

Crunchy Nut Clusters



Ingredients

- Candy cups
- 2 2/3 cups sweetened flaked coconut
- 2 cups pecans or 1 (6-ounce) jar macadamia nuts, chopped
- 2 2/3 cups white or semisweet chocolate chips
- For the glaze: 1/3 cup white chocolate (melted with 1/2 tablespoon vegetable shortening) or 1/3 cup semisweet chocolate

Instructions

1. Line 4 miniature muffin pans with candy cups; set them aside. Heat the oven to 350 degrees. Spread the coconut and nuts on separate cookie sheets. Bake each until golden brown, about 9 minutes for the nuts and 10 for the coconut, stirring every few minutes to keep them from burning. Let them cool.
2. Combine the toasted coconut and nuts in a medium-size bowl. Melt the chocolate chips -- white or semisweet -- in the microwave according to the package directions. Add the melted chocolate to the coconut mixture; stir well. Drop the mixture by heaping teaspoonfuls into the candy cups. Chill until set, about 45 minutes.
3. Melt the remaining chocolate according to the package directions. Pour the contents into a ziplock bag. Snip off a small corner of the bag, then drizzle the chocolate over the clusters. Chill until the glaze is set, about 15 minutes. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator.

Caramel Crisp Bars



Ingredients

- 4 cups mini marshmallows
- 1/4 cup (1/2 stick) butter
- 14 caramel candy squares
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 6 1/2 cups crisped-rice cereal
- 1 1/4 cups semisweet chocolate chips

Instructions

1. Line a 9- by 13-inch baking pan with a piece of foil that extends at least 2 inches over each end. Grease the foil; set the pan aside. Melt the marshmallows, butter, and caramels in a large saucepan over low heat. Stir continuously until smooth, approximately 9 minutes. Remove from the heat and stir in the vanilla extract. Add the cereal and chocolate chips; mix well. Spread the mixture in the prepared pan. Let it cool completely, about 45 minutes.
2. Transfer the mixture to a cutting board by lifting up the foil. Carefully peel off the foil. Using a sharp knife, cut the mixture into 12 large bars, as shown above, or 24 small bars. Store in an airtight container.

Chocolate Mint Brownies



Ingredients

- **BROWNIES**
- 1/2 cup butter
- 4 ounces unsweetened chocolate
- 1 1/2 cups sugar
- 3 eggs
- 1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- **MINT FROSTING**
- 1/4 cup softened butter
- 2 1/2 cups sugar glazé
- 1 1/2 to 3 tablespoons milk
- 1/2 teaspoon peppermint extract
- Green food colouring
- **CHOCOLATE TOPPING**
- 3/4 cup semisweet chocolate chips

Instructions

1. Heat the oven to 350° and grease a 9-inch square baking pan. For the brownies, place the butter and chocolate in a microwave-safe bowl. Microwave on high for 1 minute, stir, and microwave for 1 minute more. Stir until smooth. In a separate bowl, whisk together the sugar and eggs. Stir in the chocolate and the vanilla extract. Finally, stir in the flour and salt until thoroughly combined. Pour into the prepared pan, then bake for 25 minutes or until a knife inserted in the middle comes out clean. Cool for at least 1 hour.
 2. To make the mint frosting, cream the butter and confectioners' sugar. Add the milk 1 tablespoon at a time, beating until it is smooth and spreadable. Beat in the peppermint extract and tint to the desired shade with green food colouring. Frost the cooled brownies, cover, and chill for 1 hour.
 3. To make the chocolate topping, pour the chips into a microwave-safe bowl, add the butter, and microwave on high for 1 1/2 minutes or until the chocolate melts. Stir until smooth. Pour the chocolate over the brownies and smooth it with a knife. Refrigerate for 45 minutes or until the coating hardens.
 4. Bring the brownies to room temperature, then cut into 16 to 32 pieces. Layer them on a piece of cellophane (place waxed paper between the layers to prevent sticking), wrap up the brownie package, and tie with a red ribbon. Makes 16 to 32 brownies.
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Chocolate Cookie Bark



Ingredients

- 20 creme-filled chocolate sandwich cookies (about half of an 18-ounce package)
- 2 2/3 cups white chocolate chips or 2 2/3 cups semisweet chocolate chips
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract (use with semisweet chips only)

Instructions

1. Line a 9-inch-square baking pan with waxed paper. Coat the paper with nonstick spray; set it aside. Pour the cookies into a large bowl and break them into small pieces by hand or with the back of a wooden spoon, a job kids will love.
2. Melt the white chocolate chips -- or the semisweet chips -- in a large microwave-safe bowl according to the package directions (add the extract after the chips have melted). Remove from the microwave and quickly fold in the cookie pieces with a spatula. Scrape the mixture into the prepared pan and spread to about a 1/2-inch thickness. Refrigerate until solid, about 1 hour.
3. Remove the bark from the pan and carefully peel off the waxed paper. Set the bark on a cutting board. Using a sharp knife, cut the bark into 12 bars for wrapping or 24 triangles for boxing as shown above. Store in an airtight container

Raspberry Crumble Cakes



Ingredients

- 1 cup unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 1/2 cup sugar glasé
- 2 cups flour
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup rolled oats
- 1/2 cup chopped walnuts
- 3/4 cup raspberry jam

Instructions

1. Heat the oven to 375° F. Grease a 9-inch square pan with butter or cooking spray.
2. In a mixing bowl, beat the butter and sugar until they're well blended. Add the flour and salt and beat just until the dough forms clumps. Don't overmix. Lightly flour your hands, then place the dough on a piece of waxed paper and squeeze it into a ball (the warmth of your hands will soften the dough enough to hold it together).
3. Divide the dough into thirds. Crumble one third into a bowl and set it aside. Press the remaining 2 thirds evenly into the greased pan using the back of a spoon to smooth the surface. Bake it on the centre oven rack until the edges are lightly golden, about 10 minutes
4. Set the pan on a wire rack. While the shortbread cools, mix the oats and nuts into the reserved dough with your fingers until the mixture is crumbly.
5. Spread the raspberry jam on the cooled shortbread (it's okay if it's still warm), then evenly cover the jam with the crumb topping. Bake the bars until the topping is golden brown, about 24 minutes, then return the pan to the wire rack. While the shortbread is still slightly warm, cut it into 16 squares, then cut each square in half diagonally. Once the triangles cool completely (they are very fragile while warm), lift them from the pan with a spatula. Makes about 2 1/2

dozen.

Apple Pie



Ingredients

- 6 to 8 apples, such as Granny Smith, Cortland, Rome, or a local variety of tart apples
- Juice of half a lemon
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1 tsp. cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp. nutmeg
- 2 tbsp. all-purpose flour
- piecrust pastry
- 2 tbsp. butter, cut into chunks
- Milk (for glaze)

Instructions

1. Heat the oven to 425 degrees. Meanwhile, use a vegetable peeler to peel the apples. Core and slice the apples into 1/4-inch pieces. Place the apples (about 6 cups) in a large mixing bowl.
2. _____
Next, pour the lemon juice over the apples and add the sugar, cinnamon, nutmeg, and flour. Toss well. Spoon the spiced apples into the lined piecrust and dot with the butter.
3. _____
A pie's top crust is as much art as food. For a lattice style, roll out the second disk of dough, cut it into 14 strips about 1/2 inch wide, and lay 7 of the strips across the pie, 1/2 inch apart. Working from the middle of the pie toward one side, fold back every other strip, then lay a cross strip across the remaining flat strips. Return the folded strips, then fold back the alternate strips and lay in the next crosspiece. Continue, creating a weave pattern. When one half of the crust is woven, repeat with the other side. Finally, use your thumb and index finger to crimp the edges. For a top crust, place the rolled-out dough loosely on top of the apple mixture. With the tines of a fork, make a decorative pattern around the edges. Next, cut pie dough ornaments, place on top of the pie, and cut slits in the dough to allow the steam to escape. Brush the top with milk for a glaze.
4. _____
Place the pie in the preheated oven (lay a sheet of aluminum foil on the rack below to catch any juices). Bake for 45 minutes or until the crust is golden brown and you can see the juices bubbling. If the crust begins to brown before the pie is fully baked, cover it with foil.
5. _____
Let the pie cool, then slice it into wedges.