

SWEET HOLIDAY RECIPES

CANDY CANE CREAM CHEESE SQUARES

2 cans (8 oz. each) refrigerated crescent dinner rolls, divided*
2 pkgs. (8 oz. each) Philadelphia Cream Cheese, softened
1 tsp. vanilla
1 egg, slightly beaten
4 Candy canes crushed into powder via a food processor
½ cup sugar, divided
2 Tbsp. ground cinnamon

Preheat oven to 350-degrees. Unroll 1 of the cans of crescent dough. Press onto bottom of greased 13x9-inch baking pan to form crust, firmly pressing seams together to seal.

Beat cream cheese, vanilla, egg, candy cane powder and ¼ cup of the sugar with electric mixer on medium speed until well blended. Spread onto crust.

Unroll remaining can of crescent dough onto large sheet of either wax paper or parchment paper. Pat out dough to form 13x9 inch rectangle, pressing seams together to seal. Invert over cream cheese mixture to form top crust; discard wax/parchment paper. * NOTE: YOU CAN PURCHASE WHOLE SHEET CRESCENT DOUGH INSTEAD OF THE CRESCENT ROLL DOUGH, IT IS EASIER TO USE.

Bake 30 to 35 minutes or until golden brown; remove from oven. Combine remaining ¼ cup sugar and cinnamon in small bowl; sprinkle over squares when they come out of the oven and are still warm, prior to cutting. Cut and serve with a great cup of coffee.

Hint: These are easier to cut and serve when chilled.

HANUKKAH CAKE

Cooking spray
1 ½ cups white sugar
½ cup butter (unsalted please)
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
6 ounces cream cheese, softened
2 eggs, room temperature
1½ cups all-purpose flour

1½ teaspoons baking powder
¼ teaspoon salt
2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
¼ cup white sugar
2 large baking apples, peeled and chopped

Preheat oven to 350-degrees. Spray an 8-inch springform pan with cooking spray.

Beat 1½ cups of sugar with the butter, vanilla extract, and cream cheese in a bowl until soft and creamy; beat in the eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition. Whisk together the flour, baking powder, and salt in a bowl.

In a separate small bowl, stir together the cinnamon with ¼ cup of sugar. Stir 2 tablespoons of the cinnamon-sugar mixture into the flour mixture, reserve the rest of the cinnamon-sugar. Stir the flour mixture into the butter mixture to make a smooth batter, and mix in the apples. Pour this batter into the prepared pan. Sprinkle the top of the batter with the reserved cinnamon-sugar mixture.

Bake in the preheated oven until the cake pulls away slightly from the edges of the pan, about 1 hour and 15 minutes. Cool cake completely on a wire rack before removing from the pan and slicing the cake. Enjoy!

NOODLE PUDDING – KUGEL

18 oz. package wide egg noodles, uncooked
6 eggs, room temperature
1½ cups ricotta cheese
1 cup sour cream
¾ cup sugar
2¼ cups whole milk
¾ cup golden raisins
6 tablespoon butter, melted
1 tablespoon vanilla
1 teaspoon grated orange zest
1 teaspoon lemon zest or 1 TBSP. lemon juice
1 tablespoon salt

Cook noodles in boiling water until just barely tender, very al dente. Drain and set aside.

In large mixing bowl, whisk eggs. Add ricotta, sour cream, and sugar. Whisk again. Add milk, raisins, melted butter, vanilla, orange zest, lemon zest, and salt. Whisk. Spray the inside of the slow cooker with a non-stick cooking spray. Stir noodles into egg mixture and slowly pour

everything into the slow cooker. Cover and cook on High for 2-3 hours or until set in the middle.

Tip: Mix everything except for the noodles the night before and refrigerate. When you're ready to make the Pudding, just cook the noodles and add the liquid.

HOLIDAY FRUITCAKE

2 eggs

2 cups water * See Footnote

2 packages Pillsbury Date or Nut Quick Bread Mix (1 Date, 1 Nut if you can find the Nut)

1 cup chopped walnuts or pecans

1 cup golden raisins

1 large container (16 oz. Fruit Cake Mix) of diced fruit

In a large bowl add the bread mix with the two slightly beaten eggs and the liquid. Mix thoroughly. Mix in the diced candied fruit and the nuts and the raisins. Blend by hand to incorporate everything.

Pour into buttered (butter sprayed) Bundt cake pan. Tap pan on counter to make sure there are no air bubbles. Bake in a preheated 350-degree oven for one hour. Check with a cake tester to see if the center of the cake is done. If not, cook another 12 to 15 minutes. Remove from oven and allow the cake to sit for 30 minutes, and then loosening sides of cake from pan with a small pointed knife and invert, turning cake out onto a platter. Allow cake to cool completely.

To store, wrap cake in plastic wrap tightly and store in the refrigerator. If desired, you can glaze the cake with 1 cup warmed corn syrup, and then decorate with more candied fruits and nuts.

Note: Sometimes I make this cake in muffin pans with paper liners. That way I can take just one with a cup of coffee.

NOTE: The recipe calls for 2 cups of water. I use one and a half cups of bourbon, brandy, or rum, and then a ½ cup of water. I have been known to use only rum or brandy with this cake. It keeps, refrigerated, for several months.

Double Note: If you can't find both the Date and the Nut mixes, you can also use a Cranberry Mix with either of the other mixes. But the best cake is made with the Date and The Nut mix.

PANETTONE BREAD PUDDING with AMARETTO SAUCE

Sauce:

½ cup whipping cream
½ cup whole milk
3 tablespoons sugar
¼ cup Amaretto Liqueur
2 teaspoons cornstarch

Bread Pudding:

1 (1 pound) loaf Panettone bread, crusts trimmed, bread cut into 1-inch cubes
8 large eggs
1 ½ cups whipping cream
2 ½ cups whole milk
1 ¼ cups sugar

To make the sauce: Bring the cream, milk, and sugar to a boil in a heavy small saucepan over medium heat, stirring frequently. In a small bowl, mix the Amaretto and cornstarch to blend and then whisk into the cream mixture. Simmer over medium-low heat until the sauce thickens, stirring constantly, about 2 minutes. Set aside and keep warm. (The Amaretto sauce can be made 3 days ahead. Cover and refrigerate. Rewarm before serving.)

To make the bread pudding: Lightly butter a 13 x 9 x 2-inch baking dish. Arrange the bread cubes in the prepared dish. NOTE: I like to toast the bread cubes in the oven, about 250-degrees for 15 – 20 minutes. It gives the pudding a richer, toasty flavor and allows the bread to stay together longer when the custard is added to it.) In a large bowl, whisk the eggs, cream, milk, and sugar to blend. Pour the custard over the bread cubes, and press the bread cubes gently to submerge. Let stand for 30 minutes, occasionally pressing the bread cubes into the custard mixture. The recipe can be prepared up to this point 2 hours ahead. Cover and refrigerate.)

Preheat the oven to 350-degrees. Place the baking dish on the center oven shelf and bake until the pudding puffs and is set in the center, about 45 minutes. Cool slightly. Spoon the bread pudding into bowl, drizzle with some of the warm Amaretto sauce and enjoy.