



Byrd's Kitchen

by Vivian Byrd

Homemade molded candies star in Easter baskets

You might like to try something different this year and make the candies for your Easter baskets.

Carol Rogers of Canton, who has taught cake decorating for about 10 years at Central Middle School (adult education program) in Plymouth, happened to see a demonstration of candy molding a few years ago and was intrigued.

Since then, she and some friends have accumulated several molds each, buying one or two additional molds each year. They trade off, which allows access to a variety of figures.

Bulk chocolate is available from kitchen supply stores such as Create-a-Cake in Canton and Kitchen Glamour in Redford Township and Rochester, priced from \$1.80 a pound and up. Molds start at \$1.98 for a sheet containing an assortment of characters. Colors are available or you can color your own using an oil-base paste color.

Making your own means you know the ingredients, what your children and other family members are eating on Easter morning.

Mrs. Rogers set along the following very helpful information and candy recipes:

EQUIPMENT NEEDED:
Jars, baby food jars or any wide-mouth jars
Spoons, preferably long-handled
Chocolate
Chocolate molds
Bags, wrap, or boxes for packing

If using sucker molds, sucker sticks
Fillings, if desired
One of the following: sauce pan, crock pot, electric frying pan

TO MAKE your own candy, chop chocolate into small pieces. Put two inches of water in pan, crock pot or fry pan. Turn flame on low, low for crock pot, or 200 degrees for fry pan. Put chocolate in jars and place in water. Stir chocolate to hasten melting. Never let water boil. If chocolate is over-heated it will get thick and lumpy. If this happens, cool and re-heat.

If you wish to add color, do so after the candy is melted. Stir in evenly, using paste color. If you are going to paint molds, do so now. When your painting is finished, put in freezer for 10 minutes before filling with other chocolate. Spoon chocolate into mold; do not overfill. Put into freezer for about 10 minutes or until hardened. Invert mold and gently remove candy.

Melted chocolate can be used to adhere royal icing decorations to chocolate pieces. Any unused chocolate can be covered and stored for use at a later time. It is not necessary to wash molds after each use. If candy is taken out before it is completely set, wipe out mold before continuing.

CARING FOR MOLDS:
Do not use detergent, put in dishwasher, wash in too hot water nor

mold chocolate that is too hot.
Do store flat.

CHARACTERS

To create chocolate hollow bunnies, eggs, etc., you must have a mold with a front and a back. Fill half of mold with chocolate, put on other half and paper clip, clamp or put rubber bands on to secure pieces together. Then turn mold until everything is coated. Put in freezer for 5 minutes. Take out, turn again and return to freezer for another 10 or 15 minutes.

Finished chocolate can be given a more professional look by wrapping in foil, bagging or putting them in a candy box.

SOME OLD FAVORITES

Chocolate-covered cherries: Spoon

melted chocolate into bottom of mold. Place index finger in chocolate and coat sides of mold. Place in freezer for 10 minutes. Mix one part cherry juice to 10 parts fondant or ¼ cup to bag. Put cherry in mold and add fondant to ¾ full. Then seal with more chocolate. Return to freezer for 15 minutes.

Peanut butter cups: Spoon chocolate into bottom of candy mold. Insert finger and distribute chocolate around sides. Put in freezer for about 10 minutes. When chocolate is set up, spoon ½ tsp. peanut butter into center and cover with chocolate. Return to freezer for 10 minutes.

Peanut clusters: You will need one pound of chocolate to ¼ pound of raisins. Blend together and spoon into candy cups. Then put in freezer for 10 minutes.

Chocolate covered raisins: Mix chocolate and raisins together in equal amounts. Spoon into candy cups and put in freezer about 10 minutes.

Coconut haystacks: Mix chocolate with coconut and put into candy cups or on wax paper in triangle shapes, with wide part of triangle as base. Put in freezer for 10 minutes.

Chocolate crunch: Mix Rice Krispies to your taste with chocolate, put into candy cups and place in freezer for 10 minutes.

Kit-Kat: If you like Kit-Kat candy bars, try this simple and easy way to make them. Take the peanut butter sugar wafer cookies you buy in the store, dip each cookie in chocolate and lay on wax paper. You might also try a package of the vanilla-chocolate-strawberry sugar wafer cookies and

dip them in white, pink or chocolate. These will make colorful treats for any child's Easter basket.

ON YOUR OWN

All of the above is designed to help you get started. Use your imagination and your knowledge of your family's favorites to create your own special candies.

Kitchen supply stores are very helpful and will answer many of your questions. They also sometimes offer demonstrations of "how-to." Take advantage of them and you could be off on a new and delicious hobby.

Correspondence should be addressed to Vivian Byrd, the Eccentric Newspapers, 1225 Bowers St., Birmingham, Mich. 48012.



Budget steaks have an Italian Flair when served with a spicy tomato sauce.

Steaks go Italian with tomato sauce

Beef blade steak takes on Italian gusto when served with a spicy tomato sauce and spaghetti. The secret to fork-tender results is the long leisurely cooking process called braising. The moist heat softens and tenderizes the naturally less tender muscle fibers and connective tissues found in cuts from the chuck section of beef. Slow cooking in a little liquid allows for development of the beef flavor and the subtle blending of seasonings.

ITALIAN-STYLE BLADE STEAK

- 1 beef blade steak, cut ¾ to 1 inch thick
- 2 tbsp. flour
- 1 tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. cayenne pepper
- 1 ½ cup. cooking fat
- ¼ tsp. leaf oregano
- ¼ tsp. basil leaves
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- ¼ cup water

1 can (8 oz.) pizza sauce
1 can (4 oz.) mushroom pieces and stems, if desired
Cooked spaghetti
Grated Parmesan cheese, if desired

Combine flour, salt and cayenne pepper; dredge meat, reserving excess flour. Brown meat in cooking fat in large frying pan. Pour off drippings. Sprinkle oregano and basil over meat; add garlic and water. Cover lightly and cook slowly 1 ½ hours. Combine reserved flour with pizza sauce, stir into cooking liquid. Drain and add mushrooms, if desired. Continue cooking, covered, 30 minutes or until meat is tender. Serve sauce with steak and spaghetti. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese, if desired. 3 to 4 servings.

This Italian entree calls for a mixed green salad tossed with vinegar and oil dressing and crusty Italian bread. The dinner menu can be easily completed with buttered, cooked carrots and lemon sherbet for dessert.

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