
A
is for
Appetizer
The
ABCDs
of
B
is for
Beverage
Cooking
with
C
is for
Cookie
D
is for
Dessert
Writers
Compiled by Sloane Taylor

The ABCDs

of

Cooking with Writers

Compiled by Sloane Taylor

The ABCDs of Cooking with Writers
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A is for

Appetizer

BACON WRAPPED WIENIES

Sara Daniel

1 package bacon
2 packages wienies/little smokies
1½ sticks butter, melted
1½ cups brown sugar

Preheat oven to 375°F.

Cut bacon into ¼ inch – ½ inch pieces. Wrap bacon around each wienie. Secure with a toothpick and place in a single layer in 9 x 13-inch pan.

Combine butter with brown sugar. Pour over wienies.

Bake 20 minutes. Increase temperature to 400°F and cook 5 minutes longer to make bacon crispy.



Sara Daniel writes what she loves to read—irresistible romance, from sweet to erotic and everything in between. She battles a serious NASCAR addiction, was once a landlord of two uninvited squirrels, and loses her car keys several times a day.

Learn more about Sara on her website, blog, and Amazon Author Page. Subscribe to Sara's newsletter. Stay connected on Facebook, Twitter, and

Pinterest.

BLACK OLIVES IN OIL

Sloane Taylor

1 can medium pitted black olives, drained
3 garlic cloves, peeled and pressed
Olive oil
Glass jar with a secure lid

Empty the olives into the jar. Add the garlic. Pour in the olive oil to cover. Refrigerate at least 1 week. The mix will become thick and cloudy. It's okay, that's the oil solidifying.

To serve, set the jar on the counter until the oil becomes clear and normal consistency, which may take several hours.

Spoon the olives into a pretty dish. Be sure to have toothpicks.

Put the jar back in the fridge for future use. You can refill with more olives as the mixture will stay good refrigerated for up to three months.



Sloane Taylor is an award-winning author of erotic romance books released by Toque & Dagger Publishing.

Learn more about Sloane and read excerpts from her books on her website, blog, and Amazon Author Page. Stay connected on Facebook and Twitter.

CRAB DIP PRETZELS

Leigh Goff

1 (3 oz.) package cream cheese
½ cup mayonnaise
1 tbsp. horseradish
½ tsp. minced garlic
2 tbsp. minced onion
1 tbsp. lemon juice
½ tsp. hot pepper sauce
1 (8-oz. container) jumbo lump crabmeat (not canned)
White pepper to taste
4 soft pretzels
2 cups shredded Colby-Jack cheese

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Beat cream cheese, mayonnaise, and horseradish in a large bowl until smooth. Stir in garlic, onion, lemon juice, and hot pepper sauce.

Gently fold in the crabmeat, and season with white pepper to taste. Spoon mixture evenly over the pretzels, and sprinkle each with ½ cup shredded cheese.

Place pretzels in oven until cheese is melted and the topping bubbles, about 20 minutes.



Leigh Goff loves writing young adult fiction with elements of magic and romance because it's also what she liked to read. Born and raised on the East Coast, she now lives in Maryland where she enjoys the area's great history and culture.

Learn more about Leigh on her website, blog, and Amazon Author Page. Stay connected on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

CRISPY ZUCCHINI FRITTERS

Vonnie Hughes

3 large zucchinis
1tbsp. salt
2 eggs
⅔ cup flour
1 large spring onion (escallot/shallot), sliced
1 tsp. bicarbonate of soda (baking soda)
1 small can creamed sweet corn
Salt and pepper to taste
Olive or vegetable oil for frying

Grate zucchini into a bowl. Stir in salt. Set aside.

Beat eggs in another bowl.

Squeeze all moisture out of the zucchini and then add it to the eggs. Mix well.

Stir in remaining ingredients and any herbs you prefer.

Heat oil in a large frying pan. Drop in tablespoon dollops of the mixture. Fry until crisp or well browned, turning just once.

Serve warm with sour cream, yogurt and/or chutney.



Vonnie Hughes is a multi-published author in both Regency books and contemporary suspense. Vonnie was born in New Zealand,

but she and her husband now live happily in Australia. If you visit Hamilton Gardens in New Zealand be sure to stroll through the Japanese Garden. There is a bronze plaque engraved with a haiku describing the peacefulness of that environment. The poem was written by Vonnie.

Learn more about Vonnie on her website, blog, and Amazon Author Page. Stay connected on Facebook and Goodreads.

DEVILED EGGS WITH CURRY

HL Carpenter

Eggs (week-old or just-ready-to-expire eggs peel more easily)
1 tsp. salad dressing for each egg
Dash of curry powder
Dash of paprika

Hard-boil eggs using an egg cooker or a pot of cold water (cover eggs with water, bring to a boil, remove from heat, cover, and let stand 10-12 minutes). Drain; then place eggs in ice water until cool. Peel cooled eggs and cut in half lengthwise.

Slide egg yolks onto a plate and mash with a fork.

Stir in salad dressing until mixture is smooth and creamy.

Spoon yolk mixture back into egg whites, or use a disposable plastic baggie and an icing tip if you want ooh-la-la fancy deviled eggs.

Sprinkle with curry powder to taste. Dust with paprika for more color.

Arrange on a festive platter and serve warm or cold.

If you're traveling to a potluck, carry this dish in an insulated cooler with ice.



HL Carpenter is a mother/daughter author duo who write family-friendly fiction from their studios in Carpenter Country, a magical

place that, like their stories, is unreal but not untrue.

Learn more about HL and enjoy gift reads and excerpts and find out what's happening in Carpenter Country at their website. Stay connected on Pinterest, LinkedIn, Google+, and their Amazon Author Page.

FAMILY FIESTA DIP

Sharon Ledwith

250g package of cream cheese, softened
1 tbsp. margarine
½ cup of mayonnaise
1 small jar of salsa, vegetable chunk style
1 medium red pepper, finely chopped
1 medium green pepper, finely chopped
1 medium tomato, finely chopped
3 green onions, finely chopped
1 cup shredded cheese of your choice, I prefer the nacho or Tex-Mex
1 bag tortilla chips

Mix cream cheese, margarine, and mayonnaise until smooth. Spread in a medium-sized dish with edges to prevent spill over.

Cover with salsa – not too much so it's not runny.

Layer as follows: chopped red pepper, chopped green pepper, chopped tomato, chopped green onions, and then top with shredded cheese.

Refrigerate before serving. Serve with tortilla chips (and napkins).



Sharon Ledwith is the author of the middle-grade/YA time travel series The Last Timekeepers and a teen psychic series Mysterious Tales

From Fairy Falls. When not writing, researching, or revising, she enjoys reading, exercising, anything arcane, and an occasional dram of scotch. Sharon lives a serene, yet busy, life in a southern tourist region of Ontario, Canada, with her hubby, one spoiled yellow Labrador and a moody calico cat.

Learn more about Sharon on her website and blog. Stay connected on Facebook and Twitter, Google+, Goodreads, and her Amazon Author Page.

FRESH CRANBERRY RELISH

Emma Lane

One bag fresh cranberries
1 cup of walnuts (or pecans)
1 orange, peeled and chopped
⅓ cup orange juice or apple juice
1 cup sugar (to taste) (Can use Splenda or some other artificial sweetener to taste.)

Wash berries and carefully pick out any bad ones. They will usually float to the surface of the water.

Add all ingredients to food processor, but do not overfill the bowl. Use pulse speed and slowly process. Avoid turning it into slush. The end results should be coarsely chopped.

Serve in pretty bowl. May be prepared beforehand and refrigerated. The sweetness will counteract the acidity of the cranberries, but it is purely to taste—yours!



Emma Lane is a gifted author who writes under several pen-names: Regency as Emma Lane, Janis Lane weaves cozy mysteries, and spice as exotic Sunny Lane. She lives with her patient husband on several acres outside a typical American village in Western New York. Her day job is working with flowers at her son’s plant nursery.

Learn more about Emma on her Amazon Author Page, and her website, where you can look for information about writing and plants, and leave a comment or a gardening question and put a smile on Emma's face. Stay connected on Facebook and Twitter.

HAM & BROCCOLI ROLL-UPS

Sara Daniel

2 cups chopped broccoli
2 tbsp. parsley flakes
2 tbsp. margarine/butter softened
1½ cups shredded Colby-Jack/cheddar cheese
2 cups ham chopped
2 (8-roll) cans crescent dinner rolls

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Cook and drain broccoli.

In a large mixing bowl, combine parsley and margarine. Add cheese, broccoli and ham. Mix. Set aside.

Grease a round pizza pan. (A rectangle cookie sheet works too.) Separate the crescent roll dough into the pre-cut triangles. Arrange triangles around the outer edge of the pan, points hanging over the outside of the pan, bases overlapping. If you have more rolls than the pan will hold, you can use the remaining rolls to make a small inside circle.

Spoon ham filling evenly over the triangles. Fold points of triangles over the filling and tuck under the bases toward the center of the pan.

Bake for 17-20 minutes or until golden brown.



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PRETZEL CRACK – the Addictive Snack

Sharon Ledwith

32 oz. bag of pretzels
16 oz. bottle of Orville Redenbacher's Buttery Flavor popcorn oil
1 package ranch dressing mix (dry)
1 tsp. garlic powder
½ tsp. onion powder
2 tbsp. dill weed
1 deep foil tray (from dollar store)

Mix all dry ingredients in a medium size bowl.

Stir in the popcorn oil.

Coat pretzels evenly, then spoon out onto a deep foil tray.

Air dry pretzels in foil tray, stirring every 15 minutes until dry (approximately 1-2 hours).

Store your freshly made pretzel crack in freezer bags. Voila. Done. Ready for consumption.

Warning: If you find that you or a family member eats a whole bag in one sitting, it's time for an intervention. Do what you must. Be firm. Then, since the bag is empty, go ahead and make some more. You know you want it.



Sharon Ledwith is the author of the middle-grade/YA time travel series The Last Timekeepers and a teen psychic series Mysterious Tales From Fairy Falls. When not writing, researching, or revising, she enjoys reading, exercising, anything arcane, and an occasional dram of scotch. Sharon lives a serene, yet busy, life in a southern tourist region of Ontario, Canada, with her hubby, one spoiled yellow Labrador and a moody calico cat.

Learn more about Sharon on her website and blog. Stay connected on Facebook and Twitter, Google+, Goodreads, and her Amazon Author Page.

PUMPKIN CHEESE BALL

HL Carpenter

2-packages cream cheese, 8-oz. each
4 oz. crumbled feta or blue cheese
4 oz. shredded sharp cheddar or pepper jack cheese
2 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
1 tsp. prepared mustard
½ tsp. onion powder
Paprika
Stem of a green bell pepper

Place all the cheese in a large bowl and let soften to room temperature.

When cheese is soft, add Worcestershire, mustard, and onion powder. Blend with electric mixer or food processor on low speed. Scrape bowl and beat blended mixture on medium speed 1 or 2 minutes more until well mixed (do not over-beat).

Turn the mix onto plastic wrap. Pull the wrap up and secure with a twist tie. Shape the wrapped mixture into a ball. Score the pumpkin “ribs” onto the cheese ball with your fingertip or a flat knife.

With the plastic in place, set the cheese ball in a bowl and refrigerate for 4 hours or overnight.

Before serving, sprinkle with paprika and add a bell pepper stem to top.

Keep refrigerated until the crowd arrives, then serve with assorted crackers.



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ROQUAMOLE DIP

Dominique Eastwick

1 cup crumbled Roquefort or St. Agur cheese
¼ cup sour cream
2 ripe avocados
¼ cup jarred sliced pickled green jalapenos
2 tbsp. finely sliced scallions
¼ tsp. paprika
1 bag blue corn tortilla chips

Crumble or mash blue cheese in a bowl. Blend in sour cream.

Mash in avocados. If they are ripe, a fork should be all you need.

Roughly chop sliced jalapenos. Stir them into the mixture along with finely sliced scallions.

Arrange in the center of a plate or dish. Dust with paprika and surround with tortilla chips.

Dive in!



Award-Winning author Dominique Eastwick currently calls North Carolina home with her husband, two children, one crazy lab, and one lazy cat. Dominique spent much of her early life moving from state to state as a Navy Brat. Because of that, traveling is one of her favorite pastimes. When not writing you can find Dominique with her second love…her camera.

Learn more about Dominique on her website, blog, and Amazon Author Page. Be sure to join her newsletter for up to the minute info on new releases, contests, and more. Stay connected on Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, and Pinterest.

SWEET BBQ MEATBALLS

Sloane Taylor

1 (16 oz.) frozen Italian seasoned meatballs
1 (6 oz. or 10 oz.) grape jelly
1 bottle barbecue sauce
¼ cup dry red wine

Combine all ingredients in a medium-size saucepan. Be sure the meatballs are covered with the jelly and barbecue sauce. Adjust the amounts as necessary. Be sparing if you add more wine. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer 20 minutes or until meatballs are heated through.

Keep warm on the stove or in a low-heat oven until you're ready to serve.

To make your life easier, prepare this appetizer several days in advance of your party. Be sure to cover and refrigerate. On party day, remove the meatballs from the fridge at least 2 hours prior to serving. Warm either on the stovetop or in the oven.



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B is for

Beverage

BEWITCHING PUNCH

Leigh Goff

1 750-ml bottle orange vodka
2 750-ml bottles Prosecco
2 1-liter bottles of orange-flavored seltzer
½ gallon orange juice
2 pints orange sorbet

Gently mix vodka, Prosecco, seltzer, orange juice, and lemonade in a large punch bowl.

Scoop the sorbet into the punch bowl, so it has time to melt. Add the ice ring to keep the punch cold and colorful.

ICE RING

Water
15 seedless red grapes
10 maraschino cherries, halved
1 orange, peeled and sliced thin

In a 6 – 6½ cup ring mold, arrange thin citrus slices and maraschino cherries or grapes in an attractive design. Pour water into mold to partially cover fruit. Freeze.

When frozen, add water to fill mold ¾ full. Refreeze. At serving time, unmold and float fruit side up in punch bowl. If you prefer, freeze ring without decorations. Or, instead of freezing water, freeze part of the orange juice. This will keep punch cold without diluting it.

Serves 12 – 15.



Leigh Goff loves writing young adult fiction with elements of magic and romance because it's also what she liked to read. Born and raised on the East Coast, she now lives in Maryland where she enjoys the area's great history and culture.

Learn more about Leigh on her website, blog, and Amazon Author Page. Stay connected on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

CHAMPAGNE COCKTAIL

Carol Browne

½ oz (15ml) ginger liqueur
½ oz (15ml) blackcurrant liqueur
Champagne

Pour both liqueurs into a fluted champagne glass. Top with cold champagne.

This beverage dates back to World War II. Wartime Britain was cut off from supplies of fruits like oranges but people were able to grow an abundance of blackcurrants in their own gardens and allotments. Would you believe that these tiny fruits contain vitamins B5, B6, B1, iron, copper, calcium, phosphorus, manganese, magnesium, and potassium, as well as humungous amounts of vitamin C? Ginger is also very beneficial for the health. And champagne is…well, delicious. Bottoms up!



Born in Stafford in the UK, Carol Browne was raised in Crewe, Cheshire, which she thinks of as her home town. Interested in reading and writing at an early age, Carol pursued her passions at Nottingham University and was awarded an honours degree in English Language and Literature. Now living and working in the Cambridgeshire countryside, Carol usually writes fiction and is a contracted author at Burning Willow Press. Her non-fiction books are available at Dilliebooks.

Learn more about Carol on her website and blog. Stay connected on Facebook, Twitter, and her Amazon Author Page.

CITRUS CHAMPAGNE PUNCH

Sloane Taylor

1 cup fresh lemon juice
3 cups superfine or granulated sugar
4 cups vodka
1 bottle Limoncello
3 tbsp. dry vermouth
4 bottles chilled dry Champagne or sparkling wine
2 lemons sliced thin
1 bottle ginger ale

Combine lemon juice, sugar, vodka, Limoncello, and vermouth in a large glass or ceramic bowl. Stir until sugar is completely dissolved. Add sliced lemons. Cover and refrigerate 1 – 2 hours to chill.

Add Champagne and then gently stir to blend. Add ginger ale if mixture seems too strong.

Serve in a punch bowl with ice on the side.

Makes approximately 5 gallons.



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ELDERFLOWER BUBBLY

Carol Browne

No yeast is required to put the sparkle into this fruity and refreshing beverage, which is ready to drink in three weeks.

20 elderflower heads
1½ lemons
½ kilo/1 lb sugar
5 litres/1gallon cold water

Shake the flowerheads to dislodge any insects and cut off the stalks. Put the flowers, sugar, and sliced lemon in a large clean bowl or plastic bucket.

Add the water and stir thoroughly, using a wooden spoon.

Cover the container with a weighted plate or lid to make an airtight fit and leave for 24 hours.

Strain the liquid into a jug and pour it into clean, dry bottles with screw caps. Plastic bottles are best because they can withstand any expansion of the contents, but, in any case, leave a gap of 2”/5 cm between the liquid and the top of the bottle.

This beverage does not keep indefinitely, so enjoy its crisp, grapey flavour within three to four weeks of bottling.



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EMMA'S EVERY EVENT PUNCH

Emma Lane

1 pitcher unsweetened iced tea
1 cup pineapple juice
¼ cup maraschino cherry juice
6 cherries, sliced
1 medium-sized chunk of pineapple
1 orange slice
Sprig of spearmint
1 cup ginger ale

Add all the ingredients to the pitcher of iced tea. Allow to sit in the refrigerator for several hours.

When you are ready to serve, pour ginger ale over the iced tea. Fill glasses with ice cubes and then serve immediately.



Emma Lane is a gifted author who writes under several pen-names: Regency as Emma Lane, Janis Lane weaves cozy mysteries, and spice as exotic Sunny Lane. She lives with her patient husband on several acres outside a typical American village in Western New York. Her day job is working with flowers at her son's plant nursery.

Learn more about Emma on her Amazon Author Page, and her website, where you can look for information about writing and plants, and leave a comment or a

gardening question and put a smile on Emma's face. Stay connected on Facebook and Twitter.

FIZZY BLOOD ORANGEADE

Leigh Goff

1 cup freshly squeezed blood orange juice from 4-5 blood oranges
½ cup freshly squeezed orange juice from 2 oranges
1 cup Sprite
1 cup shaved/crushed ice

Gently stir all ingredients into a small pitcher. Pour into chilled glasses and enjoy.



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MOCK CHAMPAGNE COCKTAIL

C.D. Hersh

For each 8-ounce champagne glass you need:

¼ cup white grape juice
⅛ cup Chamomile tea
Ginger ale, regular or diet
Star fruit
Fresh cranberries

Combine grape juice and cooled tea in an 8-ounce champagne flute.

Fill glass with ginger ale.

To give the drink a holiday flare, add a slice of star fruit and a couple of whole, fresh cranberries to the glass before adding the liquids.



Putting words and stories on paper is second nature to co-authors C.D. Hersh. They've written separately since they were teenagers and discovered their unique, collaborative abilities in the mid-90s. As high school sweethearts and husband and wife, they believe in true love and happily ever after. They look forward to many years of co-authoring and book sales, and a lifetime of happily-ever-after endings on the page and in real life.

Learn more about C.D. Hersh on their website and blog. Stay connected on Facebook, Twitter, Goodreads, and their Amazon Author Page.

MOCK CHAMPAGNE PUNCH

Sloane Taylor

2 – 2 liter bottles ginger ale
46 oz. pineapple juice
64 oz. white grape juice
Blueberries
Orange slices

ICE RING

Fill a ring-shaped cake pan half full with ginger ale.

Freeze until partially frozen. Lay pieces of fruit around the ring. Fill the pan with ginger ale and freeze until solid.

Chill the second bottle of ginger ale and juices for several hours.

Lay the ice ring in a large punch bowl. Pour ginger ale and juices over the ice ring and serve.



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MOCK CRANBERRY SANGRIA

C.D. Hersh

For each 8-ounce champagne glass you need:

¼ cup brewed Hibiscus Watermelon tea, we use Republic of Tea brand
⅛ cup brewed Chamomile honey and vanilla tea, we use Twinings brand
Sparking apple cider
1 rounded tbsp. jellied cranberry sauce smooth or whole berry
Fresh fruits, grapes, whole cranberries, pineapple chunks, peeled sliced star fruit, or peeled kiwi—or your favorites
Short skewer or sizzle stick

Thread fruits on a skewer or swizzle stick and set aside.

Pour cooled teas and cranberry sauce in the glass. Mix until sauce is dissolved. Fill glass with sparkling apple cider. Enjoy!



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ORGASMIC CHOCOLATE MARTINI

Sara Daniel

1½ shots Godiva® Chocolate Liqueur
1½ shots crème de cacao
½ shot vodka
2½ shots half-and-half

Pour all of the above into chilled martini glass or mix in a shaker with ice and then pour into glass.

Garnish with chocolate shavings, whipped cream and/or chocolate syrup.



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SANGRIA WITH & WITHOUT A KICK

Vonnie Hughes

2 cups boiling water
4 green tea bags
1 cup sugar
2 cinnamon sticks
3 cups red grapefruit juice, preferably fresh
1 cup orange juice
1 orange, sliced into thin rounds
1 lime, sliced into thin rounds
1 medium apple, cored and cut into chunks or/and wedges
2 peaches cut into wedges
3 cups carbonated water

Pour the boiling water over the tea bags and steep for 10 minutes. Discard tea bags and then stir in sugar.

In a large pitcher combine tea, cinnamon sticks, juices, and fruit. Refrigerate for at least 1 hour but preferably overnight. Just before serving, stir in carbonated water. Serve in large glasses filled with ice.

THE ADULT VERSION

1 – 750ml bottle red wine
150ml (5oz.) brandy
1 cup orange juice
½ grapefruit, sliced into thin rounds
1 orange, sliced into thin rounds
1 lime, sliced into thin rounds
1 medium apple, cut into chunks
2 peaches cut into wedges
6 cinnamon sticks

In a large pitcher combine wine, brandy, juice, fruit, and cinnamon sticks. Refrigerate for at least 1 hour but preferably overnight. Serve in large glasses filled with ice.



Vonnie Hughes is a multi-published author in both Regency books and contemporary suspense. Vonnie was born in New Zealand, but she and her husband now live happily in Australia. If you visit Hamilton Gardens in New Zealand be sure to stroll through the Japanese Garden. There is a bronze plaque engraved with a haiku describing the peacefulness of that environment. The poem was written by Vonnie.

Learn more about Vonnie on her website, blog, and Amazon Author Page. Stay connected on Facebook and Goodreads.

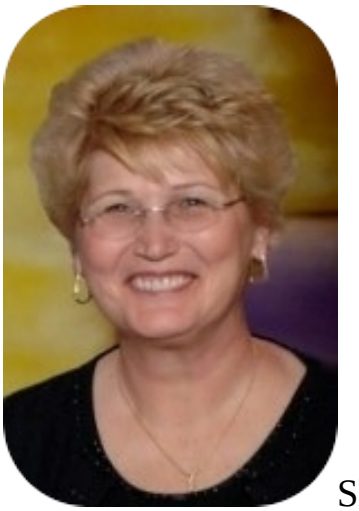
VODKA & PINEAPPLE

Sloane Taylor

3 pineapples cored, peeled, and cut into rings
1.75 liters of your favorite vodka
Large wide-mouth glass container with a secure lid

Place the pineapple rings at the bottom of the container in any design you fancy. Pour the vodka on top. Be sure to cover the pineapple by at least 2 inches. You don't have to refrigerate as the alcohol preserves the fruit. Check periodically to be sure the vodka level is still well over the pineapple.

To serve, pour over ice in a cocktail glass or swirl it with ice and then pour into pony glasses.



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C is for

Cookie

ANZAC BISCUITS (COOKIES)

Vonnie Hughes

1 cup plain flour not self-raising
1 cup rolled oats
½ cup desiccated (shredded) coconut
¾ cup sugar
½ tsp. salt
125 grams (4.4 oz.) of butter
2 tbsp. golden syrup (light molasses)
1 tsp. bicarbonate of soda (raising agent)
2 tbsp. boiling water

Preheat oven to 160°C or 325°F (140°C or 285°F for a fan-forced oven).

Line two baking trays with non-stick baking paper (parchment paper).

Sift flour into a large bowl. Stir in the oats, coconut, sugar and salt.

Combine butter and golden syrup and stir over medium heat until melted.

Stir the bicarbonate of soda in the boiling water and add to the mixture. It will bubble.

Quickly pour the liquid over the flour mixture and combine.

Roll heaped tablespoons of the mixture into small balls and place at 5cm (about 2 inches) intervals on the baking trays. Press the balls down with a fork to flatten.

Bake for about 18-20 minutes until golden brown.



Vonnie Hughes is a multi-published author in both Regency books and contemporary suspense. Vonnie was born in New Zealand, but she and her husband now live happily in Australia. If you visit Hamilton Gardens in New Zealand be sure to stroll through the Japanese Garden. There is a bronze plaque engraved with a haiku describing the peacefulness of that environment. The poem was written by Vonnie.

Learn more about Vonnie on her website, blog, and Amazon Author Page. Stay connected on Facebook and Goodreads.

BASIC DROP COOKIES

Vonnie Hughes

2 cups ordinary flour
2 tsp. baking powder (rising agent)
½ tsp. salt
4 oz. butter
1 cup sugar – brown or white
1 tsp. Essence (extract) – vanilla, lemon, or your preference
1 egg, beaten
½ cup milk

Preheat oven to 325°F.

Sift the flour, baking powder and salt into a bowl.

Cream the butter in a large bowl and then add the sugar. Continue until the mixture is fluffy. Add the essence and egg. Beat the mixture well. Lastly, add the flour mix alternately with the milk to form a soft batter.

Drop in teaspoon lots well apart, to allow for spreading, on a greased oven tray. Bake for 10-12 minutes.

Makes almost 4 dozen.

This is just a basic recipe and you can ring the changes by adding grated lemon to the butter and sugar mix, or chopped nuts, or dried fruit, or chocolate sprinkles or…anything that takes your fancy. Dried cherries are great!



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BROWN BUTTER COOKIES

Anne Montgomery

2 cups butter (no substitutes)
2 cups brown sugar
2 eggs
2 tsp. vanilla extract
1 tsp. baking soda
½ tsp. baking powder
½ tsp. salt
3 cups all-purpose flour
⅔ cup chopped pecans

ICING (Optional)

½ cup reserved brown butter
2 tsp. vanilla extract
3½ cups confectioner's sugar
½ cup hot water

Preheat oven to 350°F (175°C).

Heat butter over medium heat in a saucepan for 5 minutes or so, until it turns nut brown in color. The foaming and bubbling is part of the process, but make sure not to burn it. Remove from heat and cool slightly. Reserve ½ cup butter for frosting.

Pour remaining brown butter into a large mixing bowl. Beat butter with sugar until the butter is no longer hot. Mix in eggs, vanilla, baking soda, baking powder, and salt. Beat thoroughly. Mix in flour and chopped pecans.

Drop tablespoons of dough onto ungreased baking sheets. If you don’t want to ice the cookies, gently push a half-pecan into the center of each dough ball.

Bake for 10 minutes or until light brown around the edges. Cool.

If you choose to ice the cookies, mix the reserved brown butter, vanilla, confectioner's sugar, and hot water in a medium bowl. Beat until smooth. Frost cooled cookies and place a half-pecan in the middle of each cookie.



Anne Montgomery has worked as a television sportscaster, newspaper and magazine writer for six publications, teacher, baseball umpire, and football referee. She also worked at ESPN in Connecticut anchoring the Emmy and ACE award−winning SportsCenter. When she can, Anne indulges in her passions: rock collecting, scuba diving, and playing her guitar.

Learn more about Anne on her website and blog. Stay connected on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and her Amazon Author Page.

CANDY CANES

Sara Daniel

½ cup butter, softened
½ cup shortening
1 cup powdered sugar
1 egg
1½ tsp. almond extract
1 tsp. vanilla
2½ cups flour
1 tsp. salt
½ - 1 tsp. red food coloring
1 cup crushed candy canes or peppermint candy

Preheat oven to 375° F.

Combine butter, shortening, and powdered sugar. Mix in egg, almond extract, and vanilla. Continue mixing as you add in flour and salt.

Divide dough in half. Place in separate bowls. Blend food coloring into one bowl of dough.

Shape one tablespoon of dough from each color into a rope. Place ropes side by side on a cookie sheet. Press together lightly and twist. Curve down the top third to form a candy cane.

Bake for 8-10 minutes. Remove from oven and immediately sprinkle cookies with crushed peppermint candy. Wait until cookies are cool to prevent breakage when removing them from the pan.



Sara Daniel writes what she loves to read—irresistible romance, from sweet to erotic and everything in between. She battles a serious NASCAR addiction, was once a landlord of two uninvited squirrels, and loses her car keys several times a day.

Learn more about Sara on her website, blog, and Amazon Author Page. Subscribe to Sara's newsletter. Stay connected on Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest.

CHOCOLATE BALLS

Alicia Joseph

1 stick butter
1 ½ cup sugar
½ cup cocoa
4 cups flour
1 tsp. cinnamon
½ tsp. cloves
½ tsp. baking powder
½ tsp. vanilla
1 cup coffee at room temperature

Preheat oven to 350° F.

COOKIE DOUGH

Mix butter, sugar, and cocoa together in a medium-sized bowl. Add the other ingredients in a large bowl. Stir well. Blend in the butter mixture.

Form the dough into little balls.

Bake 10 minutes. DO NOT OVERBAKE. The balls will get hard.

FROSTING

1 cup powdered sugar
2 tbsp. milk
½ tsp. vanilla

Add milk slowly to the sugar to make right consistency. Stir in vanilla. Mix well. If too thin, add more sugar. If too thick, add a few more drops of milk until you get a spreadable consistency.



Alicia Joseph grew up in Westchester, Illinois. Her books are sweet, romantic stories in the LGBT genre. Alicia is currently working on a new novel called *A Penny on the Tracks*, a coming of age story about love and friendship. Alicia has many works-in-progress that she hopes to finish soon. When she is not writing, Alicia enjoys volunteering with animals, rooting for her favorite sports teams, and playing “awesome aunt” to her nine nieces and nephews.

Learn more about Alicia on her blog and Amazon Author Page. Stay connected on Facebook and Twitter.

CHOCOLATE CHIP CHOCOLATE COOKIES

Chris Pavesic

½ cup unsweetened baker's chocolate powder
¾ cup granulated sugar
¾ cup packed brown sugar
1 cup butter (plus an additional amount for coating the baking tray)
1 tbsp. vanilla
1 egg
2¼ cup all-purpose flour (plus an additional amount for coating the baking tray)
1 tsp. baking soda
½ tsp. sea salt
1 package (12 oz.) semi-sweet chocolate chips
¼ package raw pecan halves
½ cup (approximate) coarse sugar or sanding sugar

Preheat oven to 375°F.

Prepare the baking sheet by coating the surface with butter and then dusting with flour. This will help ensure the cookies do not stick.

Prepare the plate. Sprinkle the coarse or sanding sugar on the surface for pressing the cookie dough.

Mix chocolate powder, granulated sugar, brown sugar, butter, vanilla, and egg in a large bowl until blended.

Stir in flour, baking soda, and salt until mixed. (The dough will be stiff.)

Stir in chocolate chips until evenly mixed.

Using the tablespoon-sized measuring spoon, scoop one cookie and drop it onto the plate.

Using your fingers or the back of the spoon, press and mold the dough until it is shaped the way you desire. (My family likes the traditional rounded cookie shape—but you do you!)

Lift the cookie and place it sugar-side up on the baking sheet. Press one of the pecan halves into the center. Repeat for the remaining cookies.

Space the cookies about 2 inches apart on the baking sheet. Bake for 8 to 10 minutes. Cool slightly. Remove from the cookie sheet. Finish cooling on a wire rack.

This recipe makes about 36 cookies.



Chris Pavesic is a fantasy author who lives in the Midwestern United States and loves Kona coffee, steampunk, fairy tales, and all types of speculative fiction. Between writing projects, Chris can most often be found reading, gaming, gardening, working on an endless list of DIY household projects, or hanging out with friends.

Learn more about Chris on her website and blog. Stay connected on Facebook, Twitter, and her Amazon Author Page.

GINGERBREAD COOKIES

Chris Pavesic

2 cups all-purpose flour
2 tsp. ground
1 tsp. ground cinnamon
¼ tsp. ground cloves
¼ tsp. baking soda
¼ tsp. salt
½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, softened to room temperature
⅓ cup brown sugar, packed
⅓ cup unsulfured molasses
1 large egg
decorating sugar or sprinkles

Sift dry ingredients together into a medium-sized bowl.

Use an electric mixer to beat butter and brown sugar in a large bowl until smooth. Beat in molasses and egg. Set the mixer on low, and then add dry ingredients slowly. Mix until dough is formed.

Place dough on floured plastic wrap. Wrap well and chill in the refrigerator until firm.

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Divide dough in half. Working with one half at a time (rewrap and refrigerate other half), place dough on floured parchment or waxed paper. Roll it out to ⅛ inch thick, turning, lifting, and flouring dough (and rolling pin) as needed. Freeze dough (on paper) until firm, about 20 minutes. Repeat this process with the second half of the dough.

Loosen dough from paper. Cut out shapes, transfer to baking sheets and decorate.

Bake until firm and edges just begin to darken, 10 to 18 minutes, depending on the size of the cookie. Cool completely on baking sheets.



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ITALIAN ANISETTE COOKIES

Dominique Eastwick

COOKIE DOUGH

4 cups all-purpose flour
1 tbsp. baking powder
1 cup granulated white sugar
¾ cup vegetable oil
½ cup milk
1 tbsp. anise extract
2 eggs

ICING

1 cup confectioner's sugar
2 tbsp. hot water
1 tsp. anise extract

Preheat oven to 375°F.

Combine flour, baking powder, and sugar in a large bowl. Make a well in the center and add oil, milk, extract, and eggs. Mix together until dough is sticky.

Oil fingers and pinch off dough in 1-inch pieces. Roll into a ball and place on a lightly greased cookie sheet, 1 inch apart, flatten top slightly.

Bake 8 minutes.

Blend anise extract and enough hot water to confectioner's sugar to form a smooth icing. Drizzle or spread across the cooled cookie tops.



Award-Winning author Dominique Eastwick currently calls North Carolina home with her husband, two children, one crazy lab, and one lazy cat. Dominique spent much of her early life moving from state to state as a Navy Brat. Because of that, traveling is one of her favorite pastimes. When not writing you can find Dominique with her second love…her camera.

Learn more about Dominique on her website, blog, and Amazon Author Page. Be sure to join her newsletter for up to the minute info on new releases, contests, and more. Stay connected on Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, and Pinterest.

MOUTHWATERING SUGAR COOKIES

Sharon Ledwith

3 cups of all-purpose flour
1½ tsp. baking powder
½ tsp. salt
1 cup white sugar
1 cup butter
1 egg, lightly beaten
3 tbsp. cream
1 tsp. vanilla extract
Extra sugar for topping

Preheat oven to 400°F (200°C).

Over a large bowl, sift together all-purpose flour, baking powder, salt, sugar. Cut in butter and blend with a pastry blender until mixture resembles cornmeal. Stir in lightly beaten egg, cream, and vanilla. Blend well. Dough may be chilled, if desired.

On a floured surface, roll out dough to ⅛ inch thickness. Sprinkle with sugar; cut into desired shapes. Transfer to ungreased baking sheets.

Bake for 6 to 8 minutes, or until delicately brown.



Sharon Ledwith is the author of the middle-grade/YA time travel series The Last Timekeepers and a teen psychic series Mysterious Tales From Fairy Falls. When not writing, researching, or revising, she enjoys reading, exercising, anything arcane, and an occasional dram of scotch. Sharon lives a serene, yet busy, life in a southern tourist region of Ontario, Canada, with her hubby, one spoiled yellow Labrador and a moody calico cat.

Learn more about Sharon on her website and blog. Stay connected on Facebook and Twitter, Google+, Goodreads, and her Amazon Author Page.

NO BAKE CHOCOLATE MINT OATMEAL COOKIES

Emma Lane

½ cup milk
4½ tbsp. cocoa
½ cup (1 stick) butter
1 cup peanut butter, creamy or chunky
3¼ cup instant oats
2 cups sugar, reserve a bit for sprinkling on top
1 tsp. vanilla
2 tsp. mint flavoring

Pour milk, cocoa, and butter into a medium-sized saucepan. Bring to a rolling boil and cook for 1 min. and 15 seconds.

Remove from the heat. Stir in peanut butter, oats, sugar, vanilla, and mint flavor. Mix well.

Drop onto wax paper by tablespoonfuls. Let set for 20 to 30 minutes.

Sprinkle very lightly with reserved sugar.



Emma Lane is a gifted author who writes under several pen-names: Regency as Emma Lane, Janis Lane weaves cozy mysteries, and spice as exotic Sunny Lane. She lives with her patient husband on several acres outside a typical American village in Western New York. Her day job is working with flowers at her son’s plant nursery.

Learn more about Emma on her Amazon Author Page, and her website, where you can look for information about writing and plants, and leave a comment or a gardening question and put a smile on Emma's face. Stay connected on Facebook and Twitter.

RICOTTA COOKIES

Alicia Joseph

COOKIE DOUGH

2 sticks margarine
1 lb. Ricotta cheese
3 eggs
2 tsp. vanilla
4 cups flour
1 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. salt
2 cups sugar

Preheat 350°F.

Mix all ingredients together. Drop onto lightly greased pan by tablespoonful.

Bake 12-15 minutes.

FROSTING

1 cup powdered sugar
2 tbsp. milk
½ tsp. vanilla

Mix the three ingredients to your desired consistency. Spread on cooled cookies.



Alicia Joseph grew up in Westchester, Illinois. Her books are sweet, romantic stories in the LGBT genre. Alicia is currently working on a new novel called *A Penny on the Tracks*, a coming of age story about love and friendship. Alicia has many works-in-progress that she hopes to finish soon. When she is not writing, Alicia enjoys volunteering with animals, rooting for her favorite sports teams, and playing “awesome aunt” to her nine nieces and nephews.

Learn more about Alicia on her blog and Amazon Author Page. Stay connected on Facebook and Twitter.

TWISTED CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES

Anne Montgomery

¾ cup granulated sugar
¾ cup packed brown sugar
8 tbsp. (1 stick) butter
1 tsp. vanilla extract
1 egg
2¼ cups all-purpose flour
1 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. salt
2 cups dark chocolate chips
1 cup dried cranberries
1 cup dried blueberries
1 cup coconut, I prefer the type without added sugar, but either variety works.
1 cup nuts

Preheat oven to 375ºF.

Mix sugars, butter, vanilla, and egg in large bowl. Stir in flour, baking soda, and salt (dough will be stiff).

Stir in chocolate, dried fruit, coconut, and nuts.

Drop dough by rounded tablespoonfuls about 2 inches apart onto ungreased cookie sheet. Bake 8 to 10 minutes or until light brown round the edges (centers will be soft).



Anne Montgomery has worked as a television sportscaster, newspaper and magazine writer, teacher, amateur baseball umpire, and high school football referee. She also worked at ESPN in Bristol, Connecticut, where she anchored the Emmy and ACE award−winning SportsCenter. Montgomery has been a freelance and staff writer for six publications, writing sports, features, movie reviews, and archeological pieces. When she can, Anne indulges in her passions: rock collecting, scuba diving, football refereeing, and playing her guitar.

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D is for

Dessert

BAKED APPLES

Emma Lane

One apple per person
1 tsp. butter per apple
Sprinkle of cinnamon per apple
Tiny dash of nutmeg per apple
Capful of vanilla extract per apple
Generous scoop of vanilla ice cream per apple
Whipped cream optional

Core a nice sized apple and place in a micro-safe dish, one, two, four, or however many are waiting impatiently for you to serve. Add the next four ingredients.

Cook on high, covered, for 3 to 5 minutes, check for softness. Do not overcook. Ideally the apple should retain an apple shape, but be soft enough for the fork to easily cut.

To serve, top warm apples with a generous scoop of vanilla ice cream. A single squirt of whipped cream is optional.

Enjoy the dessert while you have successfully cleansed your home of anything but the lingering fragrance of apples. A wonderful aroma!



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acres outside a typical American village in Western New York. Her day job is working with flowers at her son’s plant nursery.

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CANDIED CRANBERRIES

Dominque Eastwick

2 cups sugar, divided into 1½ cups and ½ cup
½ cup of water
1 (12-oz.) bag fresh cranberries
Thinly sliced oranges, optional

Combine ½ cup sugar and ½ cup water in a medium saucepan over medium heat, stirring until sugar is dissolved, about 2-3 minutes. For those of you who mix your drinks, this is simple syrup. For those of you from the south, this is the Sweet in your tea.

Remove from heat. Let the cranberries/fruit soak. I have heard some people soak the berries for a couple of minutes, other a few hours. I prefer a few hours. Just stir occasionally.

Working in batches, roll cranberries in remaining sugar until well coated. Allow the berries to dry on rack for at least 1 hour.

Use how the mood fits. Give as a gift, top a cake, or put on the table for a friendly gathering as a munchy.



Award-Winning author Dominique Eastwick currently calls North Carolina home with her husband, two children, one crazy lab, and one lazy cat. Dominique spent much of her early life moving from state to state as a Navy Brat. Because of that, traveling is one of her favorite pastimes. When not writing you can find Dominique with her second love…her camera.

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QUICK & EASY S'MORES

Chris Pavesic

1 pkg. (12 oz.) semi-sweet chocolate chips
½ bag (5 oz.) mini marshmallows
2 cups pretzel sticks
2 cups vanilla wafers, broken into pieces

Preheat oven to 250°F.

Pour chocolate chips into an ungreased baking pan. Pop it into oven for about 5 minutes or until the chips get shiny. They should still retain their shape.

Take the pan out and immediately add the other ingredients. Stir as fast as possible because the chocolate will cool quickly.

This can be a bit messy when stirring—you will get chocolate on your hands—but that's part of the fun.

When the other ingredients are coated, spoon the mixture onto parchment paper in serving-size portions. Allow to cool completely and serve.



Chris Pavesic is a fantasy author who lives in the Midwestern United States and loves Kona coffee, steampunk, fairy tales, and all types of speculative fiction. Between writing projects, Chris can most often be found reading, gaming, gardening, working on an endless list of DIY household projects, or hanging out with friends.

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DEATH BY CHOCOLATE ICE CREAM CAKE

Chris Pavesic

ICE CREAM FILLING

Use any type of ice cream or frozen custard you prefer. A single half-gallon will fill the pan completely.

Take the ice cream out of the freezer and let it soften. Line the cake pan with plastic wrap before adding the softened ice cream so it is easier to remove after it re-freezes.

Spoon ice cream into the cake pan and smooth until it is level. Place another piece of plastic wrap over the top before putting it back in the freezer. Refreeze for several hours. You can do this step the night before to ensure that it is frozen completely.

CHOCOLATE CAKE

2 cups organic cake flour
2 cups organic white sugar
1 tsp. baking soda
½ tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. salt
2 sticks butter
4 tbsp. cocoa
1 cup water
1 cup whole milk or almond milk
2 eggs
1 tbsp. vanilla
1 package semi-sweet chocolate chips

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Sift together the cake flour, sugar, soda, powder, and salt in a large mixing bowl and set aside.

In a saucepan set on medium heat, mix the butter, cocoa, and water until the butter is melted. Bring to a boil and then pour the mixture over the dry ingredients.

Blend milk, eggs, and vanilla together and gradually add to the mixture, stirring constantly.

Stir in chocolate chips until they are distributed evenly.

Divide the mixture between the two remaining baking pans. The pans should be lightly buttered and floured prior to pouring in the batter.

Bake 20 minutes or so.

Let the cake cool completely. Remove the two layers from the pans and place on plates. About an hour before serving, place the two cakes in the freezer.

WHIPPED CREAM and CHOCOLATE TOPPING

1 can canned whipped cream
1 bar dark chocolate 80% or higher cocoa

Using a knife or vegetable peeler, chop/shave the chocolate bar. It may tend to crumble a bit if you shave it—this is okay. This step is a bit messy so you may want to do it in advance and just save the chocolate shavings/pieces in a plastic baggie until you add it to the top of the cake.

TO ASSEMBLE

You have to work quickly. Remove bottom cake from freezer. Place it on a serving platter or plate. Remove the ice cream from the freezer. Remove the plastic wrap from the top and invert it onto the frozen cake. Remove the bottom of the plastic wrap. Take the second cake from the freezer and place on top, pressing lightly to level. “Frost” the cake with the canned whipped cream, creating a border on the top. Inside of the border, sprinkle the chocolate pieces/shavings.

Serve immediately.



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EASY VEGAN FRUIT CAKE

Carol Browne

1½ lbs. (675g) mixed sultanas and currants
1½ cup (450ml) water
½ cup (150ml) vegetable oil
12 oz. (350g) 100% whole meal flour
2 oz. (50g) blanched almonds, chopped
1 tbsp. molasses/black treacle
2 tsp. grated lemon rind
2 tsp. ground mixed spice
3 oz. (75g) brown sugar
3 tbsp. sherry or rum, optional

Preheat oven 150°C - 300°F - Gas Mark 2.

Grease and line a 7½ inch (19cm) round cake tin.

Place all the ingredients (except the sherry) in a basin and beat well until evenly mixed. Pour into the prepared tin.

Bake about two hours or until the cake rises and is firm to the touch. Allow to cool slightly in the tin. Spoon sherry over the top. Leave the cake in the tin until cold.

This cake doesn't keep for very long. There are two reasons for this! The lack of fat in the recipe is one; the fact that it is delicious and you won't be able to leave it alone is another. But the cake does freeze extremely well if you do want to save some for another day.



Born in Stafford in the UK, Carol Browne was raised in Crewe, Cheshire, which she thinks of as her home town. Interested in reading and writing at an early age, Carol pursued her passions at Nottingham University and was awarded an honours degree in English Language and Literature. Now living and working in the Cambridgeshire countryside, Carol usually writes fiction and is a contracted author at Burning Willow Press. Her non-fiction books are available at Dilliebooks.

Learn more about Carol on her website and blog. Stay connected on Facebook, Twitter, and her Amazon Author Page.

MINI BROWNIES

HL Carpenter

Non-stick spray
12-cup mini muffin pan
½ cup semi-sweet chocolate chips
3 tbsp. butter
2 tsp. cocoa powder
1 tbsp. molasses or water
1 tsp. vanilla extract
¼ cup flour
1 egg
3 tbsp. granulated sugar
3 tbsp. brown sugar

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Place chocolate chips and butter in a bowl and microwave for 2 minutes at 50% power. Stir until smooth.

Mix cocoa and molasses into the melted chocolate.

Add vanilla, flour, and egg, and mix well. Add sugars and mix well.

Spray muffin pan with cooking spray, then spoon the batter into the cups, dividing evenly.

Bake 10-12 minutes. Tops of brownies will be puffy.



HL Carpenter is a mother/daughter author duo who write family-friendly fiction from their studios in Carpenter Country, a magical place that, like their stories, is unreal but not untrue.

Learn more about HL and enjoy gift reads and excerpts and find out what's happening in Carpenter Country at their website. Stay connected on Pinterest, LinkedIn, Google+, and their Amazon Author Page.

JAZZED UP CHOCOLATE CAKE

Anne Montgomery

1 chocolate cake mix (use Devils Food)
Eggs, oil, water: according to box directions
1 cup walnuts
1 cup mini chocolate chips

Mix the cake as directed on the box.

Finely chop the walnuts. You can also use a food processor. The idea is to reduce them to tiny pieces. It's the oil in the walnuts that makes the cake rich.

Stir walnuts and chocolate chips into the batter, pour into prepared pans. Bake according to the directions on the box.

You can eat the cake plain or decorated. We like a not terribly sweet vanilla butter cream. Use whatever frosting works for you or plop on a dollop of fresh whipped cream.



Anne Montgomery has worked as a television sportscaster, newspaper and magazine writer, teacher, amateur baseball umpire, and high school football referee. She also worked at ESPN in Bristol, Connecticut, where she anchored the Emmy and ACE award–winning SportsCenter. Montgomery has been a freelance and staff writer for six publications, writing sports, features, movie reviews, and archeological pieces.

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KUMQUAT PIE

HL Carpenter

9” PIE SHELL (or use ready-made)

⅓ cup plus 1 tbsp. shortening
1 cup flour
½ tsp. salt
2 -3 tbsp. water

Preheat the oven to 475°F.

Mix the flour and salt and cut the shortening into the mixture until it resembles small peas.

Sprinkle in water and stir with a fork until the mixture sticks together.

Gather the mixture into a ball and roll into a round a bit larger than your pie plate.

Crimp the edges of the pastry along the side of the pie plate, prick the pastry with a fork, and bake in oven 8-10 minutes, until golden brown.

FILLING

1 pint-sized clamshell package of kumquats (enough to make ⅔ cup puree)
1 14-oz. can sweetened condensed milk
½ cup lemon juice
1 cup whipping cream (or omit this and the 3 tbsp. sugar and use ready-made cream)
3 tbsp. sugar

Wash and puree the kumquats in a blender or food processor.

Pour the condensed milk and the lemon juice into a bowl and beat 1-2 minutes.

In a separate bowl, beat the whipping cream with 3 tbsp. of sugar until stiff (above five minutes).

Combine whipped cream with the condensed milk mixture and beat until thick. Fold in the pureed kumquats.

Pour the kumquat mixture into the baked pie shell and chill in the refrigerator until set.

GARNISH (or use ready-made whipped cream)

1 cup whipping cream
3 tbsp. sugar

Before serving the pie, combine whipping cream and sugar. Beat until stiff. Garnish the pie with the whipped cream.



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MAPLE MADNESS BUTTER TARTS

Sharon Ledwith

TART SHELLS

2 cups (500ml) all-purpose flour
1 tsp. (5ml) salt
¾ cup (175ml) all-vegetable shortening, well chilled (we use CRISCO® Golden All-Vegetable Shortening)
4-8 tbsp. (60-120ml) ice cold water

Blend flour and salt in medium mixing bowl. Cut ½-inch (1.5 cm) cubes of chilled shortening into flour mixture using a pastry blender or two knives until mixture resembles coarse crumbs with pea-sized pieces remaining.

Sprinkle 4 tbsp. (60ml) of the ice-cold water over the flour mixture. Using a fork, stir and draw flour from bottom of bowl to the top; press chunks down to bottom of bowl with fork. Add more water by the tablespoon, mixing until dough holds together.

Divide dough into two balls. Flatten balls into ½-inch (1.5 cm) thick disks, wrap in plastic wrap and chill for 30 minutes or up to 2 days.

Place ball of dough on lightly floured work surface. Use a floured rolling pin and roll thinly from center outward. Cut out 6 rounds with 4” (10 cm) cutter. Repeat with second ball of dough. Fit rounds into 12 medium-sized muffin cups.

FILLING

½ cup (125ml) packed brown sugar
¼ cup (60ml) pure maple syrup
¼ cup (60ml) corn syrup
¼ cup (60ml) all-vegetable shortening
1 egg, slightly beaten
1 tsp (5ml) vanilla extract

½ tsp (2ml) salt
¾ cup of raisin or pecans (if desired)

Preheat oven to 425°F (220°C).

Combine all filling ingredients except raisins (or pecans); mix well.

Evenly divide raisins (or pecans) into pastry shells.

Fill cups ⅔ full with syrup mixture.

Bake on bottom shelf for 12 to 15 minutes or just until set. DO NOT OVERBAKE. Cool completely before removing from the pan.

Makes 12 Maple Madness butter tarts.



Sharon Ledwith is the author of the middle-grade/YA time travel series The Last Timekeepers and a teen psychic series Mysterious Tales From Fairy Falls. When not writing, researching, or revising, she enjoys reading, exercising, anything arcane, and an occasional dram of scotch. Sharon lives a serene, yet busy, life in a southern tourist region of Ontario, Canada, with her hubby, one spoiled yellow Labrador and a moody calico cat.

Learn more about Sharon on her website and blog. Stay connected on Facebook and Twitter, Google+, Goodreads, and her Amazon Author Page.

ORANGE GRANITE – FLAVORED ICE

Sloane Taylor

2 cups water
¾ cup sugar
1 cup orange juice
3 tbsp. lemon juice

In a 2-quart saucepan, bring the water and sugar to a boil over medium heat. Stir only until the sugar dissolves. Timing from the moment the sugar water begins to boil, cook the mixture for exactly 5 minutes. Remove the pan from the heat and allow the syrup to cool to room temperature.

Once cooled, stir the orange and lemon juices into the syrup. Pour mixture into a shallow metal pan.

Freeze the granite for 3 to 4 hours. Every 30 minutes, stir and scrape in the ice particles that form on the sides of the pan. The granite should be a fine, snowy texture. For a coarser texture, which I prefer, freeze the flavored syrup in ice cube trays until solid, then drop cubes into a plastic bag and smash with a heavy wooden spoon or mallet.



Sloane Taylor is an award-winning author of erotic romance books released by Toque & Dagger Publishing.

Learn more about Sloane and read excerpts from her books on her website, blog, and Amazon Author Page. Stay connected on Facebook and Twitter.

POUND CAKE WITH FRESH STRAWBERRIES

Sara Daniel

2 sticks butter, room temperature
1 cup sugar
4 eggs
1 tsp. vanilla
¼ tsp. nutmeg
1 tsp. baking powder
2 cups flour
Fresh strawberries – sliced

Preheat oven to 325° F.

Grease and flour a 9 x 5 loaf pan.

Beat butter with an electric mixer for 1 minute.

Add sugar to butter, a bit at a time, beating on medium/high for 5 minutes or until light and fluffy.

Add eggs one at a time, beating for one minute after each egg, and scraping the bowl. Add vanilla and beat for another minute.

Gradually add nutmeg, baking powder, and flour, beat on low/medium until just combined.

Pour into prepared pan. Bake 1 hour.

Cool and slice. Serve with fresh strawberries.



Sara Daniel writes what she loves to read—irresistible romance, from sweet to erotic and everything in between. She battles a serious NASCAR addiction, was once a landlord of two uninvited squirrels, and loses her car keys several times a day.

Learn more about Sara on her website, blog, and Amazon Author Page. Subscribe to Sara's newsletter. Stay connected on Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest.

SALTED CARAMEL APPLE CUPCAKES

HL Carpenter

2-3 apples, peeled, cored, and finely chopped
1 stick plus 1 tablespoon butter, softened to room temperature
⅔ cup brown sugar
2 eggs
1 tsp. vanilla
¼ cup heavy cream
1 cup flour
1 tsp. baking powder
¼ tsp. salt
1 tsp. pumpkin pie spice

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Put ¼ cup apples and 1 tablespoon butter in a bowl and microwave for 1 minute at 50% power to soften. Mash with a fork (lumps are okay). Let cool.

Cream together the stick of softened butter and brown sugar. Blend eggs and vanilla into the creamed mixture. Add the mashed apples and heavy cream to the batter and mix well.

In a small bowl stir together flour, baking soda, salt, and pumpkin pie spice. Add to wet ingredients and mix thoroughly. Batter will be thick.

Fold chopped apple pieces into batter.

Line a 12-muffin tin with baking cups. Spoon batter evenly into the cups.

Bake 20 minutes.

Let cupcakes rest in pan for five minutes. Transfer to baking rack to cool completely.

FROSTING

1 stick of butter
1 cup brown sugar
⅓ cup heavy cream
¼ tsp. salt
2 cups powdered sugar

Melt butter in pot on stove over medium-high heat. Add brown sugar and heavy cream. Stir constantly until sugar is dissolved. Stir in salt.

Let mixture bubble for 2-3 minutes without stirring. Remove from heat. Stir in powdered sugar and mix until smooth.

Frost cooled cupcakes.

CARAMEL SAUCE

1 cup white sugar
¼ cup water
¼ cup butter
⅔ cup heavy cream

Heat sugar and water in pot on stove over medium-high heat, stirring constantly until sugar is dissolved and mixture boils.

Let mixture boil without further stirring until it browns to the color of caramel. Add butter and stir until butter is melted.

Remove from heat. Add heavy cream. Stir until the bubbling stops and the sauce is smooth. Drizzle over cupcakes.

For additional flavor, garnish cupcakes with a sprinkle of salt.



HL Carpenter is a mother/daughter author duo who write family-friendly fiction from their studios in Carpenter Country, a magical place that, like their stories, is unreal but not untrue.

Learn more about HL and enjoy gift reads and excerpts and find out what's happening in Carpenter Country at their website. Stay connected on Pinterest, LinkedIn, Google+, and their Amazon Author Page.

Cooking Tips

General

Always cook with a sink of hot soapy water at the ready. It makes for easier cleanup.

Write the date and your opinion along with any adjustments on your recipes. Make a note in the index, i.e., VG (very good), etc. for future reference.

Sponges are a manmade cleaning treasure that is a breeding ground for bacteria. Discard your used sponge, no matter how clean it looks, monthly.

No one needs a whole sponge for doing dishes. Cut the sponge into quarters. Use one now and save the remainder for the following month.

Meats

Do not flour roasts before you brown them. All you're browning is the flour and the meat is not sealed to hold in its juices.

Always allow roasts, steaks, etc. to sit on a cutting board for 10 minutes, with a foil tent over, before you carve it. This allows the juices to sink back into the meat.

Fruits

Avocados

Do not toss the pits when you make guacamole or another dip that uses avocados. Save them to plunge into the serving dish. The dip will stay green and fresh for at least two days.

Bananas

The easiest method to peel a stubborn banana is from the bottom up. That's right, flip it end over end and strip away.

Cantaloupes

For the sweetest fruit, skip the smooth rinds, and look for the rinds that have cellulite-looking wrinkles.

Pineapples

The day prior to serving cut off the top. Turn the pineapple upside down on a plate and allow it to sit on your counter. All the beautiful juices return to the cut end and make the entire pineapple more flavorful.

Strawberries

What you see is what you get. Strawberries are the only fruit that does not ripen more once it is picked. Those big white sections you see in the plastic container are with you forever.

You can store fresh strawberries in the refrigerator for up to four days. Do not wash them. Lay a paper towel on a plate or low dish, then add the strawberries, but do not mound them. Wash when ready to use.

Tomatoes

Place unripe tomatoes in a brown paper bag. Store in a cool dark spot. This is also great for all the green tomatoes you rescue from your garden at the end of summer.

Do not store tomatoes in the refrigerator. They lose their flavor.

Vegetables

Steam fresh vegetables to retain bright color and crispness. Place a metal steamer in your saucepan. Add chicken stock, white wine, and water to just

below the bottom steamer holes. The stock and wine add a little extra flavor and the alcohol cooks away.

Dried and Canned Beans

When cooking beans for soup, stews, and the like, add a teaspoon or so of baking soda to the mixture. This cuts the negative intestinal reactions to beans and does not affect the flavor or cooking.

Fresh Green Beans

Add a paper towel to the plastic bag when you store green beans in the refrigerator. It absorbs the excess moisture so the beans stay fresh for a longer period of time.

Celery

What to do with those extra stalks that you don't need, but don't want to throw out at today's prices? Chop and sauté in a mix of olive oil and butter. Store in small containers, and freeze until needed for soups, stews, and the like.

Garlic - Fresh

Use a garlic press instead of chopping. The press brings out more flavor and you'll use less garlic.

Lettuce

All types need moisture to stay fresh. When buying head lettuce, look for the longest stem. Scratch the nub with your nail, sprinkle with water, and place in an open plastic bag. Store in the fridge, preferably the crisper drawer.

Leaf lettuces should be rinsed in cool water, wrapped in a dish towel or other cloth, and stored in the crisper drawer of your fridge.

Remoisten the lettuce after each use to retain freshness.

Mushrooms

Clean mushrooms just before using. Wipe with a dry paper towel to remove the growing soil.

Loose mushrooms keep reasonably well in a paper bag and stored in the refrigerator.

After you use a portion of mushrooms that come in a plastic container, cover the remainder with cling wrap and store in the refrigerator.

Onions

Cut the root end off onions first. This allows the gas that makes your eyes water to escape.

After you cut the roots off a green onion, use a piece of paper towel to pull off the slippery end. Stops your fingers from smelling and being sticky.

What to do with the rest of an onion when the recipe calls for a small amount? Sauté the remainder. Freeze in small containers for your next recipe.

Salads

Make your salad early in the day and never worry about it turning brown or mushy. Add your salad ingredients, without the dressing, to a large bowl. Gently toss until well mixed. Cover with a damp paper towel and store in fridge until you’re ready to add dressing and serve.

Herbs

Chop fresh herb leaves easily. Place the leaves, without stems, into a cup and snip with scissors.

Dairy

Cheese

Spray your cheese grater with a little non-stick cooking spray. The cheese won’t stick and cleanup is a breeze.

Grate your own Parmesan, Asiago, Swiss, etc. fresh when you need it. The remainder of the block will keep in your fridge for months if you cover tightly with cling wrap or aluminum foil, then store in a plastic bag. Should a little mold appear simply scrape it off with a knife. Surprisingly the cheese is still good.

Eggs

Make hardboiled eggs easily. Eggs should be in your refrigerator no less than 5 days otherwise they are devils to peel. Set eggs in a saucepan and then fill with cold water to cover. Be sure to add the lid so the pan boils faster. Bring to a boil over medium heat. Turn off the burner and keep the pan on the burner for 8-9 minutes.

Peeling hard boiled eggs is easy. After the eggs are boiled, pour out the hot water. Add cold to the pot. Crack the end of each egg against your sink gently, then place them back in the cold water while you do the others. Roll the eggs along the counter or the middle part of your sink with a little pressure. This takes a little practice to master so you don’t mush the egg. The shell peels off easily.

Store peeled hardboiled eggs for up to five days in a glass container. Cover the eggs with water. Change the water every other day.

Milk

Children of any age should not drink expired milk, but adults can for an additional day or two without a problem.

Additional Tips

Bread

Don’t store bread in the refrigerator. This dries it out.

Bread freezes well for up to one month.

Brown Sugar

When light or dark brown sugar hardens place it into a plastic bag. Add a slice of white bread and seal. Within hours the sugar is back to a usable state.

Cooking Oil

Test if the oil is hot enough for frying by adding a small piece of white bread to the heated pan. When the bread toasts golden quickly the oil is ready.

Ice Ring

The following recipe is simple and adds a festive look to any punch bowl.

Water
1 orange, peeled and sliced thin
10 maraschino cherries, halved
15 seedless red grapes, halved
10 strawberries, halved
25 blueberries

Arrange thin citrus slices and another fruit of your choice, or any combination of fruits omitting the orange, in an attractive design in a Bundt pan. Pour water into mold to partially cover fruit. Freeze.

When frozen, add water to fill mold ¾ full. Another option is to use orange juice, another juice, or ginger ale whichever works best with your recipe in place of water. This keeps the punch cold without diluting it. Refreeze.

At serving time, unmold by dipping the pan in hot water to loosen the ice. Float the ring fruit side up in punch bowl.

Pasta

Don’t add oil or salt to the cooking water. Those additions make it difficult for the sauce to cling to the pasta.

After pasta is cooked *al dente* and drained, return it to the pot. Stir in a few ladles of hot sauce. Allow to sit for a few minutes before serving. This stops the watery ring that forms on your dinner plate or bowl.

From all of us to all of you,

Happy Cooking!