

December Holiday Recipes

I have been making this for many holiday seasons now! It makes your whole house smell festive – like you have been baking gingerbread all day!

Christmas Scent for your Kitchen

3 sticks cinnamon, each 3-4" long
3 bay leaves
¼ cup whole cloves (a small jar contains ¼ cup)
½ lemon with rind
½ orange, with rind
4 cups water

Combine all ingredients in an old saucepan or one you won't need to use. Heat the mixture on the back of the stove, on "low" or "warm" to scent your kitchen. This will keep for a few days on the back of the stove. Just turn it on when you want it and turn the burner off when you leave the kitchen. Add more water if needed. No calories at all!

Pumpkin Butter

Looking for an inexpensive and homemade gift for your friends? This recipe makes enough for about 5 half-pint jars, at a cost of less than 75 cents a jar. A similar item purchased at a gourmet grocery store can cost \$6.00 or more. Enjoy on biscuits, scones, toast, English muffins, etc.

1 can pumpkin (29 oz.), use plain pumpkin, NOT pumpkin pie mix
¾ cup apple juice
2 teaspoons ground ginger
½ teaspoon ground cloves
1 and ½ cups granulated white sugar
2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
1 teaspoon ground nutmeg

Method: In heavy saucepan, combine pumpkin, apple juice, spices and sugar. Stir to combine. Simmer over medium heat for about 30 minutes to blend flavors, stirring often. *Caution:* Mixture is very thick and can erupt like a volcano when it boils. Keep a lid on it slightly ajar, or place the handle of a wooden spoon under the lid to let steam escape. Remove from heat before stirring to avoid burning yourself with the hot mixture. Ladle into clean ½ pint jars and refrigerate until ready to serve. Nutrition information per tablespoon: 20 calories, 8 gm carbs, 30% of daily Value for Vitamin A. Recipe from allrecipes.com

Oatmeal Cranberry Raisin Cookies **(This recipe was not demonstrated on the program)**

Here is a healthier cookie recipe that contains no saturated or trans fat. They are delicious and nicely spiced! You can use raisins too instead of the dried cranberries, but the cranberries look very festive for the holidays!

1-cup whole-wheat flour
1-teaspoon cinnamon
½ teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon nutmeg
½ cup canola oil
½ cup sugar
½ cup brown sugar
1 whole egg plus 1 egg white
1-teaspoon vanilla extract
2 cups dry oatmeal
½ cup raisins
½ cup dried cranberries (Craisins)

METHOD: Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Combine the flour, cinnamon, baking soda, and nutmeg in a bowl and set aside. In a large bowl, combine oil, sugars, eggs, and vanilla and beat with an electric mixer until well mixed. Add the flour mixture and mix until all is combined. Stir in the oatmeal, raisins and cranberries with a mixing spoon until incorporated. Drop the dough by teaspoonfuls onto a baking sheet coated with non-stick cooking spray. Bake for 10-15 minutes or until just browned. Remove from the sheet to cool. Makes about 4 dozen (1/2 oz.) cookies. Per serving (2 cookies) = 110 calories, 3 gm total fat, .5 gm. Recipe from the Nutrition Action Healthletter

Poached Pears

Poached pears make a very festive and fat-free dessert! This dessert is not suitable for people with diabetes because it is high in carbohydrates!

4 medium, firm but ripe Bosc or Bartlett pears
1 bottle (15.2 oz.) cranapple raspberry juice
½ cup sugar
2 bay leaves
2 whole cloves
1 tsp orange zest (just the yellow part of the peel)

Method: Peel pears, leaving the pears whole with the stem intact. In a 2-quart saucepan, simmer pears in juice, with remaining ingredients, uncovered for about 10-15 minutes or until pears are tender when poked with a fork. Do not overcook; pears should be tender, but still hold their shape. Place each pear in a shallow serving bowl. Boil juice until slightly thickened and syrupy. Remove cloves and bay leaves, and drizzle juice over pears. Serve warm. Even more delicious when served with a scoop of vanilla frozen yogurt and sprinkled with toasted sliced almonds. Makes 4 servings. Nutrition info. per serving (without any almonds or other accompaniments): Calories 260, fat 0, Sodium 10 mg., Carbs 67 gms, fiber 6 grams, protein 1 gram. Recipe from Gourmet Magazine.

Raspberry Strippers

These vanilla butter cookies are festive and quick to make because you bake the entire recipe at one time. They are low in total fat, even though they are made with butter! You can use any type of preserves you like, but apricot and raspberry are my favorites!

1/3 cup granulated sugar
5 tablespoons butter
1 ½ teaspoons vanilla
1 large egg white
1 cup all purpose flour
2 tablespoons cornstarch
¼ teaspoon baking powder
¼ teaspoon salt

Topping:

1/3 cup apricot or raspberry preserves, or any favorite

Glaze:

½ cup powdered sugar
2 teaspoons fresh lemon juice or enough to make a drizzling consistency
¼ teaspoon almond or vanilla extract (I like the almond better)

Method:

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F. Beat granulated sugar and butter with a mixer at medium speed until well blended, add 1 ½ teaspoons vanilla and egg white, mix well. Add flour, cornstarch, baking powder and salt, stirring until well blended. Mixture will be stiff. Turn dough onto a lightly floured board and divide in two equal pieces. Roll each portion into a 12" log. Place on a greased baking sheet. Form a ½" deep indentation along the length of the log, using your finger or the handle of a wooden spoon. Spoon preserves into the center, be careful not to overfill. Bake at 375 degrees F. for about 20 minutes or until just starting to brown. While logs are baking, combine powdered sugar, lemon juice and almond extract. After logs are baked, transfer to a cutting board and drizzle with glaze. Cut each log diagonally into 12 slices per log. Transfer slices to cooling racks, makes 2 dozen cookies. Per cookie: 75 calories, 2.5 gm fat, 1.5 gm sat. fat, 12 grams carbs, 56 mg. sodium, and less than 1 gram protein. Recipe from Cooking Light magazine.

Whole Wheat Sugar Cookies

These delicious cookies are 100% whole grain. The combination of almond, vanilla, orange, and nutmeg creates a very unique flavor – your friends may ask “What did you put in these?” You can also frost them with a little orange frosting and decorate them as you like.

1 cup packed brown sugar
½ cup (1 stick) softened butter
1 egg
2 tablespoons milk
¼ teaspoon almond extract
1 teaspoon vanilla
2 cups whole wheat flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon baking soda
¼ teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon grated orange peel
¼ teaspoon nutmeg
Sugar for rolling

Method: In a medium bowl, using an electric mixer, cream together brown sugar and butter until fluffy. Add egg, milk, almond and vanilla and mix well. Blend together flour, baking powder, soda, salt, nutmeg and orange peel. Add to egg mixture and blend until combined. Shape dough into balls, using about 2 teaspoons per cookie. Roll in granulated or colored sugar if desired. Place about 2” apart on cookie sheet sprayed with non-stick coating. Flatten cookies slightly. Bake in a preheated 375 degree F. oven for about 9-10 minutes or until golden. Cool on pan 2 minutes and transfer to rack to finish cooling. Nutrition info. per cookie: (considering a yield of 3 dozen cookies) Calories: 70, Carbs. 11, fiber 1 gm, sodium 78 mg, protein 1 gm. Recipe from the Wheat Foods Council.