

These elegant desserts will grace any occasion

Festive spring celebrations, such as wedding showers, anniversaries and graduations, are a perfect time to serve luxurious desserts featuring fruit and cool, creamy fillings.

Refreshing and elegant flavors that even seem to taste like spring are highlighted in two lovely, make-ahead desserts — Peaches 'N' Coconut Chocolate Chip Torto and Raspberry Sugar Cookie Cheesecake. Although they are especially attractive and may at first appear complicated to make, both of these luscious desserts easily fit into a busy schedule.

Each dessert should be finished at least eight hours before serving to allow time for the flavors to blend and the dessert layers to soften. Preparation time is shortened since the interesting dessert layers are actually large, tender cookies, made from refrigerated cookie dough.

Peaches 'N' Coconut Chocolate Chip Torto is a colorful dessert with two layers of chocolate chip cookies and creamy coconut filling, topped with peach slices in the bottom of two foil-lined round cake pans.

When it comes to cool, rich elegance, cheesecake certainly takes the cake. Raspberry Sugar Cookie Cheesecake is an especially glamorous version featuring glazed raspberries held be-

tween layers of sugar cookies and a creamy filling. Instead of the usual cheesecake mixture that is "set" with eggs, this adaptation is made with a fluffy filling of marshmallows, cream cheese and a hint of lemon.

The creamy cheesecake-like filling covers a sugar cookie base, which is made in a springform pan. Cookies standing upright along the edges of the pan help support the luscious filling. A few raspberries saved from the raspberry layer garnish the top.

PEACHES 'N' COCONUT CHOCOLATE CHIP TORTO
16-oz roll refrigerated natural chocolate flavored chocolate chip cookies
FILLING
2 cups miniature marshmallows
1/4 cup milk
8 oz pkg cream cheese, softened
1/4 tsp almond extract
2 cups whipping cream, whipped
1 cup coconut, toasted
16-oz can peach slices, well drained or 1 cup fresh peach slices

Heat oven to 350°. Line two 9- or 8-inch round cake pans with aluminum foil. Slice well-chilled dough into 30 slices, about 1/4-inch thick. Arrange slices in bottoms of prepared pans. Bake at 350° for 16 to 24 minutes or until golden brown. (Cookie layer will be puffy when removed from oven.) Cool completely. Remove cookie layer from pans; carefully peel off foil.

In medium saucepan, melt marshmallows with milk over low heat until mixture is smooth. Chill until slightly thickened.

In large bowl, combine cream cheese and almond extract, mixing until well blended. Stir in marshmallow mixture; fold in shipped cream and coconut.

Place 1 cookie layer on serving plate. Spread 1/4 of filling over cookie layer; top with second cookie layer. Spread with remaining filling. Refrigerate 8 hours or overnight. Top with peach slices before serving. Garnish with mint, if desired. 12 to 14 servings.

RASPBERRY SUGAR COOKIE CHEESECAKE
17-oz roll slice "n" bake refrigerated sugar cookies
CREAM CHEESE FILLING
4 cups miniature marshmallows
1/4 cup milk
2 (8 oz) pkg cream cheese, softened
2 tbsp lemon juice
1 tsp grated lemon peel
1 tsp vanilla
2 cups whipping cream
2 tbsp powdered sugar

RASPBERRY FILLING
10-oz pkg frozen raspberries, thawed, drained (reserve liquid and add water to make 1 1/4 cups)
2 tbsp cornstarch

Heat oven to 350°. Slice well-chilled dough into 36 slices, about 1/4-inch thick. Place about 18 slices in bottom of 9- or 10-inch ungreased springform pan. Bake at 350° for 20 to 25 minutes or until golden brown. (Cookie layer will be puffy when removed from oven.) Cool completely.

Reduce oven to 325°. Place remaining cookie slices 2 inches apart on un-

greased cookie sheets. Bake at 325° for 11 to 13 minutes or until golden brown. Cool 1 minute on cookie sheet; remove to cooling rack. Cool completely.

In medium saucepan, melt marshmallows in milk over low heat until mixture is smooth. Chill until slightly thickened.

In large bowl, combine cream cheese, lemon juice, lemon peel and vanilla; mix until well blended. Stir in marshmallow mixture; mix well. Set aside.

In large bowl, whip cream until soft peaks form. Add powdered sugar; beat until stiff peaks form. Fold whipped cream into cream cheese mixture. Refrigerate while preparing Raspberry Filling.

In small sauce pan, gradually stir raspberry liquid into cornstarch. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, until mixture comes to a boil; cook 1 minute. Refrigerate mixture until slightly thickened, about 15 to 20 minutes. Fold in raspberries.

Place 10 to 12 cookies, side by side around inside edge of springform pan. (Top of cookies should face outside of pan and rest on top of the cookie base.) Spread half of cream cheese mixture over cookie crust. Place 4 to 6 cookies on top of cream cheese mixture; press down gently. Spread raspberry mixture evenly over cookie layer. Top with remaining cream cheese mixture. Cover. Refrigerate 8 hours or overnight before serving. Garnish with reserved raspberries. 12 to 14 servings.

*If desired, set aside a few raspberries for garnish.



This Peaches 'N' Coconut Chocolate Chip Torto is made using two layers of chocolate chip cookies and a coconut filling and is topped with peach slices.



When enough is enough, or is it?

What constitutes an adequate portion? That question pops up at our house when we have guests.

My wife always believes there'll never be enough food to go around. Her motto: cook a ton.

I'm more conservative. I calculate servings as precise as possible, then allow an extra one or two for big eaters.

Sometimes, we have leftovers galore. Occasionally, we run short and have to rely on appetizers and overflowing salads to fill the gap.

For a recent dinner, I miscalculated rather badly. I figured the main course, a gourmet dish, should be enjoyed in small portions.

"Is that all the chicken you're going to serve?" Anita asked.

"I guess not," I said.

It was too late to thaw and bone more breasts so I zipped to the supermarket and bought fillets. My penalty: three times the price of preparing the chicken myself.

You can avert such a problem by gauging the appetites of your guests as accurately as possible.

If you're a superb chef, however, enough may not be enough. Check with your back-seat coo-kmate.

CREAMED CHICKEN FILLETS
4 chicken breasts, boned, skinned and split
1 tsp. salt
1/4 cup all-purpose flour
4 tbsp. cooking oil
3/4 cups sherry sauce

Wipe chicken fillets with damp paper toweling. Season with salt. Dredge chicken in flour, brown well in large skillet, adding oil as needed, and remove to warm plate. Prepare sherry sauce in skillet, return chicken and cook on medium heat 10 minutes. Serves 4.

SHERRY SAUCE
4 tbsp. butter
4 tbsp. all-purpose flour
1 cup clear chicken broth
2 cups cream
2 egg yolks, slightly beaten
4 tbsp. sherry wine

Melt butter on medium heat in skillet. Off heat, stir in flour. Return skillet to heat, add broth and cream and cook until thickened, stirring. Stir 1/4 cup sauce into egg yolks, return to skillet and cook several more minutes, stirring. Yields 3 1/4 cups.

Big ideas start small

Who hasn't gotten a brainstorm, at one time or another, how things could be improved around the office, highways and stores in which he spends his time?

How many, however, possess the successful man's willingness to act on his "big ideas" on his "big ideas"? What would you have done, for instance, in James Hargreaves' place? Imagine yourself back in 1769. Though a few factories had sprung up, the machine age was far in the dim future; the housewife's spinning wheel still produced most of England's fabrics. In one of the rare moments when Mrs. Hargreaves' spinning wheel was idle, her two small sons upset it during their rough house play. The new angle of the wheel on the floor gave Hargreaves his big idea: a method of spinning eight threads at a time instead of one. He followed it up, and proved the spinning jenny, which revolutionized England's textile industry.

You might still be marveling at "tall" seven-story buildings if a housewife, surprised at her husband's early return from work one day in 1889, hadn't dropped her book on the bird cage when jumping up to greet him. Wheels began to turn in the mind of William LeBaron Jenney, architect and engineer. If a frail bird cage could support a heavy book, why couldn't a steel framework support a tall building?

At that time architects took it for granted that a building's weight had to be sustained by its walls. Jenney amazed them by building the first steel-frame curtain-wall "skyscraper," Chicago's 12-story Home Life Insurance building.

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