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Candy Bar, Candy
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Holiday Items while supplies last

Holidays from page 1B

foods now taste good."

Ajluni said she uses the AHA Cookbook's new and revised fifth edition. That book, or the paperback fourth-edition, is available in area book stores.

"I've discovered there's a number of recipes available in this cookbook for good-tasting party foods, such as lemon-pepper mushrooms and pita crisps."

The young mother believes that "everything you put in your mouth affects you." That's why she is attempting to instill in her son good eating habits.

"I know that Steven is still young, but I really watch what I feed him. So far, he likes oatmeal, and he doesn't know what candy is."

She added that when the family travels, she carries healthy munchies, like bagels, pretzels and bananas.

Christina Stromp Hanba of Livonia said that having a small child and being connected with the cardiology field — she is a nurse — are among the reasons

orange dip and the Mexcall bean dip from the "Lean and Luscious and Meatless" cookbook, by Bobbie Hinman and Millie Snyder.

Jan Westover of Troy also serves healthy food when she entertains, because, like Hanba and Ajluni, she is an AHA Heart Ball committee member, and she's married to a cardiologist and has a nursing background. Westover is also the mother of four children, ages four to 20.

"Healthy foods help us (she and her husband, Doug) and our kids have the energy to keep up with our busy schedules," Westover said.

Another reason she and her husband need lots of energy is that they serve as foster parents to babies born with crack and other drug addictions. They currently have their 13th foster child.

"The whole family is aware of the benefits of eating low-fat and low-cholesterol foods," she said.

"We make heart-healthy meals on a daily basis, and even our treats are nutritious."

See recipes.

Bake holiday memories made of gingerbread

See related Taste Buds column on Taste front.

GINGERBREAD PEOPLE
2 1/2 cups all purpose flour
2 teaspoons ground ginger
1 1/2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon ground cloves
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup (1 1/2 sticks) butter, room temp.
1/2 cup dark brown sugar, packed
1/2 cup molasses
1 large egg

Sift the flour, ginger, cinnamon, soda, cloves and salt together in a large bowl. Set aside. Using an electric mixer, cream butter and sugar together until fluffy and smooth. Beat in molasses and egg. Add the dry ingredients and mix well to incorporate. Gather dough into a ball and divide into three pieces. Flatten each piece into a disk, wrap in plastic and refrigerate until firm. (Can be made a day ahead).

Position rack in center of the oven. Preheat to 375 degrees. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper. Set aside. Roll out one chilled disk of dough on a lightly floured surface to 1/4-inch thick. Using a gingerbread cutter about 5 inches in height, cut out gingerbread forms.

Transfer with a spatula to baking sheets. Bake cookies about 1 inch apart. Gather all leftover dough and repeat. Bake cookies at 375 degrees for 10 minutes. Allow to cool for 1 minute then remove to cool on wire racks.

Store in airtight containers. Makes about 2 dozen.

MOMMA'S RICH SOUR CREAM GINGERBREAD
2 eggs
1/2 cup sour cream
1/2 cup molasses
1/2 cup dark brown sugar, packed
1 1/2 cups cake flour, sifted
1 teaspoon ginger
1 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 cup melted, unsalted butter
Beat eggs until foamy and stir in sour cream, molasses and brown sugar. Set aside. Sift together the dry ingredients and stir into egg mixture and mix well. Stir in butter and incorporate. Lightly grease and flour an 8 by 8-inch baking dish and bake in a preheated 325 degree oven for 30 minutes or until a cake tester inserted in the center comes out clean. Serves 4-6.

AUNT EDNA'S GINGERBREAD CAKE
1/2 cup solid vegetable shortening (i.e. Crisco)
1/2 cup granulated sugar
1/2 cup brown sugar, packed
1/2 cup molasses
2 eggs
1 tablespoon instant coffee dissolved in 2 teaspoons hot water
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
2 teaspoons fresh grated lemon peel
2 cups cake flour
1 tablespoon cinnamon
1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon

ginger
1 1/2 teaspoons baking soda
2 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice
1/2 teaspoon salt

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Lightly grease and flour a 9-inch round cake pan. Set aside. Cream together the shortening and both sugars until fluffy, about 2-3 minutes. Stir in molasses, eggs, coffee, vanilla and lemon peel and mix well. Set aside. Sift together the flour, spices, soda and salt and stir into shortening mixture. Stir until just mixed. Do not overmix. Pour into prepared pan and bake in a preheated oven for 45 minutes or until a cake tester inserted in the center comes out clean. Serves 6.

GINGER CREAM CHEESE FROSTING
5 large crystallized ginger slices
2 tablespoons plus 2 cups powdered sugar
1 pound cream cheese, room temp.
1/2 cup (1 1/2 sticks) butter, room temp.
1 1/2 teaspoons ground ginger
1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract
Place crystallized ginger on a flat surface with 2 tablespoons powdered sugar. Finely chop the ginger or crush with a large knife. Using an electric mixer, beat cream cheese and butter until fluffy. Beat in remaining powdered sugar, both gingers and vanilla. Mix well. makes 4 cups frosting.

Healthy holiday appetizers sure to please your guests

See related story on Taste front.

LEMON PEPPER MUSHROOMS
Vegetable oil spray
8 large fresh mushrooms
1 tablespoon fresh chives
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
1 tablespoon, light, reduced-calorie mayonnaise
1 tablespoon light vegetable oil
1 1/2 teaspoons lemon-pepper seasoning
Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Lightly spray a shallow baking dish with vegetable oil.

Wipe mushrooms with a clean, damp cloth. Remove stems and set mushroom caps aside. Discard lower half of stems very finely. In a small bowl, combine chopped stems with remaining ingredients. Mix well. Stuff mushrooms caps with mixture. Place stuffed mushrooms in prepared pans and bake 8 to 10 minutes. Serve immediately. Serves 8; 1 mushroom per serving, 26 calories per serving.

PITA CRISPS
3 large whole-wheat pita bread rounds
1/4 cup low-fat margarine, melted
1/4 cup minced fresh parsley
1/4 teaspoon crushed, dried sweet basil
2 green onions, finely chopped

3 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese
Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Separate each pita bread into 2 round single layers. Set aside. In a small bowl, combine margarine, parsley, sweet basil and green onions. Mix well.

Brush mixture evenly over the 6 rounds of bread. Sprinkle cheese evenly over open pita rounds. Cut each into 6 wedges. Bake on ungreased cookie sheet 12 minutes or until crisp. Serve warm. Two wedges per serving, 67 calories.

SPINACH VEGETABLE DIP
1 (10-ounce) package frozen no-salt added chopped spinach
5 green onions with tops, coarsely chopped
1/4 cup watercress, large stems removed
1/4 cup fresh parsley, large stems removed
8 ounces plain nonfat yogurt
1 avocado, peeled and chopped
1 1/2 teaspoons no-salt garlic seasoning
1/4 teaspoon salt (optional)
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1/4 teaspoon hot pepper sauce, or to taste
1 purple cabbage
Cook spinach, drain and wring out all juice in a clean kitchen towel.

In the work bowl of a food processor fitted with a metal blade, finely chop spinach, onion, watercress and parsley, or chop with a knife and transfer to a blender. Process just until blended. Do not overprocess! Remove to colander to drain excess liquid. Set aside.

Place remaining ingredients except cabbage in processor or blender and process until smooth. In a bowl, combine vegetables and yogurt mixture. Mix to blend well. Cover and refrigerate at least 2 hours to allow flavors to blend.

Hollow out purple cabbage to use as a serving bowl. Serve with a variety of vegetables. Serves 24; 1 tablespoon per serving, 23 calories.

Recipes from the American Heart Association Cookbook, 8th edition.

CRANBERRY-ORANGE DIP
1/2 cup plain non-fat yogurt
1/2 cup canned whole-berry cranberry sauce
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/4 teaspoon orange extract
In a small bowl combine all ingredients, mixing well. Chill several hours to blend flavors. Serve as a dip for fresh fruit. Makes 8 (2 1/4 tablespoons) servings. Each serving 30 calories.

Recipes from "Lean and Luscious and Meatless" by Bobbie Hinman and Millie Snyder.