Happy Halloween!
Halloween is always a fun time to be a bit creative with meals and desserts.
Whether you are trying to get the kids fed and out the door, or have a party to attend, this week we have a few great options to try!
Be safe! Have fun!

Bats and Cobwebs

Prep Time: 10 min.
Cook Time: 30 min.
Total Time: 40 min.
Servings: 6

1 (8 oz.) pkg. bow tie pasta
1 lb. ground beef
1 small onion, chopped
1 (28 oz. jar pasta sauce
8 oz. mozzarella cheese, cut into 1/2 inch cubes
1/4 C. grated Parmesan cheese

Preheat the oven to 400° F.

Fill a large pot with lightly salted water, bring to a rolling boil over high heat. Stir in the bow tie pasta and return to a boil. Boil pasta, stirring occasionally, until cooked through but still firm to the bite, about 12 minutes. Drain well.

Cook and stir ground beef and onion in a large skillet until beef is no longer pink, about 5 minutes. Drain fat. Stir in pasta sauce and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to simmer.

Stir cooked pasta and half of the mozzarella cheese into the sauce; toss to combine. Transfer to a 2-quart baking dish. Top with remaining mozzarella and Parmesan cheese.

Bake in the preheated oven until lightly browned and bubbly, 15 to 20 minutes.

Chicken Tortilla Soup

Level: Easy
Total: 40 min.
Prep: 15 min.
Cook: 25 min.
Servings: 8

3 T. butter
1 tsp. minced garlic
1 med. onion, finely chopped
2 T. all-purpose flour
3 (14-oz.) cans chicken broth
4 C. half-and-half
1 (10.75-oz.) can cream of chicken soup
1 C. prepared salsa
4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts, boiled, drained and shredded
16-ounce bag tortilla chips
8 oz. Monterey Jack, grated
8 oz. sharp Cheddar, grated
1 (15-oz.) can black beans, drained
1 (15-oz.) can kidney beans, drained
1 (15-oz.) can whole kernel corn, drained
2 tsp. ground cumin
1 (1.27-oz.) packet fajita seasoning
1/2 C. sour cream

Melt the butter in a large pot over medium heat. Add the garlic and the onion and sauté until softened, 5 minutes. Add the flour and stir well, cooking for 1 minute more. Add the broth and the half-and-half. Stir in the cream of chicken soup, salsa, chicken, beans, corn, cumin and fajita seasoning. Continue to simmer over low heat for 15 minutes. Crumble the tortilla chips into individual bowls and top with a ladle of soup. Sprinkle each serving with cheese and add a dollop of sour cream.

Halloween Party Pizzas

Level: Easy
Total: 35 min.
Active: 25 min.
Servings 4

12-ounce package multigrain sandwich thins
1 C. pizza sauce
3 mozzarella string cheese sticks

1 (2.25-oz.) can sliced black olives, drained
3 deli slices Cheddar
9 pepperoni slices
3 slices provolone
1/2 C. shredded mozzarella
1 (2.25-oz.) can whole pitted black olives, drained

Preheat the oven to 375°F.

Split the sandwich thins into 2 halves and place 6 on each of 2 baking sheets. Spoon 1 to 2 T. pizza sauce over each sandwich thin, spreading it to the edges. Add the toppings to create each of the monsters.

For mummies: Tear the string cheese into thin strips. Arrange the strips horizontally across three pizzas like layers of a mummy. Nestle in two olive slices for eyes.

For jack-o'-lanterns: Cut out rounds from the Cheddar slices with a jar lid or 3-1/2 inch cookie cutter. Place the cut rounds on 3 pizzas. Trim pepperoni slices into triangles (3 per pizza; 2 for the eyes and 1 for the nose) and place on the Cheddar rounds. Cut an olive slice in half and use for a smile.

For ghosts: Trim the provolone slices along a bottom edge in a zig-zag pattern with kitchen shears. Place 2 black olive slices on each pizza to create the eyes.

For spiders: Sprinkle 2-3 T. shredded mozzarella over 3 pizzas.

While the pizza is baking, cut 2 whole black olives in half for the bodies and cut the remaining olive slices in half for the legs. Assemble the spiders on the cheese once the pizzas come out of the oven and are still hot by inverting an olive half on each for a body, then arranging the legs around the bodies.

Bake all the pizzas until the cheese begins to melt, but before it bubbles, 8 to 10 minutes.

Pumpkin Brownies

Prep Time: 20 min.
Cook Time: 40 min.
Total Time: 1 hr.
Servings: 16

3/4 C. all-purpose flour
1/2 tsp. baking powder
1/2 tsp. salt
3/4 C. butter, melted
1-1/2 C. white sugar
2 tsp. vanilla extract
3 lg. eggs
1/2 C. semi-sweet chocolate chips
1/4 C. cocoa powder
1/2 C. pumpkin puree
1/2 C. chopped walnuts
3/4 tsp. ground cinnamon
1/2 tsp. ground cloves
1/2 tsp. ground nutmeg

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Grease an 8-inch square baking pan.

Stir flour, baking powder, and salt together in a medium bowl.

Stir sugar, melted butter, and vanilla together in a large bowl.

Add one egg and mix with a spoon until well incorporated. Repeat to add remaining 2 eggs, mixing well after each addition.

Gradually add flour mixture and stir the batter until evenly moistened. Pour 1/2 of the batter back into the medium bowl that held the flour mixture.

Stir chocolate chips and cocoa into one bowl of batter. Stir pumpkin puree, walnuts, cinnamon, cloves, and nutmeg into the second bowl of batter.

Spread 1/2 of the chocolate batter into the bottom of the prepared baking pan, and follow with 1/2 of the pumpkin batter. Repeat the two layers once more.

Drag a kitchen knife or small spatula gently through the layers in a swirling motion to create a marbled appearance.

Bake in the preheated oven until the brownies begin to pull away from the sides of the pan, and a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean, 40 to 45 minutes.

Remove from the oven and let cool in the pan before cutting into 16 squares.

Serve warm, topped with a scoop of vanilla ice cream.

Pumpkin Salted Caramel Cupcakes

Prep Time: 30 min.
Total: 1 hr. 40 min.
Servings: 24

Cupcakes
1 box Yellow Cake Mix
1 C. 100% Pure Pumpkin (from 15 oz can)
1/2 C. water
1/3 C. vegetable oil
4 eggs
2 tsp. pumpkin pie spice

Frosting
2 tubs (16 oz) Rich & Creamy Vanilla Frosting
1/2 C. salted caramel sauce

Topping
24 Hershey's Rolos® chocolates, unwrapped, quartered
1/2 C. coarsely chopped pecans, toasted
1/4 C. salted caramel sauce
Coarse sea salt, if desired

Heat oven to 350°F (325°F for dark or nonstick pans). Place paper baking cup in each of 24 regular-size muffin cups.

In large bowl, beat cake mix, pumpkin, water, oil, eggs, and pumpkin pie spice with electric mixer on medium speed 2 minutes, scraping bowl occasionally. Divide batter evenly among muffin cups (about two-thirds full).

Bake 14 to 19 minutes or until toothpick inserted in centers comes out clean. Cool in pans 10 minutes; remove from pans to cooling rack. Cool completely, about 30 minutes.

In medium bowl, mix frosting and 1/2 C. caramel sauce with spoon until well blended. Spoon frosting into large resealable freezer plastic bag; partially seal. Cut off bottom corner of bag. Pipe frosting on outside edge of cupcake and spiraling up toward center. Decorate with 4 Rolos™ pieces and 1 tsp. pecans. Repeat steps to frost and decorate with each cupcake.

When ready to serve, drizzle 1/4 C. caramel sauce on cupcakes and sprinkle with sea salt, if desired. Store loosely covered at room temperature.

Peanut Butter Bugle® Bites

Prep Time: 10 min.
Cook Time: 5 min.
Total Time: 15 min.
Servings: 10

1 (7-1/2 oz.) bag crunchy corn snacks (such as Bugles®)
1 C. lightly packed brown sugar
1/3 C. butter
2/3 C. peanut butter
1/3 C. light corn syrup
1/4 tsp. baking soda
1 C. chocolate chips
1 T. coconut oil
flaky sea salt (optional)

Line a baking sheet with parchment or waxed paper. Spread Bugles® out on the sheet.

Combine sugar, butter, peanut butter, and corn syrup in a small saucepan over medium heat. Bring mixture to a boil, stirring often. Boil for 2 minutes, remove from heat, and pour over Bugles®. Toss quickly to coat and spread into an even layer.

Combine chocolate chips and coconut oil in a small bowl. Melt in the microwave in 30 second increments, stirring in between each. Drizzle melted chocolate over bugles and let cool completely. For best results, refrigerate for 5 minutes to allow chocolate to harden. Break into large pieces; store in an airtight container.

Cinnamon Sugar Pumpkin Seeds

Prep Time: 10 min.
Cook Time: 40 min.
Total Time: 50 min.
Servings: 10

1-1/2 C. pumpkin seeds
3 T. butter, melted
1 tsp. ground cinnamon
1/4 tsp. salt
2 T. white sugar

Gather the ingredients. Preheat the oven to 300°F Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

Place pumpkin seeds into a large bowl. Mix butter, cinnamon, and salt together in a small bowl; pour over seeds and toss until evenly coated. Spread seeds in a single layer on the prepared baking sheet.

Bake in the preheated oven, stirring occasionally, until seeds are light golden brown, about 40 minutes. Remove from the oven; sprinkle sugar over warm seeds and stir until evenly coated.

Quote of the Week:

"Each year, the Great Pumpkin rises out of the pumpkin patch that he thinks is the most sincere. He's gotta pick this one. He's got to. I don't see how a pumpkin patch can be more sincere than this one. You can look around and there's not a sign of hypocrisy. Nothing but sincerity as far as the eye can see."

~ Linus, "It's The Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown"