

# Holiday Gifts From Your Kitchen



What do your bachelor brother-in-law, your closest friend and your mailman have in common? More than you may think.

Check your Christmas list. Chances are, their names are scribbled somewhere on the list with question marks after them. But don't despair. Those folks (and plenty of others) have something else in common, too. They all love good things to eat, especially when they come from you.

Homemade gifts from the kitchen feed more than the taste buds. They carry a special nostalgic message of good will, wrapped in the warm and delicious feelings of a childhood Christmas.

A culinary treat that's made to satisfy a close friend's or relative's own personal taste can be the most personal of gifts. In fact, a food gift probably gives more joy per penny than any other kind of present.

A gift from the kitchen can nourish the giver as well as the recipient, as it offers up delicious aromas and memories of simpler times. In fact, some families spend a day together making cookies, and other treats for their special friends, thus starting a new tradition—or recapturing an old one.

On a practical note, consider that a gift from the kitchen can be turned into a present that's as simple or fancy as you wish. Let your imagination be your guide.

For example, the fruit cake, perhaps the most traditional of all Christmas desserts, is a nostalgic favorite. This recipe, made with Amaretto liqueur, looks every ounce the classic beauty when baked in a bundt pan. A busy mother's practical alternative: make it into cupcakes for lots of small treats.

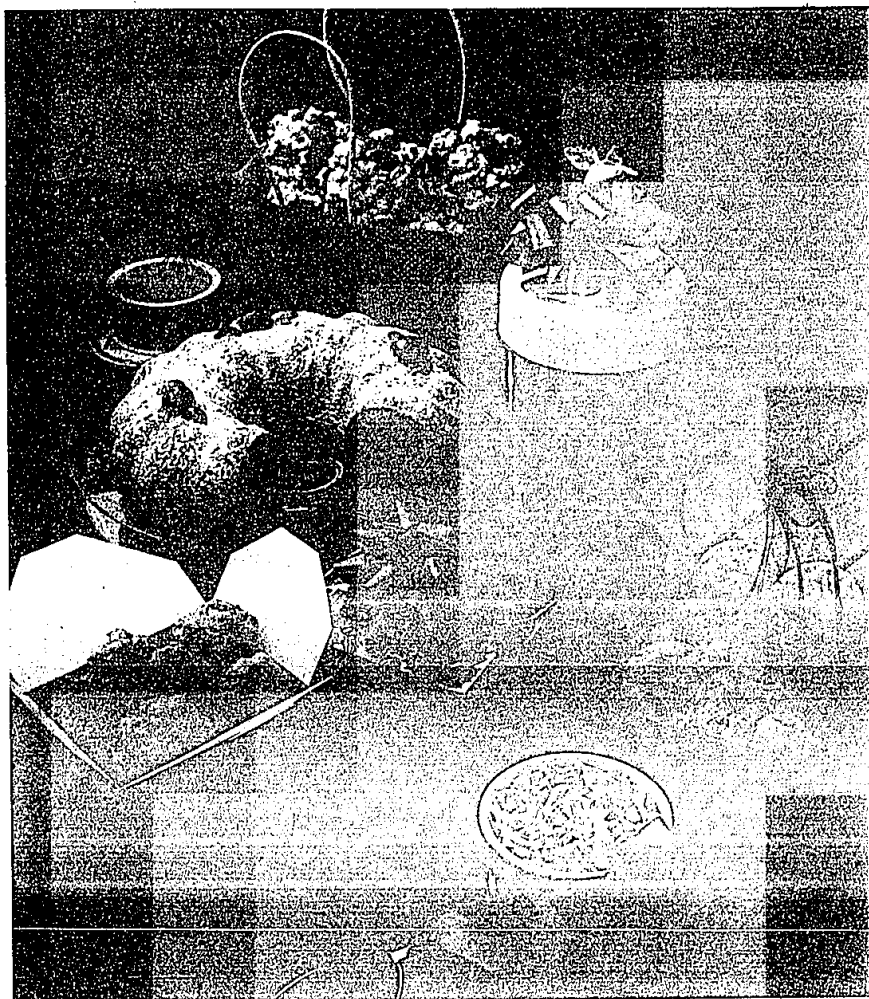
A cluster of Cinnamon Crisp Cookies on a decorated holiday plate also makes a simple and inexpensive gift. But a batch of Double Chocolate Mint Puffs in an old-fashioned cookie jar would delight a whole family. Likewise, Festive Tuna Paté may be presented in a simple stoneware crock or a hand-painted china gravy boat.

The mother who counts scout leaders, school teachers, music teachers, kids' coaches, babysitters, carpool partners, school secretaries, butchers, snow shovelers, paper boys and helpful neighbors among the important people in her life can remember them all with an array of simple gifts from the kitchen.

Here are some good "gift" recipes made with readily available ingredients and created with nutrition in mind.

Caramel Wheat Popcorn Balls have peanuts and wheat cereal in addition to the standard popcorn fare. Bran cereal also adds fiber to good taste in the Cinnamon Crisps, Double Chocolate Mint Puffs and Frosty Cherry Cookies as well as the Easy Almond Fruit Cake and the traditionally popular Chex Party Mix.

The elegant Cucumber Tuna Mousse and Tuna Paté make exotic gifts, especially when given in an unusual dish or container. A suggestion: make the Cucumber Tuna Mousse in a pretty holiday mold, then include the mold as part of the gift.



## EASY ALMOND FRUITCAKE

For the special person on your list

- 4 eggs, beaten
- 2/3 cup orange juice
- 1/3 cup vegetable oil
- 1/2 teaspoon almond extract
- 2 cups Wheat & Raisin or Wheat Chex cereal
- 2 cups all-purpose flour\*
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 2 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 2 cups chopped mixed candied fruit and peels
- 1/2 cup coarsely chopped almonds
- 1/4 cup Amaretto liqueur

Preheat oven to 350°. Grease 10-inch bundt pan. In large bowl, combine eggs, orange juice, oil, almond extract and Chex. Let stand 10 minutes. Stir to break up cereal.

Meanwhile, combine flour, sugar, baking powder, salt and cinnamon. Add to cereal mixture along with fruit and nuts. Stir just until moistened. Spread in pan. Bake 50 to 55 minutes or until tester inserted in center comes out clean. Let stand 15 minutes before removing from pan. Invert, brush top and sides with Amaretto. Cool completely. Before serving, sprinkle top with powdered sugar.

\*Stir flour; then spoon into measuring cups.

Makes 12 servings.

**MUFFIN VARIATION:** Using paper liners, fill 18 muffin cups 2/3 full. Bake at 350° for 30 minutes. Cool 15 minutes. Brush tops with Amaretto. Cool completely. Before serving, sprinkle top with powdered sugar.

Makes 18 cupcakes.

## CARAMEL WHEAT POPCORN BALLS

As good as they are pretty

- 1-1/2 quarts popped popcorn
- 3 cups Wheat Chex cereal
- 1/2 cup salted peanuts (optional)
- 1/2 cup (1 stick) butter or margarine
- 1 cup sugar
- 1/3 cup light corn syrup
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla
- 1/4 teaspoon baking soda

In large bowl combine popcorn, Chex and nuts.

In medium saucepan melt butter. Stir in sugar, corn syrup and salt. Bring to a boil, stirring often. Boil until stirring 5 minutes. Remove from heat. Stir in vanilla and baking soda. Pour syrup mixture over popcorn and cereal. Stir to coat evenly. With buttered hands or a 2-1/2-inch buttered ice cream scoop shape into balls.

Makes 12 to 14.

## FESTIVE TUNA PATÉ

A perfect hostess gift

- 1 package (8 oz.) cream cheese, softened
- 1/4 teaspoon seasoned salt
- 1 can (6-1/2 oz.) chunk light-tuna, drained and flaked
- 1 can (4 oz.) chopped green chilies, undrained
- 1/2 cup (2 oz.) shredded Cheddar cheese
- 2 tablespoons chopped pimiento
- 2 tablespoons chopped green onion with top

With electric mixer combine cream cheese and seasoned salt until fluffy consistency. Fold in tuna, chilies, chilies liquid, Cheddar cheese, pimiento and onion. Cover and refrigerate 2 to 3 hours or overnight. Serve with crackers.

Makes 2 cups.

## CHEX PARTY MIX

A traditional favorite

- 1/2 cup (1 stick) butter or margarine
- 1-1/4 teaspoons seasoned salt
- 4-1/2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
- 2-2/3 cups Corn Chex cereal
- 2-2/3 cups Rice Chex cereal
- 2-2/3 cups Wheat Chex cereal
- 1 cup salted mixed nuts

Preheat oven to 250°. Heat butter in large shallow roasting pan (about 15 x 10 x 2-inches) in oven until melted. Remove. Stir in seasoned salt and Worcestershire sauce. Add Chex and nuts. Mix until all pieces are coated. Heat in oven 1 hour. Stir every 15 minutes. Spread on absorbent paper to cool.

**Microwave directions:** In large bowl melt butter on High 1 minute. Stir in seasoned salt and Worcestershire sauce. Add Chex and nuts. Mix until all pieces are coated. Microwave on High 6 to 7 minutes, stirring every 2 minutes.

Makes about 9 cups.

**HOT & SPICY VARIATION:** Follow above recipe using 8-cup combination of your favorite Chex cereals and add 1/2 teaspoon chili powder and 1/4 teaspoon bottled hot pepper sauce. Follow cooking directions as above.

## DOUBLE CHOCOLATE MINT PUFFS

Chocolate lovers' special

- 2 cups Bran Chex cereal crushed to 2/3 cup
- 1/3 cup cocoa
- 1/2 cup semi-sweet chocolate morsels
- 3 egg whites (room temperature)
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1/4 teaspoon peppermint extract

Preheat oven to 275°. Lightly grease baking sheet. In small bowl combine Chex crumbs, cocoa and chocolate morsels. Set aside.

In medium bowl beat egg whites until foamy. Gradually beat in sugar until stiff and glossy. Fold in vanilla and peppermint extracts along with chocolate mixture. Drop by rounded teaspoons onto baking sheet. Bake 20 minutes. Turn off oven. Let set in oven 1 hour. Remove.

Makes 4 dozen.

## FROSTY CHERRY COOKIES

Sparkling cherry cookies with just a hint of almond

- 1/2 cup (1 stick) butter or margarine
- 1 cup and 3 tablespoons sugar
- 1 egg
- 1/2 teaspoon almond extract
- 1-1/2 cups all-purpose flour\*
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- 2 cups Rice Chex cereal crushed to 1 cup
- 1/2 cup chopped green and red glacé cherries

Preheat oven to 350°. In large bowl of electric mixer cream butter and 1 cup sugar. Beat in egg and almond extract. Stir together flour, salt, baking soda and baking powder. Add to creamed mixture. Mix well. Stir in Chex crumbs and cherries. Shape into 3/4-inch balls. Roll in remaining 3 tablespoons sugar. Place 2 inches apart on baking sheet. Bake 8 to 10 minutes or until bottoms are lightly browned.

\*Stir flour; then spoon into measuring cups.

Makes 6 dozen cookies.