



Cook's Question Corner

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Pumpkin Cookies

1 cup lard
2 cups mashed pumpkin
2 cups brown sugar
Sift together:
4 cups flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
2 teaspoons baking soda
2 teaspoons cinnamon
Cream pumpkin, sugar, and lard. Add sifted ingredients.

Add:

1 cup nuts (optional)
1 cup raisins or dates
Drop on ungreased cookie sheets. Bake at 375 degrees for approximately 12 minutes.
Ice with confectioners frosting flavored with maple flavoring.

Stovetop Cookies

2 cups granulated sugar
3 tablespoons cocoa
¼ cup butter
½ cup milk
Boil 5 minutes. Remove from heat. Stir in:

3 cups oatmeal
½ cup peanut butter
1 teaspoon vanilla

Drop by teaspoonful onto waxed paper. Chill.

Russian Tea Cakes

2 cups butter, softened
1 cup confectioners' sugar
2 teaspoons vanilla
4½ cups flour
¼ teaspoon salt
1½ cups chopped nuts

Cream butter and sugar. Mix in remaining ingredients. Shape into one-inch balls. Bake at 400 degrees for 10-12 minutes. Roll in confectioners' sugar. Cool. Roll in confectioners' sugar again.

Variation: use coconut or finely chopped candied cherries instead of nuts.

Old-Fashioned Ginger Cookies

3 cups dark molasses
1 cup sugar
2 cups shortening
8-10 cups flour
1 teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons baking soda
1 tablespoon ginger
1 tablespoon cinnamon
1½ cups buttermilk

Heat molasses and sugar. Stir in shortening and then dry ingredients alternately with buttermilk, ending with flour, adding no more than needed to make a firm dough. Chill. Roll ¼-inch thick. Cut out and bake at 350 degrees for 20-25 minutes.

ANSWER — John Probst, Springfield, wanted a recipe for mustard eggs. Thanks to Barb Gayman, Chambersburg, for faxing this recipe.

Mustard Eggs

10-12 hard cooked eggs
3 tablespoons prepared mustard
¾ cup sugar
½ cup vinegar
1 cup water
Pinch salt

Mix all ingredients except eggs and heat just until warm. Add eggs and store in refrigerator for a day or so to develop flavor. A blender or hand blended make the mustard mixture smoother.

ANSWER — Lou Stryker from Haddon Heights, N.J., wanted an ethnic German recipe for potato soup, which she remembers her grandmother making with chunks of potatoes and a broth similar to vegetable or beef soup.

Potato Soup

5 cups cubed raw potatoes
1 cup diced onion
2 cups chicken stock (no fat)
1 tablespoon parsley flakes
¼ teaspoon dried hot pepper
¼ teaspoon cracked black pepper
1 cup light sour cream
1 teaspoon bacon bits

Bring to a boil and cook until potatoes are soft about 15-20 minutes. Add sour cream, heat just until smooth and hot. Garnish with bacon bits. Serves 4.

Family Living Focus

by
Multi-County
Extension Agent

Winifred McGee



Almost every day, I talk to someone who wants to start their own business. The phone calls always have a truly optimistic note. Each caller has a wonderful idea — their friends have told them so — and they want to begin making some money using skills that they just happened to pick up through a hobby or interest of one sort or another. Their enthusiasm usually has them floating high on a cloud of optimism . . . no time for planning now! Moving now (before others steal the idea) is foremost on their minds.

But should it be? The rare second phone calls I receive indicate

that hopeful optimism is great, but it doesn't go far if it replaces good planning in the operation of a small business. Luck is good at the carnival, when the stakes are a dollar and it'll all go to charity anyway. That's a small risk, much the same as getting up in the morning. Business is a big risk, though, — of money, time, and ego — so careful planning is needed to see that things go the way optimism said they should. It's easiest if you plan for success from the start of your business venture, but it's never too late. Taking time now to go through the following steps will help a start-

ANSWER — Beth Graves, Columbia, wanted a recipe for Depression Potato Soup made with ground beef, onions, and diced potatoes. Thanks to Orpah Umholtz, Valley View, who sent a recipe that her dad brought home from World War I. The family called it Slum Soup and made it a lot during the Depression. It is one of the best soups that Orpah has tasted.

Depression Potato Soup

1½ pounds ground beef
1 quart corn
1 quart potatoes, diced
Parsley
1 chopped onion
Salt and pepper to taste
Brown ground beef and onion in oil or shortening. Add 1 quart water. Add potatoes, corn, and parsley.

Cook 30 to 45 minutes until potatoes are done. Add more water if needed.

ANSWER — Tina Forry, Palmyra, wanted an old recipe for chocolate chip cookies, which are soft and round almost like a sugar cookie. Thanks to Eileen Dove for sending a recipe, which she writes was requested by Carol Grove.

Soft Chocolate Chip Cookies

¾ cup margarine
1½ cups brown sugar
2 eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 tablespoon vinegar
1 cup evaporated milk
2½ cups flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon salt
1 package chocolate chips
1 cup chopped nuts (optional)

Cream butter and brown sugar until light. Add eggs and beat well. Add vanilla and vinegar to evaporated milk. Sift dry ingredients and add alternately with milk to creamed mixture; mix well.

Stir in chocolate chips and nuts. Drop by rounded tablespoons, two inches apart, on greased cookie sheet. Bake in 350 oven about 15 minutes or until delicately brown and firm to touch. Cool on rack.

ANSWER — This is actually an answer to several requests, for Betty Gruver, Hope, N.J., who wanted recipes to make fresh pork sausage, Italian sweet sausage, and Italian hot sausage in bulk, to a Kutztown reader who wanted a recipe for pepperoni made with venison or beef, and to Rose Diehl, Bloomsburg, who wanted a recipe for Venison and Pork Soupie. Bob Downey of Street, Md., writes that he makes a lot of homemade sausages and jerky. His bible for these projects is a book written by Rytex Kutas called "Great Sausage Recipe and Meat Curing." The best jerky recipe Bob ever is in the book. There are also recipes for ground beef and venison jerky, pepperoni, souse and much, much more. A free catalog of Sausage Making, Smoking, and Meat Curing supplies, equipment, and spices may be requested by writing to Sausage Maker, 26 Military Rd., Buffalo, N.Y. 14207 or call (716) 876-5521 or fax (716) 875-0302. A Shirley Walters of Lockport, N.Y. also recommends the Sausage Maker, but she gives the street address as 177 Military Rd. We are not sure which address is correct.

Bob writes that when making 5-pound or less batches of jerky, he uses an American Harvest Dehydrator. For dried ground meat sticks similar to Slim Jims, American Harvest Jerky Works is a great help. The company sells seasoning kits for various flavors of ground beef jerky.

up, or existing, business to start down the path of success.

First, stop and think. Is your (business) idea a good one for you? An important first step is to assess your personal situation so that you have a clear understanding of how well your business fits in with your life, overall. This involves asking yourself a series of questions.

- Are you willing to make decisions and see things through to the end, take criticism and rejection and be organized and self-disciplined so that you may reach success?

- Are you willing to work hard for your idea, and stick with it even if rewards are slow in coming?

- Do you tend to plan, getting things lined up before you jump into action?

- Is this idea likely to have the support of your family and friends, or might it add stress to your home life?

- Are you willing to take the risks necessary to reach your goals?

- Can you use existing resources, such as family labor, buildings, equipment and experience, to serve as the building blocks for your enterprise?

- Does the enterprise offer the potential for positive new experiences that might complement your current lifestyle and responsibilities?

Optimism is replaced by assurance when you ask yourself: Is your idea a good BUSINESS idea? You can get a good feel for this by answering some of the following questions:

- Just how clear is my idea and how clearly can I tell others about it?

- Who are my customers and what are their needs and wants?

- How do I connect with my customers?

- Who is my competition? If there is no competition, why not?

- How many people will buy my product or service? Is this number likely to grow or get smaller in the future? What will I do when this happens?

- What kind of equipment, facilities, and supplies will I need? How much will this cost?

- Who will do the work and how will it get done?

- How much money will I have to spend in the next year, and how much can I REALLY expect to make?

Careful thought and time spent in research should help you to answer these questions. Don't make the mistake of figuring that the questions will answer themselves!

After you assess your personal situation and do some research, if the business is still a "go," you need to set pen to paper (or boot up the computer) and plan how you'll actually do the business. A business plan is the best tool you'll have for your enterprise. It is a summary of what your business is, what your goals are, the results of your marketing and production research and your projected expenses and income. It does not have to be an epic. For a simple, one-person, part-time business with small start-up costs, a plan may take two sheets of paper. A larger, more complex idea that needs bank financing may mean putting together a document an inch thick.

One thing that all plans have in common is that the writer, that business owner, took the time and care necessary to plan for his or her success . . . not just hope for it. "Hopers" are here today and gone tomorrow. "Planners" are in for the long, successful, haul.