



Mr. Food  
TEST KITCHEN

# SCRUMPTIOUS Christmas Desserts

'Tis the Season for 21 Holiday Treats



"OOH IT'S SO GOOD!!<sup>®</sup>"



## **Scrumptious Christmas Desserts: 'Tis the Season for 21 Holiday Treats**

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Dear Friend,

We feel a winter breeze in the air and hear a merry jingling on the roof. You know what that means? It must be Christmas time again! We can't get enough of the holiday spirit here at the Test Kitchen. Whether we're stringing up the lights outside or sending out the annual Christmas card, there's nothing like the holidays to put everyone in a jolly mood. And what better way to celebrate than in our very own kitchen!

Whether you're entertaining a group of family and friends or you're just looking for something sweet for Christmas dessert, you can't go wrong with one of our festive cakes. If you're looking to impress the in-laws, you'll want to check out our classic recipe for **Red Velvet Cake** (page 2). You can even alternate the cake with green frosting for an extra colorful treat! Plus, did you see our **Jingle Bell Torte** (page 3) on the cover? It's one of our favorites, and the only difficult part about it is not eating the whole thing in one sitting!

There's nothing easier to bring along during the holidays than a package of homemade Christmas candy. And, let's face it, who doesn't love munching on chocolate over the holidays?! Peppermint is one of our favorite festive ingredients in Christmas desserts and our recipe for **Chocolate- and Peppermint-Coated Pretzels** (page 8) are perfect for snacking. The combination of salty and sweet make an irresistible party treat. Plus, we can't get enough of our reader-favorite recipe for **Buckeyes** (page 12). These bite-sized chocolate balls are even better than those over-priced chocolates you'd buy at the store.

Finally, we have a mixed bag of Christmas desserts that'll help you out in a cinch. From the creative kid-friendly favorite recipe for **Crispy Snowmen Treats** (page 13) to our friendly neighborhood recipe for **Holiday Cherry Nut Logs** (page 21), you're sure to find a festive Christmas dessert that'll have everyone in your group saying...

"OOH IT'S SO GOOD!!"<sup>®</sup>

Kelly Howard Patty



P.S. Enjoy this eCookbook filled with 21 festive holiday treats. Remember, the *Scrumptious Christmas Desserts* eCookbook is available FREE, with many others also available on [www.MrFood.com](http://www.MrFood.com). Go on, tell your friends to visit [MrFood.com](http://MrFood.com), so they too can get their very own FREE copies!

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# Christmas Crunch Cake

Your holiday gathering will be extra special and extra easy, when you start with a store-bought cake and fancy it up with your own homemade frosting and garnishes. Our Christmas Crunch Cake will do you proud!

## Ingredients

**Serves:** 12

**Preparation Time:** 10 min

**Chilling Time:** 8 hr

1 (8-ounce) package cream cheese, softened  
1-1/4 cups confectioners' sugar  
1 (15-ounce) container ricotta cheese  
1 cup miniature semisweet chocolate chips  
1 (8-ounce) container or 1 cup finely chopped red candied cherries  
1 Louisiana or other ring crunch cake  
1 (8-ounce) container frozen whipped topping, thawed  
3/4 cup halved red candied cherries, for garnish



## Directions

1. In a large bowl, beat together cream cheese and confectioners' sugar until fluffy, about 2 minutes. Stir in ricotta cheese until well blended, then fold in chocolate chips and chopped cherries. Chill mixture overnight, so it achieves the proper firm spreading consistency.
2. The next day, carefully cut cake horizontally, making three layers. Set bottom layer on a serving plate. Spread 1/3 of chilled mixture on top of bottom layer, then add next cake layer and repeat until top of cake is covered but sides are not.
3. Spread whipped topping on sides of cake so that it meets filling on top of cake. Garnish by placing cherry halves around cake edge.



# Red Velvet Cake

Ruby-colored red velvet cake with its sinfully good cream cheese frosting may have its roots in the South, but it's sure to melt hearts from coast to coast with every last velvety forkful.

## Ingredients

Serves: 12

Baking Time: 35 min

1 (18.25-ounce) package butter-flavored yellow cake mix  
1/4 cup unsweetened cocoa  
3/4 cup (1-1/2 sticks) butter, softened, divided  
1 cup water  
3 eggs  
1 (1-ounce) bottle red food color  
1-1/2 cups confectioners' sugar  
1 (8-ounce) package cream cheese, softened  
1 tablespoon milk



## Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degree F. Coat two 8-inch round cake pans with cooking spray.
2. In a large bowl, with an electric beater on medium speed, beat cake mix, cocoa, 1/2 cup butter, the water, and eggs until well combined. Add food color and beat until well combined. Pour batter into prepared cake pans.
3. Bake 35 to 40 minutes, or until a wooden toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Let cool 15 minutes then invert onto wire rack to cool completely. Using a sharp knife, carefully slice each cake in half horizontally, making a total of 4 cake layers.
4. In a medium bowl, with an electric beater on medium speed, beat confectioners' sugar, cream cheese, milk, and remaining 1/4 cup butter until well combined and smooth.
5. Place 1 cake layer cut-side down on a serving platter and top with 1/4 of the frosting, spreading just to the edge. Repeat 3 more times with remaining cake layers and frosting, ending with frosting on top and leaving sides unfrosted. Serve, or cover loosely and chill until ready to serve.



**Test Kitchen Tip:** To make a more traditional two-layer cake, [watch the video](#) for instructions.

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# No Bake Holiday Fruitcake

You know that old story about how most fruitcakes never get eaten, they're just given as gifts? Well, that's not the case with this no-bake one. It's gonna get eaten...and sure, you can give it as a gift because it's one they're gonna really love!

## Ingredients

Serves: 18

Chilling Time: 8 hr

- 1 (13.5-ounce) package graham crackers, crushed
- 2 (6 ounces) containers candied cherries (1 red and 1 green), coarsely chopped
- 1 (6 ounces) container candied pineapple
- 2 (14 ounces each) cans sweetened condensed milk
- 1-1/2 cups coarsely chopped pecans



## Directions

1. Line 9- x 5-inch loaf pan with plastic wrap, letting wrap hang over sides a few inches.
2. In large bowl, combine all ingredients and thoroughly mix with your clean hands. Place mixture into lined pan and cover well. Freeze at least 8 hours, or overnight before serving.
3. To serve, remove from freezer, invert over serving platter, remove pan and plastic wrap, and cut into slices. Store any remaining cake in freezer.



**Test Kitchen Tip:** This is a very rich cake, so keep in mind that a small slice will go a long way!

# Holiday Cake

This is a quick, festive way to top off your holiday meal! Garnish it with a few leftover candy canes with a side of hot cocoa for an easy Christmas cake the whole family will enjoy. If you're looking for an easy Christmas cake recipe that won't make you feel overstuffed after dinner, this is one dessert you won't want to miss.

## Ingredients

Serves: 10

Preparation Time: 10 min

- 1 (about 10 ounces) prepared angel food cake
- 1 (8-ounce) container frozen whipped topping, thawed
- 4 candy canes



## Directions

1. Place cake on serving platter and slice in half horizontally. Remove top and set aside.
2. Place candy canes in a zippered plastic bag and seal. Break into small pieces with a rolling pin or mallet.
3. Spread half whipped topping over bottom half of cake. Sprinkle half of candy cane bits evenly over topping. Replace top half of cake. Spread with remaining whipping topping and candy cane bits. Serve immediately or refrigerate until ready to serve.



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# Cranberry Upside Down Cake

Whether you serve your Cranberry Upside Down Cake as a rise-and-shine breakfast or a dessert, it's sure to bring you raves. With its wholesome ingredients like cranberries, pecans and canola oil, you can't miss!

## Ingredients

**Serves:** 12

**Chilling Time:** 8 hr

1-1/2 cups all-purpose flour  
1-1/2 teaspoons baking powder  
1 teaspoon baking soda  
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
2/3 cup packed light brown sugar  
1/4 cup canola margarine  
1 cup fresh or frozen cranberries, thawed  
1/2 cup coarsely chopped pecans  
1/4 cup canola oil  
3/4 cup granulated sugar  
2 eggs  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
1 cup sour cream



## Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Spray a 9- x 13-inch baking dish with cooking spray and line with wax paper.
2. In a large bowl, combine flour, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon, and salt; set aside.
3. In a small saucepan, combine brown sugar and margarine. Bring to a boil over medium heat, stirring occasionally. Pour brown sugar mixture into baking dish; sprinkle with cranberries and pecans.
4. In a large bowl, combine oil and granulated sugar, and beat with an electric mixer until light and fluffy. Beat in eggs one at a time then stir in vanilla. Beat in flour mixture alternately with sour cream. Pour batter over cranberry nut mixture and bake 25 to 30 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in center comes out clean.
5. Remove from oven and let sit 5 minutes. Invert cake onto a large serving platter, and slowly remove wax paper. Let cake cool before serving.

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# Jingle Bell Torte

Amaze your guests for the holidays with your pastry baking skills by using our easy shortcut tricks to making a sparkling and decadent Jingle Bell Torte. It starts with a cake mix and will end with memory-making raves!

## Ingredients

**Serves:** 12

**Preparation Time:** 15 min

**Cooking Time:** 30 min

- 1 (18.25-ounce) package chocolate cake mix, prepared according to package directions
- 1 (10-ounce) jar red maraschino cherries, well drained and chopped, with 1/4 cup juice reserved
- 1 (8-ounce) package cream cheese, softened
- 1/2 cup confectioners' sugar
- 1 (16-ounce) container frozen whipped topping, thawed
- 1 (6-ounce) jar green maraschino cherries, well drained and chopped
- 1 cup chopped pecans, with 2 tablespoons reserved for garnish
- 1 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips



## Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Coat 2 (8-inch) round baking pans with cooking spray.
2. Stir reserved cherry juice into chocolate cake batter. Pour into prepared cake pans.
3. Bake 30 to 35 minutes, or until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Let cool 10 minutes, then remove to wire rack to cool completely. When cool, slice cakes horizontally in half, making 4 layers.
4. In a large bowl, beat cream cheese and sugar until smooth. Stir in whipped topping, red and green cherries, and pecans.
5. Place 1 cake layer on platter and evenly spread one-quarter of cream cheese mixture on top. Repeat with remaining cake layers and finish with cream cheese mixture on top. Sprinkle with reserved pecans.
6. In a small microwave-safe bowl, melt chocolate chips in microwave 1 minute, stirring until smooth; add 10 seconds, if necessary. Drizzle melted chocolate on cake and refrigerate until ready to serve.



**Serving Suggestion:** Special times should be celebrated! How 'bout making up our [Holiday Nog](#) to put out with this beautiful and delicious cake.

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# Holly Fudge

Everyone knows that fudge is traditionally made with chocolate, right? But one bite of this fudge and you'll forget tradition. It's rich and creamy, and the red and green candied cherries add that little Christmas touch we're always looking for. Better make two batches, though, 'cause once the gang gets a hold of it, they'll surely eat the whole pan and then there won't be any left for gift-giving!

## Ingredients

**Makes:** 3 dozen

**Cooking Time:** 15 min

1 cup granulated sugar  
1/2 cup (1 stick) butter  
1/2 cup heavy cream  
1/8 teaspoon salt  
2 cups confectioners' sugar  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
1 cup red and green candied cherries, chopped



## Directions

1. Coat 8-inch square baking dish with cooking spray.
2. In large saucepan, bring granulated sugar, butter, heavy cream, and salt to boil over medium heat, stirring frequently. Allow to boil 5 minutes, stirring constantly.
3. Remove from heat and slowly add confectioners' sugar and vanilla, stirring until smooth and well combined. Stir in cherries until evenly distributed.
4. Spoon into baking dish and chill 1 hour, or until firm. Cut into squares and serve, or store in an airtight container.



**Test Kitchen Tip:** If you prefer, leave out the candied cherries, and you'll have a great vanilla fudge.



# Chocolate- and Peppermint-Coated Pretzels

The slow cooker is ideal for candy making. It keeps chocolate at a constant temperature, so no reheating is necessary to get an even coating. Our Chocolate- and Peppermint-Coated Pretzels will turn you into an expert candy maker in no time!

## Ingredients

**Makes:** 80 pieces (about 4-1/2 pounds)

**Cooking Time:** 2 hr

- 1 (16-ounce) package pretzel nuggets
- 2 (16-ounce) packages chocolate-flavored bark candy coating, coarsely chopped
- 2 cups (12 ounces) semisweet chocolate chips
- 1 (4-ounce) square semisweet baking chocolate, broken into pieces
- 1 (16-ounce) package hard peppermint candies, finely crushed and divided (about 1-1/2 cups)
- 1/2 teaspoon peppermint extract



## Directions

1. Combine first 4 ingredients in a 6-quart slow cooker.
2. Cover and cook on LOW setting 2 hours. Stir chocolate mixture; add 1 cup crushed peppermint candies and peppermint extract, stirring well to coat.
3. Drop pretzel mixture by heaping tablespoonfuls onto wax paper. Sprinkle remaining 1/2 cup crushed peppermint candies evenly on pieces before they set. Let stand until firm. Store in an airtight container.



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# Wrapped Candy Presents

These taste as good as they look! Our Wrapped Candy Presents offer a tasty surprise inside each and every one.

## Ingredients

**Yields:** 24

**Baking Time:** 15 min

**Chilling Time:** 30 min

1/2 cup (1 stick) butter, softened  
3/4 cup confectioners' sugar  
1 tablespoon vanilla extract  
1-1/2 cups all-purpose flour  
1/8 teaspoon salt  
24 chocolate candy kisses  
1/2 cup white chocolate chips  
Red and green decorating sugar for garnish



## Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.
2. In a large bowl, beat butter, confectioners' sugar, and vanilla. Add flour and salt and mix until a soft dough forms. (If dough is dry, add 1 tablespoon milk.)
3. Wrap a tablespoon of dough around each chocolate candy and place on baking sheet.
4. Bake 12 to 15 minutes or until light brown on bottom. Cool 15 to 20 minutes.
5. Place white chocolate chips in microwave-safe bowl and microwave 60 seconds; stir until smooth. Dip top of each cookie in white chocolate and sprinkle immediately with red and green sugar. Let cool.



# Chocolate Cherry Truffles

J.M. Hirsch, author of the cookbook "High Flavor, Low Labor," shares his sinfully rich, incredibly easy Chocolate Cherry Truffles recipe with Mr. Food and his viewers. Yes, you can make your own homemade truffles and impress your gang anytime.

## Ingredients

**Makes:** 30 truffles

**Chilling Time:** 2 hr

14 ounces dark chocolate, broken into small pieces OR 2-1/3 cups dark chocolate chips

3/4 cup heavy cream

1/2 cup dried cherries, finely chopped

2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar

Pinch of salt

1/2 cup cocoa powder



## Directions

1. In a medium saucepan, melt chocolate and heavy cream over medium heat until smooth, stirring constantly. Stir in cherries, vinegar, and salt; mix well.
2. Pour chocolate mixture into an 8" x 8" baking pan and refrigerate about 2 hours, or until set.
3. Place cocoa powder in a bowl. Using a melon baller or sturdy measuring spoon, scoop 1 tablespoon of chocolate mixture. Roll into a smooth ball between your palms; chocolate will be messy. Place in cocoa powder and roll ball until evenly coated; repeat until all chocolate mixture is used. Refrigerate truffles until ready to serve.



*Adapted from "High Flavor, Low Labor" cookbook by J.M. Hirsch. Used with permission.*



# Chocolate Almond Caramel Apples

These festival favorites are a cinch to make yourself! Our luscious homemade gooey caramel apples with a hint of almond crunch and the sweet surprise of chocolate will be an instant hit!

## Ingredients

Serves: 4

Chilling Time: 1 hr

4 large Red Delicious apples, washed and dried  
1 (14-ounce) package vanilla caramels, unwrapped  
2 tablespoons water  
1 cup (6 ounces) semisweet chocolate chips  
1/2 cup slivered almonds, toasted  
4 wooden craft sticks



## Directions

1. Line a rimmed baking sheet with waxed paper and coat with cooking spray. Insert a wooden craft stick into the stem end of each apple.
2. In a medium saucepan, combine caramels and water over low heat until melted, stirring constantly. Remove from heat and spoon over apples, coating completely. Place coated apples on baking sheet and chill 1 hour.
3. In another medium saucepan, melt chocolate chips over low heat, stirring constantly. Drizzle over caramel apples and sprinkle with nuts. Return to baking sheet and chill 30 minutes, or until set.



**Test Kitchen Tip:** Make these caramel apples your own by covering with your favorite type of chocolate – white, milk, or semisweet, or even using more than one type. And sprinkle with your favorite nuts, sprinkles, or crushed candy. One of our favorites is covered with white chocolate and macadamia nuts.

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# Buckeyes

It seems like someone brings buckeyes to every cookie exchange party. What are buckeye cookies? They have a smooth peanut butter filling and are coated with rich semisweet chocolate. No wonder they're so popular!

## Ingredients

**Makes:** about 5 dozen treats

**Chilling Time:** 1 hr

2 cups smooth peanut butter  
1 cup (2 sticks) butter, softened  
1-1/2 pounds confectioners' sugar  
1 (12-ounce) package semisweet chocolate chips  
1/3 cake paraffin wax (see Note)



## Directions

1. In a large bowl, combine peanut butter and butter; mix until smooth. Gradually add confectioners' sugar, stirring until thoroughly mixed. Form mixture into 1-inch balls, place on a waxed paper-lined rimmed baking sheet, and chill 1 hour.
2. In a double boiler over medium heat, or in a saucepan over low heat, melt chocolate chips and paraffin wax, stirring until smooth. Stick a toothpick in the center of each peanut butter ball and dip each three-quarters of the way into the chocolate mixture, coating all sides except the top quarter. Place on the prepared baking sheet and remove toothpick. Using your finger, fill in the hole left by the toothpick.
3. After dipping all the peanut butter balls, cover, and chill, or freeze until ready to serve.



**Test Kitchen Tip:** Cake paraffin wax is commonly used in chocolate to assist in the process of melting and keep it solid at room temperature. You should be able to find paraffin wax at your grocery store in the aisle where canning supplies and jars are sold. You may also find it in the aisle where baking supplies are sold.

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# Crispy Snowmen Treats

Kids will love to decorate fun, brightly colored Crispy Snowmen Treats. This recipe is great for young chefs!

## Ingredients

Serves: 5

Preparation Time: 15 min

3 tablespoons butter  
1 package (10 ounces) marshmallows (about 40)  
6 cups crispy rice cereal  
5 round red peppermint candies  
8 red jelly beans  
10 semisweet chocolate chips  
25 mini semisweet chocolate chips  
1 fruit roll-up, cut into 3/4-inch strips  
15 red-hot cinnamon candies  
10 pretzel sticks



## Directions

1. Line a baking sheet with waxed paper and coat with nonstick cooking spray.
2. In a soup pot, melt the butter over low heat. Add the marshmallows and stir until melted. Remove from the heat and add the cereal; stir until completely coated.
3. Using a 3/4-cup measure of mixture for each, form five balls and place on the baking sheet. Using a 1/3-cup measure for each, form five more balls. Place the smaller balls on top of the larger ones, forming snowmen.
4. Decorate with candies, chocolate chips, and pretzels, or design your own creations. Serve, or cover loosely with plastic wrap until ready to serve.



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# Italian Christmas Cream

This colorful traditional-style chilled creamy Italian Christmas Cream mold is packed with bananas, grapes, Maraschino cherries and chopped walnuts. Great for the holidays or any entertaining year-round.

## Ingredients

Serves: 8

Chilling Time: 8 hr

2 firm bananas, peeled and sliced  
2 cups sliced seedless green grapes  
2 cups (16 ounces) sour cream  
1 cup coarsely chopped Maraschino cherries  
1 cup coarsely chopped walnuts  
1/2 cup sugar  
1-1/2 teaspoons grated fresh lemon peel



## Directions

1. Combine all ingredients in a large bowl; mix well. Coat a mold or Bundt pan with cooking spray; pour mixture into prepared casserole dish. Freeze 8 hours or overnight.
2. When ready to serve, let stand at room temperature 15 to 20 minutes.



**Test Kitchen Tip:** If you like, you can unmold this onto a serving platter. Garnish with whipped cream and extra cherries.

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# Peppermint Twist Cheesecakes

We bet you'll like doing this twist. We mean, who wouldn't love bite-sized cheesecake morsels with minty candy dancing inside?!

## Ingredients

**Serves:** 18

**Cooking Time:** 25 min

**Chilling Time:** 2 hr

18 chocolate wafer cookies  
3 (8 ounces each) packages cream cheese, softened  
2 eggs  
1/2 cup confectioners' sugar  
1 cup crushed candy canes or peppermint candies



## Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.
2. Line 18 regular-sized muffin tins with paper baking cups. Place a chocolate wafer in bottom of each paper cup.
3. In a large bowl, with an electric beater on medium speed, beat cream cheese, eggs, and confectioners' sugar until creamy. Stir in crushed candy. Spoon evenly into paper cups and bake 22 to 25 minutes, until set. Cool completely, then cover loosely and chill at least 2 hours before serving.

**Serving Suggestion:** Top with whipped topping and a whole miniature candy cane for that perfect holiday treat.



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# Holiday Whoopie Pies

Our Test Kitchen has put a festive holiday spin on popular Amish Whoopie Pies. Bake a batch of our Holiday Whoopie Pies and maybe even leave one out on a plate for Santa on Christmas Eve. Bet he'd love that!

## Ingredients

**Makes:** 18 pies

**Preparation Time:** 15 min

**Cooking Time:** 10 min

1 (18.25-ounce) package devil's food cake mix  
3/4 cup water  
1/2 cup vegetable oil  
3 eggs  
1 cup milk  
5 tablespoons all-purpose flour  
1-1/4 cups granulated sugar  
1 cup vegetable shortening  
2 teaspoons peppermint extract  
1 to 2 cups confectioners' sugar  
Red and green decorating sugar



## Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Coat baking sheets with cooking spray.
2. In large bowl, combine cake mix, water, oil, and eggs; beat with an electric mixer on low speed until well blended. Drop batter by teaspoonfuls onto prepared baking sheets.
3. Bake 8 to 10 minutes, or until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Let cool slightly then remove to wire rack to cool completely.
4. In saucepan, combine milk and flour and cook over medium-high heat, stirring constantly until thick paste forms; let cool.
5. In medium bowl, beat granulated sugar and shortening until fluffy; stir in peppermint extract then add cooled flour mixture and beat until doubled in volume. Add 1 cup confectioners' sugar and beat until mixture is stiff, adding more if needed.
6. Turn half cooled cakes over on their backs then spoon a dollop of filling onto each. Place remaining cakes on top of filling, forming sandwiches. Sprinkle the filling with decorating sugar, then serve or refrigerate until ready to serve.

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# Christmas Tree Brownie

While you're trimming the tree this year, why not dig into an edible brownie tree? After all, who doesn't like brownies?

## Ingredients

**Serves:** 10

**Cooking Time:** 25 min

**Chilling Time:** 30 min

- 1 (21.5-ounce) package brownie mix, batter prepared according to package directions
- 1 (16-ounce) can vanilla frosting
- 2 to 3 drops green food color
- 1/2 teaspoon mint extract
- 1 cup M & M's
- 1 junior-sized candy bar, unwrapped



## Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Line a 9- x 13-inch baking pan with foil, extending foil over edges. Spray foil with cooking spray. Spread brownie batter evenly into pan and bake 25 to 30 minutes, or until a wooden toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool brownies completely then freeze 30 minutes.
2. Using foil, lift brownies from pan and place on cutting board. To cut a tree shape from brownies, start at center of 1 short side, and make 2 diagonal cuts to corners of opposite short sides, forming a triangular piece in the center.
3. In a medium bowl, combine frosting, food color, and mint extract; mix well. Place 2 brownie side pieces together on a large serving tray to form a tree shape. Spread 1/3 cup frosting over top of tree shape. Stack with the whole tree shape, trimming if necessary to line up edges.
4. Frost sides and top of brownie tree with remaining frosting. Place candy pieces decoratively over top of tree. Place candy bar at base of brownie tree to form a tree trunk.

**Test Kitchen Tip:** Make it holiday festive by lining your serving platter with colored decorating sugar to make your cake sparkle.



## Scrumptious Christmas Desserts: 'Tis the Season for 21 Holiday Treats

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# Holly Crackles

Need a star entry for your holiday cookie platter? Add some holiday cookie cheer with our Holly Crackles. They're bite-sized wreath-shaped cookies that look as good as they taste - and they always disappear in a flash.

## Ingredients

**Makes:** 36 cookies

**Preparation Time:** 15 min

1/2 cup (1 stick) butter  
30 large marshmallows (a 10-ounce bag contains 38 to 40)  
1 to 1-1/2 teaspoons green food color  
1-1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract  
4 cups cornflakes cereal  
Red-hot cinnamon candies, for decorating



## Directions

1. In a medium saucepan, melt butter and marshmallows over medium-low heat, stirring constantly.
2. When melted, remove from heat and stir in 1 teaspoon food color and the vanilla. Add more food color, if desired. Stir in cornflakes.
3. Drop mixture, 1 tablespoon at a time, onto wax paper. Decorate with candies. Let stand 30 minutes, or until cool.



**Test Kitchen Tip:** You can make these an Easter or springtime treat, too. Use pastel food color and jelly beans and call them Birds' Nests!

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# Brownie Bonbons

Want to make a Christmas treat that looks and tastes fancy without fuss and in no time? It can be your little holiday secret that these luscious brownie bonbons are so simple.

## Ingredients

**Makes:** 36 treats

**Cooking Time:** 40 min

1 (19.8-ounce) package brownie mix, batter prepared according to package directions

1/2 cup finely crushed candy canes



## Directions

1. Bake brownies according to package directions.
2. Place crushed candy canes in a shallow dish. Remove brownies from oven and allow to sit 5 minutes. While brownies are still warm, use a small ice cream scoop or a spoon to scoop them out; roll into 1-inch balls.
3. Immediately roll in crushed candy canes, coating completely. Allow to cool completely before serving.



**Test Kitchen Tip:** We like to make some of these with traditional candy canes and others with green-and-white ones to get nice color variety for my dessert platters.

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# Chocolate Wreath Fudge

Your holiday gathering will be extra special and extra easy, when you start with a store-bought cake and fancy it up with your own homemade frosting and garnishes. Our Christmas Crunch Cake will do you proud!

## Ingredients

**Yields:** 36 pieces

**Chilling Time:** 3 hr

2 (14-ounce) cans sweetened condensed milk  
1 (12-ounce) package semisweet chocolate chips  
1 (12-ounce) package milk chocolate chips  
Red and green candies to decorate



## Directions

1. Coat an 8-inch or 9-inch cake pan with cooking spray.
2. In a saucepan over medium heat, bring sweetened condensed milk to a rolling boil. Remove from heat and add semisweet and milk chocolate chips, stirring until smooth.
3. Cover sweetened condensed milk can with plastic wrap and place in center of cake pan. Pour chocolate mixture in pan around can.
4. Chill 3 to 4 hours, or until firm. Remove can, then remove fudge to a plate.
5. Decorate with your favorite red and green candies to look like a wreath.



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# Holiday Cherry Nut Logs

These make edible holiday gift treats that "yule" love...and so will your gang, but they're so versatile they're welcome any time of year at all!

## Ingredients

**Makes:** 4 dozen slices

**Preparation Time:** 5 min

**Chilling Time:** 4 hr

- 1 (12-ounce) package vanilla wafer cookies, crushed
- 2 cups chopped pecans
- 2 cups raisins
- 1-1/2 cups mini marshmallows
- 1 (6-ounce) jar maraschino cherries, drained and chopped
- 1 (14-ounce) can sweetened condensed milk
- 1/4 cup confectioners' sugar



## Directions

1. In a bowl, combine all ingredients except confectioners' sugar; mix well.
2. Form mixture into 4 equal-size logs.
3. Place confectioners' sugar in a shallow dish and roll logs in sugar, coating completely.
4. Wrap each log in plastic wrap and chill for at least 4 hours, or until firm.
5. Slice just before serving.



**Test Kitchen Tip:** Make colorful holiday gifts by wrapping these logs in colored plastic wrap or cellophane and tying with ribbons.



