

Halloween is going to be here soon and all the cute, and not so cute (scary), costumes will be showcased at many of the local community events and parties.

If you are having a party or just want to make Halloween a little “extra” for your family this year, you need to try some of these creative treats.

This week, we will focus on family friendly ideas and next week, we will focus on the adults!

Ghoul Punch

Servings: 32 (6 qts.)

1 vinyl glove
1 gal tropical fruit punch, chilled
2 liters lemon-lime soda, chilled
1 qt. raspberry sherbet
Ice cubes

Fill glove with water; tie or seal and freeze for at least 4 hours. In a 7-qt. punch bowl, combine punch and soda. Add sherbet and ice cubes. Remove glove from hand-shaped ice; add to punch. Serve immediately.

Halloween Chex Mix™

*Prep Time: 15 min.
Total Time: 1 hr. 15 min.
Servings: 15 cups*

4 C. Corn Chex™
4 C. Wheat Chex™
2 C. cinnamon Teddy Grahams®
1/2 C. unsalted butter, melted
6 T. light brown sugar
1 tsp. ground cinnamon
1 tsp. salt
1 tsp. pure vanilla extract
2 C. candy corn and/or candy pumpkins
2 C. chocolate-covered pretzels
2 C. salted sweet potato chips, such as Terra®
1 C. Reese's® pieces

Preheat oven to 250°. In a large bowl, combine Corn Chex™, Wheat Chex™, and Teddy Grahams®. In a small bowl, mix butter, brown sugar, cinnamon, salt, and vanilla.

Drizzle about one-third of butter mixture over the Chex™ mixture. Toss to coat, then repeat with remaining butter mixture until every component is coated.

Divide the Chex™ mix between 2 unlined, rimmed baking sheets; spread in an even layer.

Bake the Chex™ mix, tossing every 15 minutes, until toasted and crisp, 30 to 45 minutes.

Let cool, then mix in candy corn, pretzels, sweet potato chips, and Reese's® pieces.

Ghostly Cupcake Cones

*Prep: 25 min.
Bake: 25 min. + cooling
Servings: 2 doz.*

1/3 C. butter, softened
1/2 C. creamy peanut butter
1-1/2 C. packed brown sugar
2 lg. eggs, room temperature
1 tsp. vanilla extract
2 C. all-purpose flour
2-1/2 tsp. baking powder
1/2 tsp. salt
3/4 C. 2% milk
24 ice cream cake cones (about 3 in. tall)
Frosting of your choice
Assorted jimmies and sprinkles

In a large bowl, cream the butter, peanut butter and brown sugar until light and fluffy, 5-7 min. Beat in eggs and vanilla. Combine dry ingredients; add to creamed mixture alternately with milk, beating well after each addition.

Place ice cream cones in muffin cups. Spoon about 3 T. batter into each cone, filling to 3/4 in. from the top.

Bake at 350° for 25-30 min. or until a toothpick inserted in the center of the cake comes out clean. Cool completely on wire racks. Pipe frosting over cupcake tops in ghost shapes; arrange jimmies and sprinkles on frosting as desired to create facial features.

Crazy Halloween Blondies

*Prep: 20 min.
Cook: 20 min.
Servings: 2 doz.*

1 C. butter, melted

2 C. packed brown sugar
2 lg. eggs, room temperature
2 tsp. vanilla extract
2 C. all-purpose flour
1/2 tsp. baking powder
1/4 tsp. salt
1 C. chopped pecans, divided
2/3 C. milk chocolate M&M's®, divided
2/3 C. chopped candy corn, divided
2/3 C. coarsely chopped miniature pretzels, divided
2/3 C. miniature semisweet chocolate chips, divided
2/3 C. butterscotch chips, divided
1 jar (12 oz.) hot caramel ice cream topping

Preheat oven to 375°. Line a 13x9-in. baking pan with parchment, letting ends extend up sides; grease paper.

In a large bowl, beat melted butter and brown sugar until blended. Beat in eggs and vanilla. In a large bowl, mix flour, baking powder and salt; gradually add to brown sugar mixture, mixing well. Stir in half the pecans, M&M's®, candy corn, pretzels, chocolate chips and butterscotch chips.

Spread into prepared pan. Bake 20-25 min. or until a toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool completely in pan on a wire rack.

Spread caramel topping over bars; sprinkle with remaining pecans, M&M's®, candy corn, pretzels, chocolate chips and butterscotch chips. Lifting with parchment, remove from pan. Cut into bars.

“Boo”-rrific Kisses

Prep: 20 min.

Cook: 40 min.

Servings: 2-1/2 doz.

2 lg. egg whites
1/2 tsp. vanilla extract
1/4 tsp. almond extract
1/8 tsp. cider vinegar
1/2 C. sugar
Orange food coloring, optional
1-1/2 tsp. miniature semisweet chocolate chips

Place egg whites in a small bowl; let stand at room temperature for 30 min. Add extracts and vinegar; beat on medium speed until soft peaks form. Gradually beat in sugar, 1 T. at a time, on high until stiff glossy peaks form and sugar is dissolved, about 6 min. Beat in food coloring if desired.

Transfer the meringue to a pastry bag fitted with a #10 round tip. Pipe 1-1/2-in.-diameter ghost shapes onto parchment-lined baking sheets. Add 2 chips on each for eyes.

Bake at 250° until set and dry, 40-45 min. Turn oven off; leave cookies in oven for 1 hour. Carefully remove from parchment. Store in an airtight container.

Monster Munch

Prep: 10 min.

Total Time: 30 min.

Servings: 8-10

3 C. plain popcorn or kettle corn
2 C. pretzels
1 C. semisweet chocolate chips, melted
1 C. white chocolate chips, melted
1/2 C. candy corn
1/2 C. yellow, orange, and chocolate M&M's®
2 tsp. Halloween-colored sprinkles or nonpareils

On a parchment-lined baking sheet, place a single layer of popcorn or kettle corn and pretzels.

Transfer melted chocolates to separate piping or resealable plastic bags, with a corner snipped, and drizzle popcorn and pretzels with melted semisweet chocolate, making sure to drizzle lines very close together (you want the majority of the mix to be covered in chocolate).

Top with candy corn and M&M's® and drizzle with melted white chocolate. Top with sprinkles and freeze or refrigerate until chocolate is firm, 20 min.

Break into pieces and serve.

Spiderweb Taco Dip with Bat Tortilla Chips

Prep: 25 min.

Cook: 5 min.

*Servings: 1-1/2 C. dip
and 7 doz. chips*

20 chipotle chili and pepper tortillas or flour tortillas (8 in.)
Cooking spray
3/4 tsp. garlic salt
3/4 tsp. ground coriander
3/4 tsp. paprika
3/8 tsp. pepper

Dip:

1 pkg. (8 oz.) cream cheese, softened
3/4 C. salsa
1/2 C. prepared guacamole
1 to 2 T. sour cream

Preheat oven to 350°. Cut tortillas into bat shapes with a 3-3/4-in. cookie cutter. Place tortillas on baking sheets coated with cooking spray. Spritz tortillas with cooking spray. Combine the garlic salt, coriander, paprika and pepper; sprinkle over tortillas. Bake until edges just begin to brown, 5-8 min.

In a small bowl, combine cream cheese and salsa. Spread into a 9-in. pie plate. Carefully spread guacamole to within 1 in. of edges.

Place sour cream in a small resealable plastic bag; cut a small hole in a corner of bag. Pipe thin concentric circles an inch apart over guacamole. Beginning with the center circle, gently pull a knife through circles toward outer edge. Wipe knife clean. Repeat to complete spiderweb pattern. Serve with tortilla bats.

Goblin Bites

Prep: 20 min.

Cook: 5 min.

Servings: 32 appetizers

32 wonton wrappers
1/2 lb. bulk Italian sausage
1/2 lb. ground beef
3 C. shredded Colby-Monterey Jack cheese
1 C. mayonnaise
1/2 C. sour cream
1/2 C. whole milk
2 to 3 tsp. ranch salad dressing mix
Finishing touches: sliced ripe olives, radishes, sliced green onions and cucumber peel

Press wonton wrappers into muffin cups. Bake at 350° for 5 min. or until lightly browned.

Meanwhile, in a large skillet, cook sausage and beef over medium heat until no longer pink; drain. In a large bowl, combine the cheese, mayonnaise, sour cream, milk, salad dressing mix and meat mixture. Spoon 2 T. into each wonton cup.

Bake at 350° for 5-7 min. or until heated through. Add faces with olives, radish slices, onions and pieces of cucumber peel. Serve warm.

Halloween Feet Loaf

Prep: 30 min.

Cook: 55 min.

Servings: 8

1 T. canola oil
1 med. carrot, grated
1 sm. onion, finely chopped
1 celery rib, finely chopped
1/2 med. green pepper, finely chopped
2 C. soft bread crumbs
1 lg. egg, lightly beaten
1/2 C. 2% milk
1 tsp. garlic powder
1/2 tsp. seasoned salt
1/2 tsp. pepper
2 lbs. ground beef
1 med. carrot, cut into 10 thin slices
2/3 C. ketchup
2 T. balsamic vinegar

Preheat oven to 350°. In a large skillet, heat oil over medium heat. Add carrot, onion, celery and green pepper; cook and stir 3-4 min. or until tender. Cool slightly.

Line a 15x10x1-in. baking pan with foil; grease foil. Place bread crumbs in a large bowl. Stir in egg, milk, seasonings and carrot mixture. Add beef; mix lightly but thoroughly. Shape into two feet with indentations for toes.

Transfer to prepared pan. Bake, uncovered, 30 min. Position carrot slices on loaves for toenails. In a small bowl, mix ketchup and vinegar; brush half over meat loaf. Bake 20 min. longer or until a thermometer reads 160°. Brush with remaining mixture; bake 5 min. longer.

Pizza-Stuffed Pumpkins

Prep Time: 45 min.

Total Time: 2 hrs.

Servings: 16

2 C. (16 oz.) ricotta
1 C. shredded mozzarella
1/2 C. finely grated Parmesan
1 tsp. kosher salt
1/4 tsp. freshly ground black pepper

1 (16.3-oz. tube) Pillsbury Grands™ Southern Homestyle Biscuits
4 T. unsalted butter
1 garlic clove, finely chopped
2 tsp. finely chopped fresh parsley
1/2 tsp. paprika
16 (1"-long) thin pretzel sticks Marinara sauce, for serving

In a medium bowl, combine ricotta, mozzarella, Parmesan, salt, and pepper. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate until ready to use.

Cut biscuits into 16 pieces; form each into a ball with your hands. Roll out each ball to a 3 1/2" to 4" round.

Place about 2 tsp. ricotta mixture in the center of round. Gather sides of dough; pinch to seal. Gently press down on dough to create a flat bottom. Transfer to a parchment-lined baking sheet. Repeat with remaining rounds. Refrigerate until cold, about 20 min.

Arrange a rack in center of oven; preheat to 350°. Cut 16 (17" to 20") pieces of kitchen twine. On a cutting board, lay out 1 strip of twine. Place 1 piece of stuffed dough in the middle of twine. Loosely tie around dough, then flip and tie as if you were tying a bow around a gift. Turn dough and tie twine around. Keep screen awake Repeat as needed for 6 sections total. Make a loose knot to secure. Trim off excess twine. Repeat with remaining stuffed dough and twine. Arrange on a parchment-lined baking sheet, spacing 1" to 2" apart.

Bake pumpkins until golden brown, 15 to 20 min.

Quote of the Week:

"I can smell autumn dancing in the breeze. The sweet chill of pumpkin, and crisp sunburnt leaves."

~Ann Drake