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Lighten up holiday sauces —

AS — One way to keep calorie and fat power to a minimum during the holidays is to prepare traditional side dishes with light sauces or glazes made with spices and a touch of sugar, instead of thick, buttery sauces. As an example, these cinnamon apple sweet potatoes are accented with cinnamon apple topping instead of a heavy caramel glaze.

CINNAMON APPLE SWEET POTATOES

- 4 medium sweet potatoes
- 1 1/2 cups finely chopped apple
- 1/4 cup orange juice
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1 1/2 teaspoons cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon grated orange peel

Wash sweet potatoes; prick with a fork. Place on paper towels and cook on high (100-percent power) in the microwave 20-25 minutes, or until tender, turning halfway through cooking. Set aside.

Combine remaining ingredients

and cover and cook on high for 3 minutes. Stir mixture, then cook uncovered on high 1 1/2 to 2 minutes or until the sauce is thickened. Slit sweet potatoes and spoon sauce over each one. Makes 4 servings.

Note: Sauce can be made ahead and reheated at serving time.

Nutritional information per serving: 216 cal., 3 g. pro., 53 g. carb., 12 mg. sodium, 0 chol.

Choco-caramel delights are Hershey Cocoa's delicious alternative to traditional holiday thumbprint cookies.

CHOCO CARAMEL DELIGHTS

- 1/2 cup butter or margarine, softened
- 2/3 cup sugar
- 1 egg, separated
- 2 tablespoons milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/4 cup cocoa
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup finely chopped pecans
- caramel filling (recipe follows)
- 1/2 cup semisweet chocolate chunks
- 1/2 teaspoon shortening

In a small mixer bowl, beat butter, sugar, egg yolk, milk and vanilla until creamy. Stir together flour, cocoa and salt; blend into butter mixture. Chill dough at least 1 hour or until firm enough to handle.

Heat oven to 350 degrees F. Beat egg white slightly. Shape dough into 1-inch balls. Dip each ball into egg white; roll in pecans to coat. Place on lightly greased baking sheet. Press thumb gently in the center of each ball. Bake 10 to 12 minutes or until set. Press gently in center of each cookie to keep indentation. Immediately spoon about 1/2-teaspoon of the caramel filling into the center of each cookie. Gently remove from cookie sheet; cool on wire rack.

Place semisweet chocolate chunks and shortening in a small microwave-safe bowl. Cook on high (100-percent power) for 1 minute or until softened, stir. Allow to stand several minutes to finish melting, stir until smooth. Place wax paper under wire rack with cookies. Drizzle chocolate mixture over top of cookies. Makes about 2 dozen.

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