

New cookbook features quick baked desserts

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Who has time to bake desserts? You can, if you plan ahead, said Elinor Klivans, author of "Bake and Freeze Desserts: 130 Do-Ahead Cakes, Pies, Cookies, Brownies, Bars, Ice Creams, Terrines, and Sorbets" (William Morrow & Co.; Oct. 20, 1994, \$25).

This newly published cookbook fits the needs of today's busy cooks. Klivans shows you how to make luscious desserts weeks in advance.

As a busy mother, cooking teacher, and restaurant pastry chef, Klivans has transformed her kitchen into the hardest working pastry assistant imaginable. She is the only pastry chef at a restaurant in Maine, where she is well known for her great desserts.

"It dawned on me that if I were ever to have time off, I needed to prepare a variety of desserts, not just a few basic mixtures, freeze them ahead of time, and have them ready and waiting to serve," said Klivans.

The result: A freezer stocked with everything from separate pastry components to be assembled later, to entire, show-stopping desserts. Klivans shares her recipes and tips in her cookbook.

Especially helpful are her tips for labeling desserts, defrosting them, and storing them. There's a chart that tells you how long nuts and desserts — baked and unbaked — can be kept in the freezer.

Here are a few of her tips for freezing desserts.

- Cool desserts before freezing them.
- Keep freezer temperature as close to 0 degrees F as possible.
- Label desserts with date and contents.
- Store desserts inside the freezer, not on door shelves.

This was one of my favorite recipes from the book.

CRANBERRY-PEAR CRUNCH

- Cranberry-Pear filling
- 5 cups peeled and cored pears (about 6 medium pears)
- ¼ cup plus 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter, melted
- 2 teaspoons fresh lemon juice
- 1½ cups cranberries fresh or frozen
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- Almond Crumb Topping
- 1 cup unbleached all-purpose flour

Cook up holiday traditions

Whether it's going sledding with friends after a fresh snowfall, baking holiday cookies with kids or sending greeting cards to loved ones, winter is a time for traditions.

According to cookbook author Melanie Barnard, the holiday season is also the perfect time to create new opportunities to celebrate with family and friends.

Here are some creative winter occasions worth celebrating.

- For a delicious, easy-to-make

Turn pumpkin into a brownie

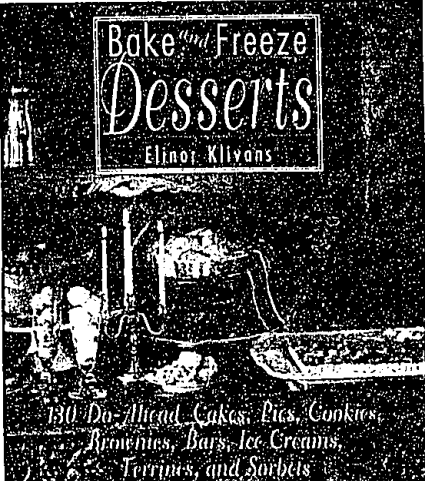
AP — Just like Cinderella's fairy godmother, you can magically turn pumpkin into something fantastic — a nutritious and scrumptious brownie. Pumpkin moistens and tenderizes these blond brownies, reducing the need for fat. Egg whites also pinch-hit for a whole egg, while cocoa stands in for melted chocolate. When you've got the bars baked and cut, wave your knife and watch. Your brownies will disappear like magic, too.

CHOCOLATE PUMPKIN BROWNIES

- ¾ cup packed brown sugar
- ½ cup canned pumpkin

Nutrition hot line

Call the toll-free Nutrition Hot line of the American Institute for Cancer Research 1-(800) 843-4114 for free, personalized answers to nutrition questions from a registered dietitian. The hotline operates weekdays 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. You can also call the hot line to request a list of free publications to help you eat for good health and lower cancer risk.



Make ahead desserts: Cookbook author Elinor Klivans shows you how to bake desserts in advance to enjoy later in her new book.

- 1 cup (packed) light brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 6 ounces (1½ sticks) cold unsalted butter, cut into 12 pieces
- 1 cup sliced or slivered blanched almonds, toasted and cooled
- Vanilla ice cream for serving with the crunch

To prepare the filling, Cut peeled pears into chunks about 1-inch in size. Put the pears into a 2½-quart baking container. Use a 10-inch layer pan with 2-inch high sides or a shallow baking dish that is safe to transfer from freezer to oven.

Mix in ¼ cup of the sugar, the melted butter and lemon juice. Taste the filling and add up to 1 tablespoon more sugar. Mix in the cranberries and cinnamon and stir the mixture to coat the pears evenly with cinnamon. Wipe the edges of the baking dish clean.

Mix the topping. Put the flour, brown sugar, and cinnamon in a

large bowl and stir together. Add the butter pieces and with an electric mixer, pastry blender or your fingertips mix together just until coarse crumbs form, about ¼ to ½-inch in size. Use a spoon to stir in the cooled, toasted almonds. Sprinkle the crumbs over the pear mixture.

To freeze: Wrap the crunch tightly with plastic wrap then heavy aluminum foil, gently pressing the foil against the crunch. Freeze up to one month.

To bake and serve: Uncover the frozen crunch. Position a rack in the middle of the oven. Preheat oven to 325 degrees F. Bake the frozen crunch 50 to 55 minutes, until the filling just begins to bubble and the crumb topping is a golden color.

Or defrost the crunch in the refrigerator and bake, uncovered, at 325 degrees F. for 40 to 45 minutes. Let the crunch cool about 10 minutes before serving.

Spoon the warm crunch onto individual plates and serve with a scoop of vanilla ice cream.

snack, spread pesto sauce on Italian bread and top with two tomatoes and two slices of sharp cheddar cheese. Broil 2 to 3 minutes until cheese melts and serve warm.

■ End the night relaxing in front of the fire with a hot cup of apple cider or hot chocolate and few of your favorite holiday cookies.

■ Invite loved ones over on New Year's Day to reminisce about the old and welcome in the new. Ask each person to bring a favorite

photo or memory of the previous year. Spend time sharing stories and remembering all the events and occasions that made this past year special.

■ Serve a variety of "new" dishes and ask everyone to bring one of their childhood favorites such as Mom's tuna casserole, meat loaf, peanut butter and jelly sandwiches without the crusts or homemade macaroni and cheese. Share and exchange old recipes and create new favorites.

blended. Add flour, baking powder, cocoa powder, cinnamon, allspice, salt and nutmeg. Beat on low speed until smooth. Stir in chocolate pieces.

Spray an 11-by-7-by-1½-inch baking pan with nonstick coating. Pour batter into pan; spread evenly. Bake in a 350-degree F oven for 15 to 20 minutes or until a toothpick inserted near the center comes out clean. Cool in the pan on a wire rack. Cut into 2-inch squares. Makes 16 squares.

Nutrition facts per square: 62 cal., 3 g fat, 11 mg chol., 1 g pro., 14 g carbs., 0 g fiber, 53 mg sodium. Daily values: 18 percent vit. A.

Breakfasts

Try these to liven it up

Are you looking for breakfast ideas that are satisfying and low in calories? Here are some ideas from Quaker Oats.

■ Top cereals with fruit and a dash of cinnamon. Use skim milk instead of whole milk.

■ Sip on a smoothie. Blend low-fat yogurt, berries and fruit juice

in a blender or food processor until smooth.

■ Instead of pastry and doughnuts, opt for a whole wheat bagel or fat-free muffin.

■ Spread toast with fruit spread instead of margarine and save 5 grams of fat (about 45 fat calories) for each teaspoon you use.



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