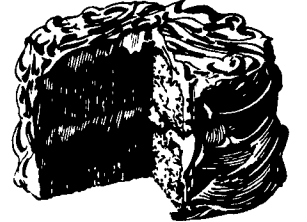


# Home On The Range



## Gifts From The Kitchen

It's that time of the year when thoughts focus on sharing special feelings with friends and family. There's no better way to express these sentiments than with home-baked gifts.

When preparing baked goods to give as gifts, choose recipes that have a festive look and are pleasing to most palates.

Create additional holiday baking fun by inviting children to participate in the creative process. Many tasks, such as measuring ingredients, rolling dough and decorating, can be delegated to children with some supervision. These activities can also be used to teach valuable lessons about counting and fractions.

The finished confections will taste all the sweeter for the extra dash of love and care that went into their preparation.

### BAKED CARAMEL CORN

- 1 cup butter
- 1/2 cup corn syrup
- 6 quarts popped popcorn
- 2 cups firmly packed brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon vanilla

Melt butter in saucepan. Stir in brown sugar, corn syrup, and salt. Bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Boil without stirring for 5 minutes. Remove from heat. Stir in baking soda and vanilla. Gradually pour over popped corn, mixing well.

Turn into 2 large shallow baking pans. Bake in 250 degree oven for one hour. Stir every 15 minutes. Remove from oven. Cool completely.

Break apart and store in airtight container.

**Michelle Ryan**  
Dauphin Co. Dairy Princess

### PING PONG CANDY

- Boil together in electric frying pan:
  - 2 cups molasses
  - 2 cups sugar
  - 2 cups milk
  - 2 sticks butter

Boil over medium heat for about 30 minutes. Add 1 cup black walnuts and 2 teaspoons vanilla. Pour into buttered 8x8-inch pan. (The syrup looks curdled). Cool. Cut into squares and wrap in wax paper.

**Cordelia Wolfe**  
Seven Valleys

### HOLIDAY RUM TORTE

- Cake:**
- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
  - 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
  - 3 eggs
  - 1 1/4 cups sugar
  - 1/4 cup milk
  - 1/4 cup butter
  - 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

- Filling and Frosting:**
- 2 cups whipping cream
  - 2 tablespoons confectioners sugar
  - 2 tablespoons almond liqueur
  - 1/4 cup whole-milk Ricotta cheese
  - 1/2 cup light rum, divided
  - 1-ounce square semi-sweet chocolate, divided
  - 1/4 cup chopped toasted almonds
  - Chopped candied fruit, if desired
  - Finely grated chocolate, if desired

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. For cake, combine flour and baking powder; set aside. Beat eggs in small mixer bowl until thickened, 4 to 5 minutes. Reduce speed to medium and gradually add sugar, beating until lemon-colored, about 5 minutes. Add flour mixture to egg mixture. Beat until combined. Heat milk and butter in small saucepan until butter melts. Add to batter, beating until combined. Stir in vanilla. Pour batter into well-buttered jelly roll pan. Bake 15 to 20 minutes. Cool cake in pan on wire rack for 10 minutes. Loosen sides and remove; cool completely. Cut cake vertically into 3 pieces, each 10x5-inches.

For filling and frosting, combine whipping cream, sugar, and liqueur in large mixer bowl. Beat until almost stiff. Add Ricotta and beat until smooth. Place one cake layer on serving plate. Sprinkle with 1/3 of the rum. Spread with about 1 cup whipped cream mixture. Sprinkle with 1/3 grated chocolate. Repeat with next layer. Top with last cake layer. Sprinkle with remaining rum. Frost top and sides of cake with remaining frosting. Press almonds onto sides of cake. Pipe any remaining whipped cream mixture through a pastry tube with a fluted tip along top edges of cake. Refrigerate at least 4 hours or overnight. Just before serving, sprinkle candied fruit down center of top of cake. Dust fluted frosting lightly with chocolate. Slice and serve.

**MAMMA**



Easy on the cook, this fabulous Holiday Rum Torte can be made ahead, frosted, and frozen. The whipping cream and Ricotta cheese frosting survive the rigors of freezing unscathed.

### CARAMEL MINI-POPCORN BALLS

- 24 squares vanilla caramel candies
  - 1 tablespoon water
  - 5 to 6 cups popped popcorn
- In large mixing bowl, place unwrapped caramels and water. Microwave on high for 1 minute. Stir. Continue microwaving on high, stirring every 30 seconds, until caramels are melted. Add popcorn; toss until well coated. Wet hands; shape mixture into 2-inch balls. Wrap each popcorn ball in a sheet of crystal clear plastic wrap. Makes 18 popcorn balls.

### HOLIDAY SNACK MIX

- 3 cups cinnamon toast cereal
  - 2 cups chocolate bear-shaped graham snacks
  - 2 cups peanuts
  - 1 1/2 cups red and green candy-coated chocolate pieces
- In large mixing bowl, combine cereal, graham snacks, peanuts, and chocolate pieces. Pour mixture into container with lid. Makes: 16 to 18 servings.

For an instant gift, top a jar of holiday snack mix with a spectacular plastic wrap bow. Place snack mix in clear containers with lids and decorate lids.

## Featured Recipe

Cheese, a nutritious, delicious food, is available in countless shapes, sizes, and flavors. To help consumers make cheese choices, the American Dairy Association has produced The Complete Cheese Handbook. This colorful, 20-page booklet offers a variety of information, including a cheese lover's guide to selection, tips for choosing and storing cheese, cooking guidelines for a variety of cheeses (including low-fat), suggestions for designing a cheese board with taste and visual appeal, cheese nutrition information, and tasty cheese recipes.

For a copy of the booklet, send a self-addressed, stamped envelop to Complete Cheese Handbook, Dairy and Nutrition Council Mid East, 3592 Corporate Drive, Suite 114, Columbus, OH 43231.

Here is a recipe from the booklet.

### CHEESY MUSHROOMS

- 24 mushroom caps, about 2 inches in diameter
  - Fresh lemon juice
  - Melted butter
  - 1/4 cup crushed herb-seasoned croutons
  - 1 egg
  - 1/2 teaspoon red pepper sauce
  - 1 1/2 cups shredded Monterey Jack cheese
  - 1 1/2 cups shredded Cheddar cheese
  - 1/2 cup minced green onion
  - 1/2 cup minced green pepper
  - 2 tablespoons chopped pimento, drained
- Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Carefully scoop out stem of mushrooms. Dip caps in lemon juice, then melted butter. Place hollow sides up on baking sheet. Sprinkle with crushed croutons. Combine egg and red pepper sauce in small mixing bowl. Beat until thick and lemon colored, about 3 minutes. Stir in cheeses, onion, green pepper, and pimento. Place about 1 heaping tablespoon cheese mixture in each mushroom cap. Bake 10 to 12 minutes or until cheese is melted. Serve immediately.

## Recipe Topics

If you have recipes for the topics listed below, please share them with us. We welcome your recipes, but ask that you include accurate measurements, a complete list of ingredients and clear instructions with each recipe you submit. Send your recipes to Lou Ann Good, Lancaster Farming, P.O. Box 609, Ephrata, PA 17522. Recipes should reach our office one week before publishing date.

### December

- 14- Holiday Cookies
- 21- Fireside Treats
- 28- Ideas For Leftovers

### January

- 4- Lo-Cal Recipes