almonds)
- 2 tbsp rum (optional)

method

1. Preheat the oven to 325°F (165°C). Grease and line a loaf pan with parchment paper.
2. In a bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, cinnamon, nutmeg, and cloves.
3. In another bowl, cream butter and brown sugar until fluffy. Add eggs and vanilla. Gradually mix in the dry ingredients, alternating with orange juice.
4. Fold in the dried fruits, nuts, and rum (if using) until evenly distributed.
5. Pour the batter into the prepared pan and bake for 1 hour 30 minutes, or until a toothpick comes out clean. Cool completely before slicing.

Serves 10-12 slices

tip from the chef

Decorate with cinnamon sticks and star anise, perfect for a holiday breakfast!

holiday
candy apples

■■□ | Preparation time: 15 minutes - Cooking time: 15-20 minutes

method

1. Insert a stick into the stem end of the apple pushing about halfway through and set aside.
2. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper and coat generously with cooking spray.
3. In a large saucepan over high heat, stir together the sugar, syrup and water. Bring the mixture to a boil and turn the heat to medium. Stir in the food coloring. Insert a candy thermometer and continue to boil until the mixture reaches Hard Crack stage (from 300-310 degrees), approximately 15-20 minutes.
4. Remove the sugar mixture from the heat and allow to rest for a few minutes before quickly dipping the apples in the sugar mixture turning to coat. (The rest allows the bubbles to subside a bit so you don't have bubbles in your candy coating.)
5. Transfer to the baking sheet to cool completely.

Serves 8

ingredients

- **2 cups granulated sugar**
- **¼ cup corn syrup**
- **¾ cup water**
- **½ teaspoon red food coloring**
- **8 small-medium apples**

tip from the chef

Decorate your candy apples with sprinkles!

holiday mint
chocolate chip ice cream cake

■■□ | Preparation time: 20 minutes - Cooking time: 4-6 hours or overnight

ingredients

- 20 chocolate wafer cookies
- ¼ cup butter (melted)
- 1.5 quarts (about 6 cups) Mint chocolate chip ice cream
- 1 cup chocolate fudge sauce
- ½ cup crushed candy canes or peppermint candies (for topping)
- 16 ounces whipped cream for frosting
- Red food coloring

method

1. Crush chocolate wafer cookies into fine crumbs, then mix with melted butter. Press into the bottom of a 9-inch springform pan to form an even layer. Freeze for 10 minutes.
2. Let the mint chocolate chip ice cream soften for 5-10 minutes at room temperature for easier spreading.
3. Spread half of the softened ice cream evenly over the cookie crust. Drizzle with chocolate fudge sauce, then top with the remaining ice cream.
4. Cover the cake with plastic wrap and freeze for at least 4-6 hours or until firm. Remove from the springform pan.
5. Mix a couple drops of food coloring with the whipped cream. Frost the cake with the whipped cream and sprinkle crushed candies on top and on the sides. Slice, and serve.

Serves 8-10 people

tip from the chef

Decorate with white chocolate christmas trees!

spiced
cranberry pecan tart

■■□ | Preparation time: 20 minutes - Cooking time: 45-50 minutes

method

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F (175°C). Press the pie crust into a 9-inch tart pan and set aside.
2. In a bowl, whisk together eggs, brown sugar, maple syrup, melted butter, cinnamon, ginger, vanilla extract, and salt until well combined.
3. Spread chopped pecans and cranberries evenly over the pie crust. Pour the egg mixture over the pecans and cranberries.
4. Place the tart in the preheated oven and bake for 45-50 minutes, or until the filling is set and the crust is golden.
5. Let the tart cool completely before slicing. Serve with whipped cream if desired.

Serves 8-10

ingredients

- **1 pre-made or homemade pie crust (9-inch)**
- **1 cup pecans (chopped)**
- **1 cup cranberries (fresh or frozen)**
- **1 cup brown sugar**
- **½ cup maple syrup**
- **¼ cup butter (melted)**
- **3 large eggs**
- **1 tsp ground cinnamon**
- **½ tsp ground ginger**
- **1 tsp vanilla extract**
- **¼ tsp salt**

tip from the chef

Enjoy your deliciously spiced tart!

almond joy truffles

■■□ | Preparation time: 15 minutes - Cooking time: 30 minutes

ingredients

- 1½ cups shredded coconut
- ½ cup sweetened condensed milk
- ½ tsp almond extract
- 24 whole almonds (or as needed)
- 1 ½ cups semi-sweet chocolate chips
- 1 tbsp Coconut oil:
- Assorted sprinkles
- 24 lollipop sticks or wooden skewers

method

1. In a bowl, combine shredded coconut, sweetened condensed milk, and almond extract. Stir until well blended.
2. Scoop about a tablespoon of the coconut mixture and roll into balls. Press an almond into the center of each ball and re-roll to cover. Place on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper.
3. Freeze the coconut balls for about 20-30 minutes to firm them up.
4. In a microwave-safe bowl, melt the chocolate chips and coconut oil in 30-second intervals, stirring in between until smooth.
5. Dip each chilled coconut ball into the melted chocolate, then return to the parchment-lined sheet. Insert the skewers and decorate with the sprinkles. Let the truffles set in the fridge for 10-15 minutes before serving.

Serves about 24 truffles

tip from the chef

Melt white chocolate and drizzle over the chocolate coated truffles before decorating with the sprinkles!

christmas
stollen bread

■■□ | Preparation time: 25 minutes - Rising time: 1-2 hours - Baking time: 35-40 minutes

method

1. In a small bowl, combine warm milk, 1 tablespoon of sugar, and yeast. Let it sit for 5-10 minutes until frothy.
2. In a large bowl, mix flour, remaining sugar, cinnamon, melted butter, egg, vanilla, and almond extract. Add the yeast mixture and knead until a soft dough forms. Stir in candied fruit, raisins, and almonds. Cover and let rise for 1-2 hours or until doubled in size.
3. Punch down the dough and roll it into an oval shape. Fold one side of the dough lengthwise, leaving an off-center ridge. Place on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper.
4. Preheat the oven to 350°F (175°C). Bake for 35-40 minutes or until golden brown.
5. Let the stollen bread cool, then dust generously with powdered sugar before serving.

Serves 8-10

ingredients

- **3½ cups all-purpose flour**
- **2¼ tsp (1 packet) active dry yeast**
- **½ cup sugar**
- **¾ cup milk (warm)**
- **½ cup butter (melted)**
- **1 large egg**
- **1 tsp vanilla extract**
- **½ tsp almond extract**
- **1 cup candied fruit**
- **½ cup raisins**
- **½ cup chopped almonds**
- **1 tsp ground cinnamon**
- **Powdered sugar for dusting**

tip from the chef

Enjoy this traditional Christmas treat!

pumpkin
praline pie

■■□ | Preparation time: 20 minutes - Baking time: 50-55 minutes

ingredients

- 1 pre-made or homemade pie crust (9-inch)
- 1 ½ cups canned pumpkin puree
- ½ cup brown sugar
- ¼ cup granulated sugar
- 2 large eggs
- ¾ cup heavy cream
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- ½ tsp ground ginger
- ¼ tsp ground nutmeg
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

Praline Topping: (optional)

- 1 cup chopped pecans
- ¼ cup Butter (melted)
- ¼ cup maple syrup

method

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F (175°C). In a large bowl, whisk together pumpkin puree, brown sugar, granulated sugar, eggs, heavy cream, cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, and vanilla extract until smooth.
2. Pour the pumpkin mixture into the prepared pie crust. Bake for 40-45 minutes, or until the filling is set but still slightly jiggly in the center.
3. In a small bowl, combine chopped pecans, melted butter, and maple syrup.
4. After the pie has baked for 40-45 minutes, remove it from the oven. Gently spread the praline mixture over the top of the pie.
5. Return the pie to the oven for an additional 10-15 minutes, or until the topping is golden and bubbly. Cool before slicing and serving.

Serves 8-10

tip from the chef

If you prefer not to use the Praline topping, just dust your pumpkin pie with powdered sugar and decorate!

candy cane marshmallow fudge

■□□ | Preparation time: 10 minutes - Chilling time: 2 hours

method

1. In a medium saucepan, combine the chocolate chips, sweetened condensed milk, and butter. Stir over low heat until smooth and fully melted.
2. Add vanilla and marshmallows. Remove from heat, then stir in the vanilla extract and mini marshmallows until combined.
3. Line an 8x8-inch baking dish with parchment paper. Pour the fudge mixture into the dish and smooth the top.
4. Sprinkle the crushed candy canes evenly over the fudge, gently pressing them into the top.
5. Refrigerate for about 2 hours, or until firm. Once set, cut into squares and serve.

Serves 8-10 pieces

ingredients

- **3 cups (18 oz) semi-sweet chocolate chips**
- **1 (14 oz) can sweetened condensed milk**
- **2 tbsp butter**
- **1 tsp vanilla extract**
- **1½ cups mini marshmallows**
- **½ cup Crushed candy canes**

tip from the chef

Try using M & M's along with the candy canes for added decoration!

gingerbread
latte cupcakes

■■□ | Preparation time: 20 minutes - Cooking time: 18-20 minutes

ingredients

> 1 ½ cups all-purpose flour
> 1 ½ tsp ground ginger
> 1 tsp ground cinnamon
> ¼ tsp ground cloves
> ½ tsp baking soda
> ¼ tsp salt
> ½ cup butter (softened)
> ½ cup brown sugar
> ⅓ cup molasses
> 1 large egg
> ¼ cup (or strong coffee) Brewed espresso
> ¼ cup milk

Frosting:

> 8 oz (softened) cream cheese
> ¼ cup (softened) butter
> 2 cups powdered sugar
> 1 tsp vanilla extract
> ½ tsp (optional, for topping) Ground cinnamon

method

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F (175°C). In a bowl, whisk together flour, ginger, cinnamon, cloves, baking soda, and salt. In another bowl, beat softened butter and brown sugar until fluffy. Add egg and molasses, then mix in the espresso and milk.
2. Gradually add the dry ingredients into the wet mixture, stirring until just combined.
3. Line a 12-cup muffin tin with cupcake liners. Divide the batter evenly and bake for 18-20 minutes, or until a toothpick comes out clean. Let cool completely.
4. Make the frosting: Beat together cream cheese, butter, powdered sugar, and vanilla extract until smooth and creamy.
5. Once cupcakes are cooled, frost with the cream cheese frosting. Sprinkle with cinnamon, if desired.

Serves 12 cupcakes

tip from the chef

Use small decorated store bought gingerbread cookies to decorate the top of the cupcakes!

pistachio cranberry biscotti

■■□ | Preparation time: 20 minutes - Cooking time: 35 minutes (first bake) + 10-15 minutes (second bake)

method

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F (175°C). In a bowl, whisk together flour, sugar, baking powder, and salt. In another bowl, beat eggs, vanilla, and melted butter. Combine the wet and dry ingredients, then fold in pistachios and dried cranberries.
2. Divide the dough in half and shape each portion into a log about 12 inches long and 2 inches wide. Place the logs on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper.
3. Bake for 30-35 minutes until the logs are golden brown and firm. Remove from the oven and let them cool for 10 minutes.
4. Using a serrated knife, slice the logs diagonally into ½-inch thick pieces. Arrange the slices cut-side up on the baking sheet.
5. Bake the biscotti for another 10-15 minutes, flipping halfway, until crisp and golden. Let them cool completely before serving.

Serves 24 biscotti

ingredients

- **2 cups all-purpose flour**
- **¾ cup sugar**
- **1 tsp baking powder**
- **¼ tsp salt**
- **2 large eggs**
- **1 tsp vanilla extract**
- **¼ cup unsalted butter (melted)**
- **¾ cup pistachios (shelled)**
- **¼ cup dried cranberries**

tip from the chef

These biscotti's are great with your favorite cup of tea!

rum raisin bread pudding

■■□ | Preparation time: 15 minutes - 40-45 minutes

ingredients

- 6 cups (about 1 loaf) day-old bread (cubed)
- ½ cup raisins
- ½ cup walnuts, chopped
- ½ cup fresh cranberries (optional)
- ¼ cup dark rum
- 2 cups milk
- ½ cup heavy cream
- ¾ cup sugar
- 3 large eggs
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 2 tbsp butter (melted)

method

1. In a small bowl, soak the raisins in dark rum for at least 10-15 minutes to plump them up.
2. In a large bowl, whisk together milk, heavy cream, sugar, eggs, vanilla, cinnamon, and melted butter until smooth.
3. Place the cubed bread in a greased 9x13-inch baking dish. Sprinkle the soaked raisins, walnuts, cranberries, (and any remaining rum) over the bread. Pour the custard mixture evenly over the bread, pressing gently to ensure the bread absorbs the liquid.
4. Preheat the oven to 350°F (175°C). Let the pudding sit for 10-15 minutes, then bake for 40-45 minutes, or until the top is golden and the custard is set.
5. Let the bread pudding cool slightly before serving. Optionally, drizzle with extra rum and a sprinkle of powdered sugar or serve with whipped cream.

Serves 8-10

tip from the chef

Enjoy this rich, warming dessert!

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