

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 Torie 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 Torie 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. As the cookie crust bakes, the slices puff up and spread just enough to fill the pan.

The two large chocolate chip cookies are then layered with a fluffy toasted coconut filling. The finished torie is decorated with an attractive arrangement of sliced peaches and a mint garnish.

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

16-oz roll of 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 bottom 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 whipped cream and coconut.

Chocolate: The stuff of dreams

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Lacy Chocolate Crisps, a tempting recipe from the cookie section, is given here.

LACY CHOCOLATE CRISPS

1/4 cup light corn syrup
1/4 cup butter or margarine
1 pkg. (4 oz.) German sweet chocolate
1/4 cup firmly packed light brown sugar
1 cup unsifted all-purpose flour
1/2 cup angel flake coconut

Bring corn syrup to a boil in saucepan. Add butter and chocolate; cook and stir over low heat until mixture is smooth. Remove from heat; stir in sugar, flour and coconut. Drop from tablespoon, about 3 inches apart, onto lightly greased baking sheets. Bake at 300 degrees for 15 minutes, or until wafers are bubbling vigorously and have developed light holes throughout. Cool on baking sheets for 2 minutes; remove carefully, using a thin spatula. (If wafers become too difficult to remove, return to oven to soften, about a minute or two.) Cool on rack. Makes about 30 large wafers.

Note: Cookies may be shaped over aluminum foil cones or rolled over handle of wooden spoon while still warm. Fill cooked cookies with ice cream or whipped topping.



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
CHEESE FILLING

4 cups miniature marshmallows

1/4 cup milk

2 (8 oz) pkg cream cheese, softened

2 tbsp lemon juice

1 tbsp grated lemon peel

1 tsp vanilla

2 cups whipping cream

2 tsp powdered sugar

RASPBERRY FILLING

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

2 tsp 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 ungreased 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 liq-

uid 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.

Preparation time is shortened since the interesting dessert layers are actually large, tender cookies, made from refrigerated cookie dough.

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