

# Seedless Clemis are ideal stuffers

Feeling good about giving is the real trick to holiday gifts. Without the wisdom of Santa, however, this can be a very tricky task.

Food-related gifts are always a good bet, and a creation from your own kitchen is a sure way of adding a bit of yourself to the warmth and spirit of the season.

Happily, there's a wonderful fruit called a "Clem" — clementine, relatively new to North America, that's sure to add a very special touch to fruit baskets, cheese trays and, of course, to your holiday baking.

Clem clementines arrive from Spain at this time of year and can be enjoyed right through March. A clementine is a type of mandarin orange or tangerine, but it's much sweeter and juicier and, best of all, the Clem clementine is completely seedless.

Slip clementines into Christmas stockings — they'll add a new twist to traditional Christmas give-away treats. A little grated zest and juice adds a special note to chocolate rum balls —

and why not serve chocolate-dipped clementine segments with coffee?

Make it clementine bread instead instead of lemon bread this year. Perk up fruit or carrot cake with a cranberry icing made by whipping clementine juice and zest into cream cheese. Or simmer dried fruits in clementine juice then add a dash of orange liqueur and clementine sections for a festive fruit concoction.

Clementines make original hostess gifts. Consider a jar of cheery Clementine Conserve with touches of festive red and green cherries, gaily beribboned — or present an attractive container of Clementine Eggnog.

### FESTIVE CLEMENTINE CONSERVE

- 6 clementines
- 1 lemon
- 6 oz. dried apricots, quartered
- 1/2 cup water
- 2 1/2 cups sugar
- 2 Tbsp. lemon juice

- 2 whole cloves
- 1/2 cup green and red maraschino cherries, halved
- 1/2 cup slivered almonds

Remove peel from 2 clementines and lemon. Cut into slivers, enough to yield 1/2 cup. Peel remaining 4 clementines and section 1/2. Remove white membrane from lemon. Chop clementine sections and lemon pulp coarsely in food processor. Pour into large saucepan. Add slivered peel, apricots and water. Cover, bring to a boil and simmer gently 20 to 30 minutes, until tender. Stir in sugar, lemon juice, cloves and again bring to a boil. Simmer, uncovered stirring frequently until thickened, about 15 minutes. Stir in cherries, almonds, and cook 5 minutes longer. Remove cloves. Pour into hot sterilized jars and seal with melted paraffin wax.

### CLEMENTINE EGGNOG

- 2 cups dairy eggnog

- Juice of 4 clementines
- 1/2 cup Grand Marnier
- Freshly grated nutmeg

Stir together eggnog, clementine juice and Grand Marnier. Pour into glasses and garnish each with freshly grated nutmeg and a clementine section.

### CLEMENTINE CHRISTMAS TREE

- Pine boughs
- Clementines
- Whole Cloves
- Teleg Sugar
- Ribbon

On flat plate, arrange a base of pine boughs. Build a clementine tree, securing clementines, if necessary, with toothpicks or pins in a pyramid. Stud clementines with cloves for decoration and a pleasant odor. Sprinkle with teleg sugar and decorate with red or green ribbons or bows.



pilot light  
**Greg Melikov**

# Nut cracking is art

Cracking nuts is an art, not a shell game, if you develop a technique. It has taken years to shed my heavy-handed manner.

Instead, I apply middle-of-the-road pressure to my nutcracker, which doubles as a garlic press, to achieve almost perfect results. I say "almost" because it is impossible to remove the nuts whole every crack.

Placement of the nut is important, too. The almond, for instance, must stand long ends to cracker before squeezing. Again, you must watch the pressure, but the whole nut should come out more often than not. I like to use almonds with vegetables. But when the recipe calls for slivered or halved almonds, I buy them already packaged.

The most difficult to crack — not counting the chestnut, which must be slit and boiled — is the Brazil nut. The three-sided brown nut, which resembles a section of orange, requires heavy pressure, plus a pick, to free the solid, oily white meat. It goes great in rice stuffing.

**THE EASIEST** nut to crack is the filbert. That's because the small nut is round and in one piece. I can crack a half dozen and digest the sweet peanut in a minute. I just may squirrel some away to try in stuffing.

English walnuts, probably most everyone's favorite next to the peanut, is tricky. At best, it's a crack-or-miss proposition. But if you place the seams where the cracker meets the nut and apply a quick squeeze, the nut is yours at least in two halves. Walnuts are great in salads or stew.

I left the pecan off my list because it seems the only time I buy them is on vacation — from roadside stands or gift stores. My wife loves them; I don't. She has failed, however, to devise a fool-proof way to get them out perfectly halved. I may give it a try in a weak moment.

Here are some other nutty ideas:

- Garnish baked squash or sweet potatoes with chopped pecans.
- Top fresh vegetables with slivered almonds.
- Use walnut halves or quarters in salads other than Waldorf.
- Stir-fry almonds in chicken-vegetable dishes.
- Try peanuts in tuna casserole.
- Roll chopped walnuts or pecans into party cheese balls.
- Put chopped chestnuts in turkey stuffing.

Ground any variety of nuts in a blender or food processor and mix with softened cream cheese for appetizers — bread spread, celery filling or dip.

# Fix-ahead, low-cal gelatin desserts are elegant, easy holiday additions

Entertain with ease this holiday season by treating your family and friends to delicious gelatin salads and desserts.

The Lime Waldorf Ring and Spiced Strawberry Dessert feature big elegance and style to any holiday table and provide refreshing, low-calorie accompaniments to traditional holiday meals.

These offerings will help you budget your time more efficiently since they can be prepared well before the dinner hour. And remember, these gelatin molds also make attractive and flavorful additions to a relaxed brunch or gathering of friends during the holidays.

- 2 (3-oz.) packages strawberry gelatin**  
 1 1/2 cups boiling water  
 1 (16 oz.) container cottage cheese  
 1 Tbsp. sugar  
 1 tsp. grated lemon peel  
 1/2 tsp. vanilla extract  
 1/4 tsp. ground allspice  
 1 (16 oz.) can sliced peaches, drained  
 1 (16 oz.) can sliced pears, drained  
 1 cup cold water  
 sliced peaches, for garnish, optional

Dissolve one package of strawberry gelatin in 1/2 cup boiling water. In electric blender, blend dissolved gelatin, cottage cheese, sugar, lemon peel, vanilla extract and ground allspice until smooth. Pour into 8- or 9-inch springform pan. Chill until almost set, about 30 minutes. Dissolve remaining package of gelatin in 1 cup boiling water, stir in cold water. Chill until slightly thickened. Carefully pour half of thickened gelatin over cottage cheese layer. Chill 15 minutes or until almost set. (Meanwhile allow remaining half of thickened gelatin to stand at room temperature.) Alternately arrange 12 each of peach and pear slices in circular pattern over gelatin layer. Chop remaining peaches and pears; spoon into center of circle. Carefully spoon remaining thickened gelatin over fruit. Chill until firm, about 4 hours. To serve, remove dessert from springform pan and place on serving plate. If desired, garnish with additional sliced peaches. Makes 8 servings.

### LIME WALDORF SALAD

- 2 (3-ounce) or 1 (6-ounce) package lime gelatin
- 2 cups boiling water

- 1 1/2 cups cold water
- 1 1/2 cups seedless red or green grapes, halved
- 1 cup sliced celery
- 1/2 cup chopped walnuts
- 1/2 cup chopped apple
- 4 oz. cream cheese
- 2 Tbsp. milk
- 1 Tbsp. confectioner's sugar
- red or green grape bunches, for garnish, optional

Dissolve lime gelatin in boiling water. Stir in cold water. Chill until slightly thickened. Stir grapes, celery, 1/2 cup walnuts and apples into thickened gelatin. Pour into 6-cup fluted tube pan or ring mold. Chill until firm, about 4 hours. In small bowl, with mixer at medium speed, blend cream cheese, milk and confectioner's sugar until smooth. Stir in remaining walnuts. Unmold gelatin onto serving plate. Spoon cream cheese dressing into center of ring. If desired, garnish with grape bunches. Makes 8 servings.

# Meatless meals for holidays

The holiday season is upon us once again, and that means plenty of friends, fun and food. Why not try this year to help save money, reduce calories and provide good nutrition by serving meatless dishes as main courses?

Beans and peas are good, inexpensive sources of protein, iron, thiamin, riboflavin and fiber. When combined with rice or corn, they are a complete protein source. Use them in baked beans, soups, casseroles, dips (mashed) and many Mexican dishes.

Try a dip of cooked, mashed and seasoned beans with crackers for a flavorful appetizer, or serve red beans and rice as a holiday treat. Use the leftover dip as a sandwich spread. Remember to rinse, sort and soak beans and peas before using them in cooking.

Nuts and seeds are a quick and tasty way to add nutrients to holiday meals. They supply protein, vitamin B5, phosphorus and minerals. Combine nuts and seeds with grains for complete protein.

Add nuts to baked goods, spreads or dips or use them to top vegetables and salads. For a delicious change this year, try whole wheat bread made with sunflower seeds, millet, sesame or poppy seeds.

Or make string beans topped with an almond or cornflake crust. Nuts keep their best in their shells in a dark, cool, dry place. They can be frozen for longer storage, up to 2 years. Store shelled nuts in a moisture- and vapor-proof container in the refrigerator or freezer.

Grains and flours can help stretch the food budget as well as add protein and fiber to the diet. Wheat, rice, cornmeal, oats, barley and rye are some of the readily available grains you can use in your holiday fare. Cornmeal cakes or whole-grain breadsticks can be an evening meal treat.

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