

Delicious holiday treats made with healthful ingredients

See related story on Taste front.

CHOCOLATE CARAMEL CHEESECAKE BITES

1-1/2 tablespoons margarine, softened
3/4 cup wheat germ, any flavor
Two 8-ounce packages light cream cheese, softened
3/4 cup sugar
1/3 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
1 teaspoon vanilla
4 egg whites
36 small pecan halves (optional)
6 tablespoons fat-free caramel topping

Heat oven to 350 degrees F. Generously coat the inside of 36 mini muffin cups with margarine.

Divide wheat germ among muffin cups; rotate cups to completely cover insides with wheat germ. Set aside.

Beat cream cheese on medium speed of electric mixer until smooth. Blend in sugar, cocoa powder and vanilla. Beat in egg whites, one at a time, until well blended. Pour into prepared muffin cups, dividing evenly. Bake just until set, about 12 to 15 minutes. Let stand in pan 10 minutes.

To remove from pan, run small narrow spatula between crust and edge of each cup to loosen. Lift out cheesecake. Cool 30 minutes on wire rack; cover and chill.

To serve, top each cheesecake with small pecan half, if desired. Microwave caramel topping on HIGH about 10 seconds until

spoonable. Spoon 1/2 teaspoon topping in center of each cheesecake. Refrigerate leftovers promptly. Yield 3 dozen.

NUTRITION INFORMATION
(1 mini cheesecake): Calories: 70, Calories from fat: 25, Total fat: 3g, Saturated fat: 1.5g, Cholesterol: less than 5mg, Sodium: 100mg, Carbohydrate: 9g, Dietary fiber: less than 1g, Protein: 3g

GINGER CRACKLES

1 cup sugar
1/3 cup vegetable shortening, melted, cooled

1/4 cup unsweetened apple sauce
1/4 cup molasses
1 egg, beaten
1-1/2 cups all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons baking soda
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 teaspoon ground ginger
1/2 teaspoon ground cloves
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/3 cup sugar
1 tablespoon wheat germ, any flavor
In large bowl, combine 1 cup sugar, melted shortening, apple

sauce, molasses and egg; mix until well blended. In medium bowl, combine flour, 1/2 cup wheat germ, baking soda, spices and salt; mix well. Add molasses mixture; mix well.

Chill 1 hour. (Dough will be soft.) Heat oven to 375 degrees F. Spray cookie sheets with non-stick cooking spray. Combine remaining 1/3 cup sugar and 1 tablespoon wheat germ in small dish.

Drop dough by level measuring tablespoons into sugar mixture. Roll into balls. Place 2 inches apart on cookie sheets.

Bake 8 to 10 minutes or until cookies have flattened and tops have cracked. Remove from cookie sheet; cool completely on wire rack. Store tightly covered. Yield 3-1/2 Dozen.

NUTRITION INFORMATION (1 cookie): Calories: 70, Calories from fat: 15, Total fat: 2g, Saturated fat: 0g, Cholesterol: 5mg, Sodium: 80mg, Carbohydrate: 12g, Dietary fiber: 0g, Protein: 1g

Recipes and information for story on Taste front from Kretschmer wheat germ.

Chef Larry Janes moves on

December brings endings and beginnings. We celebrate the end of the year, and get ready to greet the new year, full of optimism and enthusiasm.

You'll be seeing lots of changes in the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers as 1997 dawns. The first is a new column on the front of Taste.

Chef Larry Janes has moved on, and is no longer writing for the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers.

Lois Thieleke of Birmingham, a home economist for the Michigan State University Cooperative Extension Service, Oakland County, will be featured on the front of Taste in a new column called "Home Sense."

Look for Focus on Wine by Ray and Eleanor Head on the first and third Monday of the month, and a new column focusing on locally produced specialty foods, and gourmet markets, on the fourth Monday of the month

beginning in January.

February will bring more changes. The Observer & Eccentric Newspapers will launch a new Sunday paper, which includes Taste, and Arts & Entertainment.

We appreciate your support, and look forward to serving you in the new year.

Please feel free to call or write to Keely Wygonik, Taste and Entertainment Editor, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, Inc., 38251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150. Call (313) 953-2105, or fax your comments to Wygonik by calling, (313) 591-7279.

We're currently looking for easy, after work recipes. How do

you get dinner on the table in a hurry after working all day? Send us your recipes and ideas.

We'd also like to hear from market owners, and specialty food manufacturers. Our new column will introduce readers to the many "Super" markets in our coverage area, and the people behind the counter. We'll also be talking to people who turned a favorite recipe into a "Recipe for Success."

Here are two more superior sparklings for the holidays recommended by Eleanor and Ray Head — Champagne Mumm Cordon Rouge Brut \$25, and 1989 Champagne Mumm Cordon Rouge \$30.

Just a Bite

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