

COOK UP SOME MAGIC

...with the Younger Set

Like the mischievous white rabbit who led Alice into Wonderland, parents can lead their children into the magical world of cooking. Given half a chance, boys and girls from toddlerhood on will make marvelous messes. Most youngsters can't wait to get their hands in the flour.

Teaching kids to cook not only provides the fun and satisfaction of putting things together, but also answers a very real need for working moms who need help in the kitchen. Children ranging from eight or nine (if already kitchen-handly) to fourteen are at the ideal age to share some responsibility for dinner.

The key to raising your own chef de cuisine is to involve the younger set early, at three or four years of age, in simple tasks which meld with their relatively short attention spans.

To keep up the enthusiasm, try a variety of dishes that can be associated with familiar and favorite stories like the fanciful Alice in Wonderland tea party.

The presentation of these treats is delightfully childlike. And the story can be woven into the cooking lesson and used as a diversion if you sense the young chef is becoming frustrated with a certain project.

No doubt Heritage Shortcake and Sesame Cookies would have been included in the Wonderful tea party had the Mad Hatter and the March Hare known how these treats excited young children like Alice.

Leave the magic of the Heritage Shortcake to your young chef by guiding him or her in filling and topping the shortcake with the fruit and marshmallow creme mixture.

Meanwhile, the Sesame Cookies provide the opportunity for the novice to shape dough into balls, roll them in sesame seeds, and place them on the cookie sheet as Mom and Dad fills the cookie centers with preserves.

Cakes are what made Alice grow very, very tall in Wonderland. That can be the topic as you prepare the Angel Mallow frosting for the Cupcakes With Petite Daisies. Explain to your child the magic of watching the beaten egg whites form soft peaks. Frost the cupcakes together.

Lastly, to appease the Queen of Hearts, try the Finale Fruit Tarts. Once the shells and filling have been prepared, invite your young chef to assist in filling the tarts and garnish with strawberries and bananas.

The Moral of the Story for success with your growing chefs is: maintain flexibility. Specifically,

- Don't overwhelm them with long lists of rules.
- Know in advance that when youngsters help cook, total cleanliness is next to impossible and that the final clean-up chores may well be yours alone.
- Avoid the temptation to take over and do everything yourself.
- And, above all: Always enthusiastically eat what your young chefs help cook!!



HERITAGE SHORTCAKE

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|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 2-1/3 cups all purpose biscuit mix | 1-1/2 cups peach slices |
| 1 cup whipping cream | 1-1/2 cups strawberry slices |
| 1 teaspoon vanilla | 1 cup miniature marshmallows |
| 1 cup marshmallow creme | 1/2 cup blueberries |

Prepare biscuit mix according to package directions for 8-inch shortcake.

Whip cream and vanilla until slightly thickened. Add marshmallow creme; continue beating until stiff.

Split shortcake; fill with half of fruit and marshmallow creme mixture. Top with remaining fruit and marshmallow creme mixture. Garnish with mint, if desired.

CUPCAKES WITH PETITE DAISIES

Angel Mallow Frosting

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| 1/2 cup sugar | 1 7-oz. jar marshmallow creme |
| 2 egg whites | 1/2 teaspoon vanilla |
| 2 tablespoons water | 24 cupcakes |

Combine sugar, egg whites and water in double boiler; beat with electric or rotary beater over boiling water until soft peaks form. Add marshmallow creme; continue beating until stiff peaks form. Remove from heat; beat in vanilla. Frost cupcakes. Decorate with:

Petite Daisies

For each flower, dip scissors in water. Cut across the flat side of miniature marshmallow to form petals. Arrange five petals on wax paper in a daisy design, slightly overlapping tips. Dip inside of flower into colored sugar to coat cut sides of petals.

FINALE FRUIT TARTS

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| 1 8-oz. pkg. cream cheese | 1/2 cup sugar |
| 1 cup flour | 2 tablespoons cornstarch |
| 1/4 teaspoon salt | Dash of salt |
| 2/3 cup margarine | 1 cup milk |
| | 1/2 teaspoon vanilla |
| | Strawberry halves |
| | Banana slices |

Divide cream cheese in half; reserve 4-ozs. for filling. Combine flour and salt; cut in 4-ozs. cream cheese and margarine until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Divide dough into 12 balls; chill. On lightly floured surface, roll out each ball to 4-1/2-inch circle; place in 3-inch tart pan. Prick bottom and sides with fork. Bake at 375°, 15 to 20 minutes or until golden brown. Cool completely.

In saucepan, combine sugar, cornstarch and salt. Gradually add milk; cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, until mixture becomes clear and thickened. Add vanilla and remaining 4-ozs. cream cheese, cubed; stir until smooth. Fill tarts. Chill. Before serving, garnish with strawberries and bananas. 12 tarts.

SESAME COOKIES

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| 1 cup margarine | 1/2 teaspoon salt |
| 1/4 cup sugar | Sesame seeds |
| 1 teaspoon almond extract | strawberry preserves |
| 2 cups flour | |

Cream margarine and sugar until light and fluffy. Blend in extract. Add flour and salt; mix well. Shape rounded tablespoonfuls of dough into balls; roll in sesame seeds. Place on ungreased cookie sheet. Indent centers; fill with preserves. Bake at 400°, 10 to 12 minutes. Approximately 3 dozen.