

WINTER SEASONAL SUGGESTIONS 1999

Greetings of the season to one and all! In this issue we have included many activities that encourage adult and child interaction. During this busy holiday season, we hope you will use these ideas to create happy memories of time spent helping others, preparing and eating healthful taste treats as well as having some active fun. Happy Holidays!

Jan Temple and Janet Martin

HEALTHFUL TASTE TREATS

SUGAR FREE HOLIDAY NOG (8 servings)

- 1 pkg. (.9 oz) sugar free instant vanilla pudding mix
- 7 cups skim milk (divided)
- 1 Tbsp vanilla extract
- 1 tsp. rum flavoring
- 1 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp. ground nutmeg
- 2 pkts sugar substitute (Equal)
- 1 can evaporated skim milk

In large bowl combine pudding mix, 2 cups milk, vanilla, and sugar substitute. Mix according to pudding directions. Pour pudding mixture into half-gallon pitcher (that has a tight fitting lid). Add 3 cups milk and shake well. Add remaining milk and flavoring. Shake well. Chill before serving.

RAINBOW WAFER TREE

- 3 Tablespoons margarine
- 4 cups miniature marshmallows
- 5 cups rice cereal
- 1/2 teaspoon green food color

Decorations: Rainbow colored vanilla wafers, bear shaped crackers and red candies for ornaments, popcorn for garland, and peanut butter for glue.

To prepare tree: Melt margarine in a 2-quart microwave safe dish (full power for 45 to 60 seconds). Stir in marshmallows, coating with margarine. Cook at 60% power for 5 to 6 minutes--or until marshmallows are melted. Add food color; stir well. Add cereal and stir. Pat mixture into a 9 x 13 that has been treated with vegetable cooking spray. To shape the tree: Starting at center of 9" side of pan, cut to both corners of opposite 9" side--this will be the tree. Use leftover to make a star and trunk for the tree. To decorate the tree: Use peanut butter to "glue" decorations onto the tree.



ALMOND FRUIT ROUNDS (Yield 20 servings)

- 1 pkg. mini bagels (10 pre-sliced bagels)
- 4 tsp sugar
- 1 pkg. (8 oz) reduced fat cream cheese softened
- 1/4 cup almond paste
- 1/2 tsp almond extract
- 1 can (11 oz) mandarin oranges, drained
- 1 cup halved red grapes
- 2 kiwifruit, peeled, quartered and sliced
- 1 jar maraschino cherries, drained
- 1/2 cup apricot preserves, warmed
- 1/2 cup slivered almonds, toasted

In a mixing bowl, beat cream cheese, almond paste, extract and sugar until smooth. Spread over mini bagels. Top each half with at least one piece of each fruit used. Brush with preserves; sprinkle with almonds.

FRUIT BASKET ON A STICK

A sure way to make that fruit basket disappear.

- Apple sliced in rounds (not wedges)
- Orange slices, rind removed
- Kiwi slices
- Banana slices
- Maraschino cherries



Stack one piece of each of the fruits listed and spear with a plastic toothpick.

HERBED SPINACH BALLS (Makes 30 balls)

- 1 10-oz pkg. frozen chopped spinach, thawed and well drained (about 1 cup)
- 1/2 cup finely chopped onion
- 1 egg, beaten
- 2 Tbsp. margarine (tub), melted
- 1/3 cup plain dried breadcrumbs
- 2 tbsp grated Parmesan cheese
- 1/4 tsp each garlic powder, thyme leaves, rubbed sage, salt
- Dash pepper

Preheat oven to 350°F. In medium mixing bowl combine spinach, onion, egg, and margarine, mixing well. Add remaining ingredients and mix till thoroughly combined. Shape spinach mixture into balls about the size of a walnut. Spray nonstick baking sheet with nonstick cooking spray; arrange balls on sheet. Bake till balls are cooked through and lightly browned, 15 to 20 minutes.

Adapted from: Weight Watchers Favorite Recipes, NAL Books, 1986

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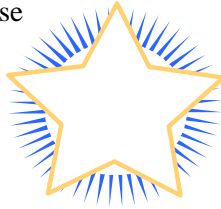
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SAUSAGE-FILLED STARS (Yield 4 dozen)

1 lb. bulk sausage
1 ½ cups (6 oz) shredded cheddar cheese, reduced fat
1 ½ cups (6 oz) shredded Monterey Jack cheese
1 medium sweet red pepper, diced
1 medium green pepper, diced
1 can (4 oz) chopped green chilies, drained
1 can (4 ½ oz) chopped ripe olive, drained
1 envelope ranch salad dressing mix
48 wonton wrappers
Vegetable oil

In a skillet, cook sausage until no longer pink; blot on paper toweling, rinse and drain. Add cheeses, peppers, chilies, and olives; add dressing mix; mix well. Set aside. Brush one side of each wonton with oil; press oil side down onto the bottom and up the sides of a muffin pan. Bake at 350°F for 5 minutes or until golden brown. Transfer to a baking sheet. Fill each with about 2 tbsp of the sausage mixture. Bake for 5 minutes or until heated through. Serve warm.

Adapted from: CountryWoman Christmas 1999, Reiman Publications, Greendale, WI



ELEGANT CHEESE TORTE (24-30 servings)

4 pkgs. (8 oz) reduced fat cream cheese, softened
1 cup butter or margarine, softened
2 tsp coarsely ground pepper
1 jar (5 ¾ oz) stuffed olives, drained and chopped
8 cups (32 oz) reduced fat shredded sharp cheddar cheese, room temperature
¾ cup apple cider, room temperature
¼ tsp paprika
1 cup chopped pecans, toasted
Grapes and assorted crackers

In a mixing bowl, beat the cream cheese and butter until smooth. Remove 3 ½ cups to a small bowl; stir in pepper and set aside. Fold olives into the remaining cream cheese mixture. Spread evenly over the bottom of a 9" springform pan; set aside. In food processor, beat cheddar cheese, cider and paprika until almost smooth. Spread half over olive layer. Top with remaining cheddar mixture. Cover with plastic wrap; refrigerate 6 hours or until firm. Place on serving plate and remove sides of pan. Press pecans into top; garnish with grapes. Serve with crackers.

Adapted from Country Woman Christmas 1999, Reiman Publications, Greendale, WI

PINEAPPLE ANGELS

Fresh fruit is such a wonderful snack, but until it's cut up, many of us won't bother to eat it. Here is a fun way to get involved with fruit and eat as you create.

For each angel you will need:



- A wedge from a slice of fresh pineapple (body)
- Half a slice of orange cut in half or smaller (wings)
- Rind from half a slice of orange (halo)
- A slice of banana (head)

Use your imagination and toothpicks to hold it together.

PINEAPPLE HOLIDAY TREE

A solution for "What to do with the top of a fresh pineapple?" Make it into a table decoration!

1 pineapple with a fresh, full set of leaves
1 red apple
Powdered sugar
Maraschino cherries

When preparing a fresh pineapple, cut the leaf portion from the meat of the pineapple. Turn the leaf portion upside down using the apple as a stand or base for the tree. Cut a 1-inch slice from the pineapple. Using a star-shaped cookie cutter, cut a star from the fresh slice of pineapple. Attach it to the top of the tree using toothpicks. Make snow for the tree by sprinkling with powdered sugar (use a sifter or wire strainer). Attach cherries as ornaments if desired.

FESTIVE FLORET FIR

12" Styrofoam cone
Aluminum foil, optional
5 ½ cups cauliflowererets (about 1 small head)
4 ½ cups broccoli florets (about 1 medium bunch)
Toothpicks
12 cherry tomatoes
3 medium carrots, cut into ½" slices
½ cup small whole ripe olives
Dip or salad dressing.

Cover Styrofoam cone with foil if desired. Attach cauliflower and

broccoli to the cone by sticking one end of a toothpick into a floret and the other end into the cone, using the larger florets at the base.

Attach a cherry tomato to treetop
OR use a star shaped cookie cutter to cut a star from a

yellow pepper. Attach carrots, olives and remaining tomatoes with toothpicks to the cone. Fill in any gaps with small florets, using half of a toothpick. Serve with dip or dressing.

Country Woman Magazine, July/Aug. 1999, Reiman Publications



BAGEL WREATH

Mini bagels, sliced

Reduced fat cream cheese spread (plain or vegetable)

Chopped vegetables (ex: broccoli, cauliflower, carrots, green onions, red pepper, green pepper)

Optional garnishes: red pepper, leaf lettuce, cherry tomatoes, parsley



Use food processor to chop an assortment of colorful vegetables. Stir to combine all vegetables. Put vegetable pieces in a bowl. Spread each half of a mini bagel with cream cheese. Dip the cream cheese side of the

bagel into the vegetable mix to get some veggies to “stick” to the bagel. Arrange the bagel halves on a round platter to form a wreath. Garnish with lettuce, parsley, cherry tomatoes and a red pepper bow if desired. To cut a bow shape from a red pepper: Use 2 large triangles for the loops, 1 small square for the center of the bow; two strips for the streamers.

LEARNING TO GROW BY GIVING

Following are several ways for your family to help others and learn generosity:

- As a family, contribute to a charitable organization.
- Together help a neighbor by shoveling snow, playing with a young child, or delivering a homemade food or gift item.
- String popcorn to hang on a tree for the birds to eat.
- Check with a local nursing home, day care center, or community group to learn about helping projects that need to be done.
- Frame a child’s “work of art” for a grandparent or relative.
- Make an ornament for a volunteer who helps your family.
- Visit or call someone who can’t leave home.
- Make family “helping” projects a priority.
- Anonymously contribute supplies to other families.
- Donate books to the library or toys to a homeless shelter
- Make a gingerbread person, star, or tree paper chain to wrap around an amaryllis plant pot and deliver to a home bound person.
- Play games with residents at a nursing home.
- Make a box of puppets for a young friend.
- Make peanut butter, birdseed and pinecone bird feeders to hang outside for the birds.
- Make a coupon book for each member of the family of things you will do for them; for example, make breakfast, play a game, clean out the car, etc.

GAME IDEAS

Thanks to ISU Extension co-workers Ann Torbert and Cathann Kress for contributing creative game ideas. For safety, use inflated balloons only with school age children.

SNOWBALL BASEBALL

First, mark bases on the floor, tape works best. To play, you need a bag of big marshmallows and a spatula. Pick teams, and play the game like regular baseball, the only difference being that you use the spatula for a bat and the marshmallows for a ball. As a twist, “run the bases” on your knees.



SNOWBALL JUGGLING

Divide the youth in circles of 6-7 children. The children clasp hands to make a circle. An adult tosses a white balloon above the circle; the children try to keep the white balloon (snowball) in the air by using their heads, elbows, hands, (anything except their feet). As they accomplish the task, add more white balloons (snowballs) above the circle. The circle can move around; the only guideline is that the children need to keep their hands hooked together.

SNOW WALK RELAY

Each team needs a pair of mittens, a box of Styrofoam packing peanuts, and a container at the goal line. The first player in each line puts on the pair of mittens, scoops up a handful of Styrofoam peanuts, runs to the goal bucket and drops them in. The youth returns to his/her line and gives the mittens to the next person. The relay continues. The goal is to deliver the most “pieces of snow” to the team’s container.

RED, WHITE, AND GREEN RELAYS

For the following relays, divide the children in teams of 4-6. Each relay team is set up in a line with the “goal” bucket/basket about 5-6 yards away. You can adjust the distance according to the size of the room. In these relays, each child in the line completes the task, tags the next person and on down the line.

RED AND GREEN BALLOON HOP RELAY

Each team needs a garbage bag of red and green inflated balloons (1/youth). One at a time, each youth takes a balloon out of the bag at the front of their line, puts the balloon between his/her knees, hops to the laundry basket (5-6 yds away), drops the balloon in the basket and runs back. When the first player returns, he/she tags the next player who does the same thing.



RED HOT SCOOP RELAY

Each team needs a spoon and a container of red-hot candies at the beginning of the line and a plastic "goal" container at the goal line. The first person scoops up a spoon full of red hots, walks to the goal bucket, and deposits the red-hot candies. The player returns and hands off the spoon to the next person. The goal is to have the most red-hot candies in the goal bucket at the end of his/her line.

CANDY CANE SLIDE RELAY

Each person on the team needs a candy cane and each team needs a small paper holiday bag with handles. The first player on the team holds the candy cane by the rounded part and carries the shopping bag with the straight end of the candy cane. He/she carries the bag around the goal bucket, walks back to the line and gives the bag to the next person by sliding it from the his/her candy cane to the next person's candy cane without using their hands to switch the bag.



GIFTS FROM THE KITCHEN

PINT SIZE HOLIDAY SOUP IN A JAR (*This was available last year, but made in a quart jar. That was a lot of soup for a smaller household. For your convenience, here is the pint-size version.*)

Use a 1-pint Mason jar to layer the following ingredients in this order:

- 2 Tablespoons beef bouillon
- 2 Tablespoons onion flakes
- ¼ cup split peas
- ¼ cup round macaroni
- ¼ cup lentils
- 2 Tablespoons barley

Carefully shake down each layer as you fill jar, finish filling jar with any shape pasta. Use glue to cover the jar lid with a piece of fabric that is 5 ¾" in diameter. Attach the following directions to the jar with a small ribbon.

TO MAKE HOLIDAY SOUP:

1. In a large pan, brown one half pound of ground beef, pork, or turkey. Drain and rinse.
2. Remove pasta from the top of the jar and set aside. Add the rest of the jar's contents to pan with 6 cups of water and the drained meat.
3. Bring to a boil; simmer slowly until peas and lentils are tender (about 35-40 minutes). Add pasta during the last 15 minutes.

LAURA'S SOY GOOD OATMEAL COOKIE KITS

A little twist on the "sand art" craze. These are a kit that help the recipient find a way to get some soyfoods in their diet.

Use a 1-quart Mason jar to layer the following ingredients in this order:

- 1 cup old fashioned oats
- 1/3 cup mini candy coated chocolates
- ¼ cup soy nuts (unsalted)
- 1 cup old fashioned oats

Wrap in green colored plastic wrap and add to jar:
2 tablespoons soy flour in bottom of ½ cup
All-purpose flour to make ½ cup flour total
½ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon baking soda

Wrap in red colored plastic wrap and add to top of jar:
½ cup brown sugar
¼ cup granulated sugar

Use glue to cover the jar lid with a piece of fabric that is 6 ¾" in diameter. Attach the following directions to the jar with a small ribbon.



To make **LAURA'S SOY GOOD OATMEAL COOKIES:**

Makes about 21/2 doz.

1. In mixing bowl, combine ¼ cup margarine, 1 egg, 2 Tablespoons water, ½ teaspoon vanilla and the red packet containing sugars. Beat well.
2. Add the green packet of dry ingredients. Beat well.
3. Stir in oatmeal, soy nuts and chocolate candies.
4. Drop by teaspoonfuls onto greased cookie sheets. Bake at 350°F for 11 minutes.

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