



Gifts from the Kitchen



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Gifts from the Kitchen

Gifts of good taste: Homemade gifts are always treasured. Mixes are unique, personalized gifts that take little time to make and are appreciated.

Family holiday fun: Children enjoy having a part in preparing gifts, so let them help measure and stir ingredients and package mixes for gift giving.

As a gift-giver, make a favorite family recipe into a mix that will bring back memories for the recipient.

Ingredients:

Mixes will be only as good as their ingredients - make sure everything, including herbs and spices, are fresh and of high quality.

Ingredients need to be mixed well when making the mix and when using. All ingredients should be lump free. Stir the mix before measuring to redistribute the ingredients.

Mixes for your health: Another reason for making mixes at home is that you control the ingredients. You can substitute whole wheat flour for part or all of the all-purpose flour. Or you have the option of decreasing the amount of sugar or salt added to a mix.

For those who are concerned about food additives and preservatives, homemade mixes offer the convenience of commercial mixes without the extra ingredients.

Keep in mind, however, that without additives to retard spoilage or increase shelf-life, homemade mixes will not keep as long as their commercial counterparts.

Homemade mixes offer convenience and savings in time without sacrificing the homemade touch. Any changes made in ingredients can affect quality. If you wish to experiment, make smaller batches to avoid wasting time and money.

Storage:

Storage conditions are just as important to the quality of convenience mixes as are the ingredients. If stored in airtight containers in a cool, dry location, dry mixes will stay fresh for several months.

The shelf-life of mixes can be extended by packaging in moisture, vapor-proof containers and refrigerating or freezing.

Mixes may be stored in large canister containers and the amount needed for a recipe measured out when ready to prepare. Or, store in pre-measured amounts for later use.

Suitable Storage containers include: glass jars, food-grade plastic containers, zip-lock bags made for freezer use (they are stronger than regular zip-lock bags) and heavy-duty aluminum foil (it tears less easily than regular foil).

Refrigerating or freezing helps maintain freshness of homemade mixes when certain ingredients are used. For example, mixes containing whole wheat flour must be refrigerated to prevent flavor changes due to higher level of fat in the whole wheat flour.

Labeling:

Before storing, label all mixes with:

- * name of product
- * use- by date
- * date prepared
- *source of recipe
- * other information you will need to use the mix

Presenting the Gift

The way the gift is presented can be almost as important as the food itself. In some cases it is nice to use a container that will be used after the food in or on it has disappeared. Flea markets and yard sales are great places to shop for these kinds of giveaway containers. Here are a few suggestions: A loaf of bread tied to a cutting board accompanied by a bread knife.

- Tea or coffee blend in a bright canister or in a tea or coffee cup. -
- Jams, jellies, and other spreads in a reusable container with a spoon or spreader attached.
- Anything wrapped in a tea towel.
- Unusually shaped cookies packed with their cutters.

Beautiful Napkin Folding

Welcome to Napkin Folding Guide. Here's the sophisticated Rose Napkin Fold. Despite looking fairly elaborate, this fold is an easy one, and it can be done with almost any variety of napkin. www.napkinfoldingguide.com/11-rose/

The Rose Napkin Fold



Despite looking fairly elaborate, this fold is an easy one, and it can be done with almost any variety of napkin. Display small bowls or glasses on top of these, or use them as novelty cocktail napkins.



2. Fold the two right corners of the napkin in so the tips rest at the center.



1. Lay the napkin face-down in front of you.



3. Fold the remaining two corners of the napkin in so the tips meet with the last two in the center.



4. Once again, begin folding the outer corners in so they meet at the center.



5. Once all of the tips are folded you are left with a square about 1/4 the size of the unfolded napkin.



6. Flip it over.

3.



7. Fold the corners in so they meet in the center and then place something sturdy in the center, or hold it with your fingers.



8. While maintaining downward pressure in the center of the napkin, reach underneath each corner and pull out the flaps to create petals.



9. Remove the center weight and your rose should look as pictured here.



10. If you like you can reach underneath the center of each side and pull out a second set of petals to fancy it up some more. Place something in the center and you're done, have a rosy meal!

Granny's Sugar Cookies

| | |
|----------------------|------------------------------------|
| ½ cup butter | 2 teaspoons baking powder |
| 1 cup sugar | ½ teaspoon salt |
| 2 eggs, beaten | 1 teaspoon vanilla |
| 2 ¼ - 2 ¾ cups flour | Colored sugar sprinkles (optional) |

Cream together butter and sugar. Blend in 2 eggs.

Sift together flour, baking powder and salt.

Stir flour mixture into creamed mixture, adding ¼ - ½ cup more flour if dough is too sticky.

Add vanilla.

Divide dough into two parts. Cover and chill 1-2 hours.

Roll out dough (one part at a time) on floured surface to ¼ inch thick. Cut with cookie cutters.

Sprinkle with colored sugar (if desired).

Bake on ungreased cookie sheet at 375 degrees about 8 minutes or until light brown on the edges.

If not using sprinkles you may frost cookie if desired. *Recipe from Cheryl Sigel, MFV Volunteer*

Sugar Cookie Icing

| | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1 cup confectioners' sugar | ¼ teaspoon almond or vanilla extract |
| 2 teaspoons milk | Assorted food coloring |
| 2 teaspoons light corn syrup | |

1. In a small bowl, stir together confectioners' sugar and milk until smooth. Beat in corn syrup and almond extract until icing is smooth and glossy. If icing is too thick, add more corn syrup.

2. Divide into separate bowls, and add food colorings to each to desired intensity. Dip cookies, or paint them with a brush.

Nutrition Information Servings Per Recipe: 12 servings; Calories: 43 Total Fat: 0g Cholesterol: < 1mg, Sodium: 1mg, Carbs: 10.9g. *Printed from Allrecipes.com 10/25/2014*

Granny's Sugar Cookies (Tag to attach to jar)

Container of sugar cookie mix

Additional ingredients:

½ cup butter, softened

2 eggs, beaten

1 teaspoon vanilla

Optional: Sugar cookie Icing:

1 cup confectioners' sugar, 2 teaspoons milk,

2 teaspoons light corn sugar (more if needed to thin)

½ teaspoon almond or vanilla extract, assorted food color

Remove colored sugar from top of mix and set aside.

Carefully pour sugar contents from mix into mixing bowl and

Mix with butter. Blend in beaten eggs.

Stir in flour mixture. Add vanilla.

Divide dough into two parts. Cover and chill 1-2 hours.

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Roll out dough (one part at a time) to ¼ inch thickness. Cut with cookie cutters.

Sprinkle with colored sugar if desired. Bake on ungreased

Cookie sheet about 8 minutes or until light brown on edges.

Decorate with additional sugar or sugar cookie frosting

when cool if desired.

Gifts from the Kitchen Ornament – Debi Doering

Using a plastic tablecloth like you purchase at the dollar store, cut a circle 10 1/2“ in diameter or use a Styrofoam plate as a guide and trace around it. After you cut the circle out of the tablecloth material, fill it with your favorite treat (candy, Chex mix, sugar coated pecans, puppy chow, nuts) and gather at the top. Tape the top of the ornament with floral tape and trim excess material. Tie a ribbon to the stem to hang from a tree. Let guests choose an ornament from the tree to enjoy. Or you can fill a basket with ornaments and give as a gift or add the ornament to a candy tray.

You can also use heavy seasonal napkins if you are careful and don't make them too heavy or fill them with things that might bleed through the paper and weaken it. Crepe paper works well or colored kitchen wrap such as Saran Wrap.

Suggestions for filling your ornament: Purchased candy, mixed nuts, sugar coated pecans and Chex mix or Puppy Chow.

Six Week Bran Muffins

Pour 2 cups boiling water over 2 cups of Bran Buds and 4 cups of All-Bran and let sit (will thicken).

Mix together:

1 cup salad oil and 3 cups of sugar.

Beat in:

4 eggs and 1 quart of buttermilk.

Add:

2 cups whole wheat flour

1 Tablespoon plus 2 teaspoons baking soda

3 cups white flour

2 teaspoons salt

Stir in wet bran mixture. Store in large covered container in refrigerator. Mixture will keep 6 weeks. When ready to bake muffins, spoon batter into greased muffin tins and bake at 400 degrees for 15-20 minutes. You may add nuts or fruit before baking. *Recipe from Jennie Miller, MFV*

Friendship Soup Mix

For 1 qt. jar:

1/3 cup beef bouillon granules

1/4 cup dried minced onion

1/2 cup dried green or yellow split peas

1/4 cup wild rice

1/3 cup uncooked long grain white rice

1/2 cup dried red or brown lentils

1/2 cup uncooked elbow macaroni

1-1 1/3 cups tri-colored rotini pasta

(enough to fill jar)

Layer ingredients in order in 1 qt. wide mouth quart jar. Pack down firmly after each layer. Seal jar. Cover top of jar with fabric.

Friendship Soup

Remove pasta from jar and set aside. Combine 6 cups water with 6 cups reduced-sodium vegetable broth or stock.

Bring to a boil. Add remaining contents of jar; return to a boil. Reduce heat to low; cover and simmer 20-30 minutes or until rice, lentils and split peas are tender.

Add pasta, 2 teaspoons black pepper and 1/2 to 1 pound browned and drained ground beef or ground turkey (optional).

Bring to a boil, stirring occasionally. Reduce heat, cover and simmer 10-12 minutes or until pasta is tender. Serves 12

Fajita Seasoning Mix

| | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| ½ cup chile powder | 2 teaspoons ground oregano |
| 3 Tablespoons cayenne powder | 2 teaspoons paprika |
| 2 ½ Tablespoons garlic powder | 2 teaspoons salt |
| 2 ½ Tablespoons celery salt | 1 teaspoon ground nutmeg |
| 2 Tablespoons lemon pepper | 1 teaspoon firmly packed brown sugar |
| 1 Tablespoon ground cumin | |

Whisk together ingredients in a small bowl. Pack in decorative containers with tight fitting lid.

Attach gift tag/recipe card with raffia or ribbon

Fajitas Make 6 servings

¼ cup corn or vegetable oil
1/3 cup fresh lime juice (2-3 limes)
2 Tablespoons Fajita Seasoning mix
1 lb chicken, pork, beef, thinly sliced
 Into bite size pieces
½ white or red onion, slices lengthwise
½ green bell pepper sliced lengthwise
½ red bell pepper sliced lengthwise

Flour tortillas, heated

Grated cheese, fresh Cilantro,
Sliced avocado, diced tomatoes,
Salsa (optional)

1. Mix oil, lime juice, and Fajita Seasoning Mix in a nonreactive bowl or a resealable food storage bag. Add meat, marinate in refrigerator 1 hour.
2. Remove meat from marinade; discard marinade. Heat a 10" cast iron or nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add drained meat, onions, and peppers. Cook and stir over medium heat until meat is no longer pink and vegetables are tender.
3. Spoon mixture into warm tortillas and garnish as desired.

Dilly Crackers

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 package of dry Ranch Dressing mix | 2/3 cup canola oil |
| 1 Tablespoon dill weed | 1 10oz. package Oyster Crackers |
| ½ teaspoon garlic powder | |

Mix dry ingredients together. Sprinkle on crackers. Add oil and mix well. Store in air tight container.

Recipe from Ann Detwiler, MFV

Toffee Bars

| | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| ½ cup butter, softened | ¼ teaspoon salt |
| ¾ cup packed brown sugar | ¾ cup semisweet chocolate pieces |
| 1 egg | 1/3 cup chopped walnuts or pecans |
| ½ teaspoon vanilla | ½ cup chocolate-covered toffee pieces |
| 1 cup all-purpose flour | |

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Beat together butter and brown sugar. Add egg and vanilla. Beat until combined. Beat in flour and salt until combined.

Spread dough evenly in an ungreased 13x9x2 inch pan. Bake for about 15 minutes until edges begin to brown and surface is dry. Remove from oven and sprinkle with chocolate pieces. Let stand 2 minutes or until chocolate is softened; spread evenly. Sprinkle with nuts and toffee pieces. Cool in pan on a wire rack for 30 minutes. Cut into bars. Makes 36 bars. *Recipe from Royce Collins, MFV*

Puppy Chow

½ cup butter
2 cups semisweet chocolate chips
1 cup peanut butter

12 cups Crispix cereal
1 pound bag of powder sugar

Melt butter and semisweet chocolate chips. Add peanut butter and stir until well blended. Pour over Crispix cereal and stir to coat. Pour powdered sugar in a paper bag and add cereal mix. Shake to coat. Chill.

Recipe submitted by Debi Doering, MFV

Sugar Coated Pecans

1 egg white
1 Tablespoon water
1 pound pecan halves

1 cup white sugar
¾ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon

Heat oven to 250 degrees. Cover a baking sheet with parchment paper. Whip the egg white and water until frothy. In separate bowl mix together sugar, salt and cinnamon. Add pecans to egg white and stir to coat evenly, remove nuts and toss them in the sugar mix until coated. Spread nuts on prepared baking sheet. Bake for 1 hour stirring every 15 minutes. *Recipe submitted by Debi Doering, MFV.*

Chex Mix

In a large pan mix 2 Cups each of the following;

Wheat Chex
Corn Chex
Rice Chex
Pretzels
Cheerios
Cheese crackers or Gold Fish Crackers
1 Can mixed nuts
Stir all together

Mix the following with a whisk in a bowl or measuring cup

1 cup vegetable oil
1 Tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
1 teaspoon garlic salt
1 teaspoon seasoned salt

Pour the mixture over the cereal mix and stir until cereal is well coated. Bake at 250 degrees for 45 minutes stirring every 15 minutes. Cool and serve or store in an airtight container.

Recipe submitted by Debi Doering, MFV

Peanut Clusters

2 lbs Ghirardelli white melting wafers
2 lbs Ghirardelli dark melting wafers
6 ozs. semi sweet chocolate chips
52 oz can extra large Virginia Peanuts
Microwave chocolates for 3 ½ minutes at 80% power.
Stir to mix chocolates. Add nuts and stir.
Use a cookie dipper to drop clusters onto waxed paper.
Let harden overnight. Store in airtight container.
Recipe from Ann Detwiler, MFV

Hot Fudge Sauce

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| 1 cup unsweetened cocoa powder | 1 cup heavy (whipping) cream |
| $\frac{3}{4}$ cup white sugar | $\frac{1}{2}$ cup unsalted butter, cut into pieces |
| $\frac{1}{2}$ cup brown sugar | 1 teaspoon vanilla |
| $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon salt | |

In a double boiler, over medium heat, stir cocoa, sugars and salt together. Add cream and butter. Cook over medium heat, stirring often until the butter is melted and the sauce comes together and is smooth and glossy. Bring the water under the double boiler to a boil for 1 minute, stirring sauce constantly. Then remove the bowl from the heat and let cool for 5 minutes. Stir in the vanilla extract. Pour into containers and store in the refrigerator for up to 1 month. When ready to use, heat in the microwave for 10-20 seconds at a time, stirring often until reheated.

Recipe makes a generous 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups of sauce. *Recipe from Ann Detwiler, MFV*

Cherry Almond Muffin Mix

You will need 6 pint jars

Mix:

| | |
|--|--|
| 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup packed light brown sugar | 3 cup dried cherries |
| 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar | 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup ground almonds (almond meal) |
| 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon baking powder | 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt |
| 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup all-purpose flour | |

Divide ingredients evenly between 6 wide mouthed pint jars. Add in layers. Place lids and seal tightly. Decorate lids as desired. Each jar will make 6 muffins.

Muffins:

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Lightly grease a 6 cup muffin pan or line with paper liners. Transfer the mix from one jar to a large bowl and thoroughly mix together. In a small bowl, beat together 2 large eggs, $\frac{1}{2}$ c. milk, 1 t. vanilla extract. Add to flour (jar) ingredients and mix with wooden spoon until combined. Add $\frac{1}{2}$ c. melted, unsalted butter and combine thoroughly. Scoop batter into prepared pan. Bake for 20-22 minutes or until tops are beginning to turn golden brown. Remove from oven and transfer to wire rack to cool. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Mix will keep for up to 6 months if sealed tightly and stored in a cool, dry place.

Recipe from Beverly Burke, MFV

Chocolate Chunk Coffeecake

Mix: (use 1 qt. jar)

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup all-purpose flour | 1 teaspoon baking powder |
| 1 teaspoon baking soda | $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt |
| $\frac{3}{4}$ cup packed brown sugar | $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped nuts |
| 1 cup chocolate chunks | |

Combine flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt in medium bowl; mix well. Pour into 1 qt. wide mouth jar. Pack down lightly. Add brown sugar, nuts, and chocolate chunks in layers-pack down lightly after each layer. Seal jar with tight fitting lid. Decorate lid as desired.

For coffeecake:

Preheat oven to 350° F. Spray 9 x 13 inch baking pan with nonstick cooking spray. Beat $\frac{1}{2}$ c softened butter in large bowl with mixer until creamy. Beat in 3 eggs and 1 t. vanilla until blended. Add contents of jar and 1 c. sour cream; beat at low until well blended. Spread batter into prepared pan. Bake 25-35 minutes or until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool in pan on wire rack. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Serves 24 *Recipe from Beverly Burke, MFV*

Chocolate Peanut Butter Cupcakes

You will need 6 pint or 12 half pint jars

Using your favorite cake mix, bake a Devil's Food cake in a 9 x 13 inch pan according to package directions. Let cool completely. Place the cake on a flat surface and use a 2 ½ inch cookie cutter to cut out 12 circles. Set aside.

Frosting: Beat until creamy, ½ cup unsalted, softened butter and ½ cup creamy peanut butter.

Add 1 ½ cups powdered sugar, 2 Tablespoons milk, and a pinch of salt. Beat until well combined. Gradually beat in up to another cup of powdered sugar until desired consistency has been reached.

If using 1 pint jars, place one circle of cake in the bottom of each of six wide mouthed jars.

Spoon 2-3 Tablespoons of frosting on top, smoothing with back of spoon. Place another layer of cake and another layer of frosting. Smooth the top. If using half-pint jars, use only one layer of cake and frosting.

Topping: Put 1 ¼ cup semisweet chocolate chips and 2 Tablespoons vegetable oil in a small microwave safe bowl. Heat on low for 30 seconds at a time until chocolate has mostly melted. Stir with a fork until chocolate is completely melted. Spoon chocolate over the tops of the frosted cakes so the frosting is completely covered, chill for 5-10 minutes in refrigerator until chocolate is set. Serve at room temperature.

Cakes can be refrigerated, covered, for up to 3 days or frozen for up to 3 months. Bring to room temperature before serving. *Recipe from Beverly Burke, MFV*

S'Mores Cakes

Need 8 small (1/2 pint) wide-mouth jars

Crust: 8 graham crackers, broken into pieces/ 6 Tablespoon sugar, ½ cup unsalted butter, melted.

Preheat oven to 350° F. Grease the 8 jars and place on jellyroll pan. To make crust, pulse the graham crackers in a food processor until they are coarse crumbs. Add sugar and butter and pulse until just combined. Spoon about 2 Tablespoon of mixture into each of the prepared jars; using your thumb and flatten into the bottom and up the sides. Bake in preheated oven for about 12 minutes, until beginning to turn golden brown.

Cake: Combine in a medium bowl 1 cup all-purpose flour, ¾ cup unsweetened cocoa powder, 1 ½ teaspoon baking powder, and ¼ teaspoon salt. In a large bowl, cream 1 stick unsalted butter (room temp) with 1 cup superfine sugar. Add 2 teaspoon vanilla extract, then add 2 large eggs, one at a time and beating after each addition until blended.

Beat in half the flour mixture. Beat in ½ cup heavy cream. Beat in remaining flour mixture. Add ¼ cup mini chocolate chips and stir in. Scoop batter into prepared jars and bake in preheated oven for about 30 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in center comes out almost clean. Increase oven temperature to 475°F. and press 4 large marshmallows into the top of each jar. Return cakes to oven and bake for an additional 5-7 minutes or until marshmallows are soft and lightly browned. Remove from oven and let cool for a few minutes before serving. Serve warm.

To store cakes: Bake cakes without marshmallows and let cool to room temperature. Seal the jars with lids and store in refrigerator for up to 5 days or in freezer for up to 3 months. To serve, preheat oven to 475°F. , bring cakes to room temperature, top with marshmallows, and heat as directed until marshmallows are golden.

Recipe from Beverly Burke, MFV

Coconut Crunch Cookies

1 cup butter

¾ cup brown sugar

¾ cup sugar

2 eggs

2 teaspoons vanilla

1 teaspoon almond extract

2 cups flour

1 teaspoon baking soda

¾ teaspoon salt

2 cups coconut

2 cups milk chocolate chips

1 ½ cups slice or chopped almonds

Cream butter & sugars, beat in eggs & extract. Combine flour, baking soda & salt.

Gradually add to creamed mix & mix well. Stir in coconut, chocolate chips & almonds.

Drop by teaspoonful on ungreased baking sheet.

Bake at 375°F for 9 to 11 minutes or until lightly browned. Cool about 1 minute before transferring to cooling rack. Makes about 4 dozen. *Recipe from Jerri Hefling, MFV*

Loaded Oatmeal Cookie Mix

| | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 cup all-purpose flour | ½ teaspoon baking soda |
| ½ teaspoon salt | ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon |
| 1 cup packed brown sugar | 1 ½ cup quick oats |
| 1 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips | ½ cup butterscotch chips |
| ¾ cup raisins | ½ cup chopped nuts |

For jar: Combine flour, baking soda, salt and cinnamon in a small bowl; mix well. Pour into 1 ½ qt. wide mouth jar. Pack down firmly. Add brown sugar, oats, chocolate chips, butterscotch chips, raisins and nuts in layers, packing down firmly after each layer. Seal jar tightly and decorate lid as desired.

For cookies:

Preheat oven to 350° F. Beat ¾ cup softened butter with mixer at medium speed until creamy. Beat in 1 egg, 1 Tablespoon milk, and 1 teaspoon vanilla until blended. Add contents of jar, beat at low until well blended. Drop dough by rounded tablespoons 2 inches apart onto ungreased cookie sheets. Bake 10-12 minutes or until edges are lightly browned. Cool on cookie sheet 2 minutes; remove to wire racks to cool completely. Makes about 3 dozen.

Recipe from Beverly Burke, MFV

Vanilla Dipped Gingersnaps

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| 2 ½ cups sugar, divided | 4 teaspoons baking soda |
| 1 ½ cups oil | 1 Tablespoon ground ginger |
| 2 eggs | 2 teaspoon cinnamon |
| ½ cup full-strength molasses | 1 teaspoon salt |
| 4 cups all-purpose flour | 10 oz. vanilla almond bark, coarsely chopped |

Combine 2 cups sugar & oil, mix well. Add eggs one at a time, beating well. Stir in molasses. Combine flour, baking soda, ginger, cinnamon & salt in separate bowl. Gradually blend into molasses mixture. Shape dough into 1 inch balls & roll in remaining sugar. Place 2 inches apart on ungreased baking sheet. Bake at 350°F for 15 to 20 minutes. Remove to wire racks to cool.

In microwave-safe bowl, melt almond bark. Stir until smooth. Dip each cookie halfway. Allow excess to drip off. Place cookie on wax paper to harden.

Makes about 7 dozen. *Recipe from Gooseberry Patch Christmas, Book 9*

Southwest Chili Spice Mix

For jar:

| | |
|--|---------------------------|
| ½ cup chili powder | 1 ½ Tablespoon salt |
| 1 ½ teaspoon garlic powder | 2 Tablespoon ground cumin |
| 2 teaspoon ground red pepper | 1 Tablespoon black pepper |
| 2 Tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon dried oregano | |

Layer ingredients in order in 1 cup food storage jar. Pack down firmly after each layer. Seal jar with tight fitting lid. Decorate as desired.

Preheat oven to 375° F. Pour Southwest Chili Spice mix into small bowl and mix well. Pour back into jar for storage. (you won't be using all of it). Combine 4 small red potatoes (cut into 1 inch pieces), 1 T. olive oil, 2 cloves minced garlic, and 1 t spice mix (from jar) in 9 inch square baking dish or casserole; toss to coat. Rub both sides of 2 boneless, skinless chicken breasts with 1 T. olive oil and 2 t. spice mix (from jar). Place on top of potatoes in baking dish. Bake 25-30 minutes or until done. Let stand 5 minutes before serving. Serves 2 *Recipe from Beverly Burke, MFV*

Italian Herb Salt *Preserve your fresh garden herbs with this versatile Italian Herb Salt.*

Ingredients

| | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| ½ cup Kosher or Sea Salt | 1/8 cup Fresh Oregano |
| 1 cup Fresh Basil | 1/8 cup Fresh Rosemary |
| ¼ cup Fresh Thyme | 1 Tablespoon Pepper Corns |

Instructions

Wash and dry the freshly picked herbs. Pick leaves and discard stems and flowers. Place on a cookie sheet and place in warm oven for 10 – 20 minutes or until herbs are dry. Combine all ingredients in a food processor or blender and pulse until the herbs are finely chopped. Place in an airtight jar. The salt preserves the herbs.

Details: Prep time: 20 mins Cook time: 10 mins Total time: 30 mins Yield: 1 cup

Gingerbread Granola

Ingredients

| | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| 4 cups old-fashioned oats | 2 cups shredded coconut |
| 1 cup raw slivered almonds | 2 teaspoons ground ginger |
| 1½ teaspoons cinnamon | 1 teaspoon ground nutmeg |
| ½ teaspoon salt | ¼ teaspoon ground cloves |
| ⅔ cup coconut oil, melted and cooled | 6 tablespoons pure maple syrup |
| 3 tablespoons molasses | 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract |
| 1 cup lightly salted roasted pistachios | 1 cup sweetened dried cranberries |
| 1 cup white chocolate chips | |

Instructions

1. Position rack in center of oven and preheat to 350°F.
2. In a large bowl, mix together oats, coconut, almonds, ginger, cinnamon, nutmeg, salt, and cloves. Pour coconut oil over mixture and stir. Combine maple syrup, molasses, and vanilla, pour over oat mixture, and stir all ingredients until evenly coated.
3. Transfer granola onto a 13"x18"x1" rimmed sheet pan and spread into an even layer. Bake, stirring and flipping with a wooden spoon every 10 minutes, until the mixture turns a nice, even, golden brown, about 30 minutes total. Watch carefully for the last 10 minutes of baking time, checking every few minutes and stirring as necessary to prevent over-browning.
4. Remove granola from the oven and stir frequently as it cools, scraping the bottom of the pan to prevent sticking. Once completely cool, mix in pistachios, dried cranberries, and white chocolate chips. Store in an airtight container.

TIPS & TRICKS:

1. Measure the maple syrup/molasses into the same measuring cup you used for the coconut oil. The residue of the oil helps the syrup slide out of the cup without sticking.
2. If you prefer, melted butter may be substituted for the coconut oil.
3. The granola will probably need to bake for a total of about 30 minutes, but ovens vary so watch the granola carefully, particularly the first time you make it and particularly for the last 10 minutes of baking time. If you cut the recipe in half, it will require less time, and if you double it and cook two sheet pans at once (switching racks and rotating pans each time you stir), it will take longer.
4. Since this granola tends to stick to the pan if not stirred very frequently during the cooling process, I've found that using a Silpat or some parchment paper on the bottom of your sheet pan alleviates this problem (you just have to stir carefully to make sure the granola doesn't wind up stuck under the parchment paper).

Irish Chicken Pot Pie- Serves 6

Prep Time: 1 hour Cook Time: 25 minutes

| | |
|--|---|
| 1 large carrot | 1 pinch salt |
| 1 average sized russet potato, peeled and diced | ½ cup flour |
| 3 stalks of celery, minced | 3 cups chicken broth |
| 5oz crimini mushrooms, cut into quarters or eights | 2 teaspoons chicken bouillon |
| 1 medium onion, minced | 1 teaspoon fresh ground black pepper |
| ½ cup fresh Italian Flat Leaf parsley, minced | 1 cup cream |
| 1 lb boneless, skinless chicken thighs | 2 sheets of puff pastry, 1 box |
| vegetable oil for frying | 3-4 Tbsp. melted butter for brushing pastry |
| 3 Tbsp. butter | |

11 mason jars (1/2 pint size wide mouth)

Instructions

1. Tip: I suggest reading through all the instructions before beginning.
2. Set the sheets of frozen puff pastry out to thaw on a floured board.
3. Cut carrot, potato and celery into small bite sized pieces. Place in a tall microwave safe bowl and add enough hot water to cover by about 2". Microwave on high for about 15-18 minutes or until the veggies are fork tender. Drain when cooked and set aside.
4. Meanwhile prepare the rest of the ingredients: Cut the mushrooms into eights. Set aside.
5. Peel the onion and dice it. Set aside.
6. Mince the parsley and set aside.
7. Wash the chicken. Trim any large chunks of fat off and discard. Cut into bite sized pieces. A kitchen scissors works well for this.
8. In a 10 cup capacity skillet (preferably cast iron) cook the chicken with some oil on medium-high, stirring frequently until the pieces are cooked through. Set aside in a bowl.
9. Preheat the oven to 400 F.
10. Add the butter, onions and pinch of salt to the skillet and cook on medium-high for about 3 minutes until golden, stirring frequently and adding oil as needed. Turn the heat down to medium. Add the mushrooms and cook an additional 3 minutes, stirring often.
11. Add the drained veggie mixture and the flour. Cook for 1 minute stirring continuously.
12. Stir in chicken broth, parsley, chicken, black pepper, white pepper and chicken bouillon. Bring to a boil stirring continuously and continue to cook until mixture has thickened slightly.
13. When the mixture has thickened, turn off the heat and stir in the cream. Taste and adjust salt and pepper as desired.
14. Use a mason jar to cut out rounds of puff pastry: Place the jar upside down on the pastry and press down firmly. Move the jar back and forth rapidly until a circle of pastry is cut out. Repeat until you have 11 circles.
15. Use a sharp knife to make an air slit in the pastry circles.
16. Use a measuring cup to scoop ⅔ cup of filling into each jar. Wipe any drips off the rims of the jars with a wet cloth. Top each filled jar with a circle of pastry. Brush the pastry with melted butter
17. Place jars in a large casserole dish (my big rectangular Pyrex is perfect) and fill the dish with water about 1" deep. This is the correct way to bake in mason jars.
18. Bake in a preheated oven for 25-30 minutes until the pastry is slightly brown and the filling is bubbly.

Notes

Serving Size: Children generally like to eat 1 jar. Teens and adults will eat up to 2 jars. I consider 11 jars to be enough to feed six people.

Baking Dish Choice: This can be made in pie plates. I suggest using two and baking for about 20-25 minutes. In my experience it is helpful to use a large cookie sheet pan to catch any drips.