



# Home on the Range

## HAPPY HOLIDAYS

*Delight family and friends with special treats*

'Tis the season for homemade treats. These festive recipes, using maraschino cherries, caramels and marshmallows, are sure to warm the hearts and taste buds of family and friends. Because they are so quick and easy, the recipes also give the cook extra time to spend with family and friends. After all, that's really what the holiday season is all about.



Caramel-Cherry Sticky Buns and Nutty Caramel Chip Bars

### Nutty Caramel Chip Bars

Makes 3 dozen

- 3/4 cup butter
  - 3/4 cup sugar
  - 2 cups all-purpose flour
  - 1 (14-ounce) package caramels
  - 1/4 cup water
  - 2 eggs, beaten
  - 1 cup peanuts, coarsely chopped
  - 1 cup miniature marshmallows
  - 1 cup semisweet chocolate chips
1. Beat butter and sugar in bowl with mixer until creamy; blend in flour. Press into ungreased 15 x 10 x 1-inch baking pan. Bake at 350°F for 15 minutes.
  2. Melt caramels and water in saucepan over low heat, stirring until smooth.
  3. Gradually blend caramel sauce into eggs in medium bowl. Stir in peanuts; pour over baked crust. Sprinkle with marshmallows and chocolate chips.
  4. Bake for 8 to 10 minutes more or until marshmallows are lightly browned. Cool completely. Cut into bars.
- Microwave: To melt caramels in microwave, reduce water to 2 tablespoons. Microwave caramels and water in small deep glass bowl on HIGH (100% power) for 2 1/2 to 3 1/2 minutes or until sauce is smooth, stirring every minute.

### Caramel Brownies

Makes 16 brownies

- 1/2 cup butter
  - 5 ounces unsweetened chocolate, chopped
  - 1 3/4 cups sugar
  - 2 eggs
  - 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
  - 1 cup flour
  - 2/3 cup walnuts, chopped
  - 25 caramels (about 1/2 [14-ounce] bag)
  - 3 tablespoons heavy cream
1. Melt butter and chocolate in saucepan over low heat, stirring constantly. Cool slightly.
  2. Beat sugar, eggs and vanilla with mixer at high speed for 5 minutes. Beat in chocolate mixture at low speed; stir in flour and walnuts just until blended (mixture will be thick).
  3. Heat caramels and cream in small saucepan over low heat, stirring constantly until smooth. Set aside.
  4. Spread half the brownie mixture into lightly greased foil-lined 9 x 9 x 2-inch pan. Bake at 350°F for 8 minutes. Pour caramel mixture over brownies in pan. Crumble remaining brownie mixture over caramel layer. Bake for 20 minutes more. Cool completely in pan.

### Caramel-Cherry Sticky Buns

Makes 10 buns

- 12 caramels
  - 3 tablespoons heavy cream or milk
  - 1/2 cup well-drained red and/or green maraschino cherries, halved
  - 1/4 cup pecans, chopped
  - 1 (12-ounce) package refrigerated buttermilk biscuits (10 biscuits per package)
1. Melt caramels and cream or milk in small heavy saucepan over low heat, stirring constantly until smooth. Pour caramel mixture into well-greased 9-inch glass pie plate.
  2. Place cherries, rounded sides down, over caramel mixture; sprinkle with pecans.
  3. Separate biscuits and place snugly in pan. Bake at 350°F for 22 to 25 minutes or until golden brown. Invert immediately onto serving platter, scraping any remaining caramel over biscuits. Serve warm.

### Pink Cherry Mallow Pie

Makes 8 servings

- 4 cups miniature marshmallows
  - 1 (16-ounce) jar red maraschino cherries, drained and juice reserved
  - 1 1/2 cups heavy cream, whipped, divided
  - 1 (6-ounce) graham cracker crust
1. Heat marshmallows and maraschino juice in heavy saucepan over low heat, stirring constantly until melted and smooth. Cool completely, stirring occasionally to prevent a skin forming on mixture.
  2. Reserve 8 cherries for garnish; quarter remaining cherries. Set aside.
  3. Fold 2 cups whipped cream and quartered cherries into marshmallow mixture; spread into graham cracker crust. Refrigerate at least 2 hours or until firm.
  4. Garnish with remaining whipped cream and reserved cherries.

### Creamy Fudge

Makes 4 pounds

- 1 1/2 cups sugar
  - 1/2 cup butter
  - 1 (5-fluid ounce) can evaporated milk (about 2/3 cup)
  - 1 (10 1/2-ounce) package miniature marshmallows
  - 3 cups semisweet chocolate chips
  - 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
  - 2 cups walnuts, coarsely chopped
1. Lightly grease a foil-lined 13 x 9 x 2-inch pan; set aside.
  2. Heat sugar, margarine or butter, milk and marshmallows over medium heat until mixture boils, stirring constantly. Boil and stir for 5 minutes.
  3. Stir in chocolate chips and vanilla extract, stirring until chips are melted. Remove from heat; stir in walnuts.
  4. Immediately spread into prepared pan. Refrigerate overnight. Cut into 1-inch squares. Store in airtight container in refrigerator. For creamier fudge, let stand at room temperature 1 hour before serving.
- Rocky Road Variation: Stir an additional 1 1/2 cups miniature marshmallows into fudge with walnuts, stirring just until combined.

### Party Cheeseball

Makes 1 (4-inch) cheeseball

- 2 (8-ounce) packages cream cheese, softened
  - 1 (8-ounce) can pineapple chunks in juice, well drained and minced
  - 1/4 cup well-drained red maraschino cherries, chopped
  - 1/4 cup well-drained green maraschino cherries, chopped
  - 1/2 cup walnuts, chopped
  - Crackers or cut up vegetables
1. Beat cream cheese with mixer until creamy. Stir in pineapple and cherries. Refrigerate until firm, about 1 hour.
  2. Shape cheese mixture into 4-inch ball. Roll cheese ball in walnuts, pressing nuts into surface to adhere. Refrigerate about 1 hour or until chilled.
  3. Serve as a spread with crackers or vegetables.

### Holiday Helpers

The holidays are always busy. Make use of these easy tips to save time.

- Always melt caramels with water, milk or cream. As a rule of thumb, use 24 caramels with 2 tablespoons liquid. Heat over low heat, stirring constantly, or microwave for 1 to 3 minutes, stirring every minute. Use as a glaze on cakes or serve over ice cream.
- Chocolate-covered cherries are a wonderful holiday treat that also can be used as a garnish for cakes, ice cream and other desserts. Just drain red or green maraschino cherries with stems on paper towels, then dip them in melted white or semisweet chocolate. Set on waxed paper and let harden.
- Add maraschino cherry juice to ginger ale; garnish with red and green maraschino cherries for a festive nonalcoholic drink.
- For easy caramel candies, place 4 pecan halves in spoke fashion on a microwaveable plate. Top with a caramel and microwave on High (100% power) 20 to 30 seconds or until softened. Top with chocolate chips and let stand to melt; spread chocolate. Cool before eating.
- For a snack mix that's good for holiday get-togethers, combine miniature marshmallows, dried fruit (such as dried cherries), nuts and cereal or popcorn. Store in an airtight container.
- Make brownies special by topping a pan of hot, freshly baked brownies with miniature marshmallows. Allow to soften slightly. Drizzle with melted chocolate and a sprinkling of nuts, if desired.
- Cherry ice cubes add a festive touch to holiday punches and other beverages. Just put one maraschino cherry in each compartment of an ice cube tray. Cover with water (or orange juice or lemonade); freeze overnight.
- For a quick caramel sauce, melt a 14-ounce bag of caramels with 2/3 cup light cream or half-and-half. Stir constantly until smooth. Serve slightly warm over cake or use as a dipping sauce with fresh fruits or cookies.



Pink Cherry Mallow Pie