



▶ Gifts from my House to Yours



▶ Mixes to Give



▶ Recipes to Give or Serve

○ ISSUE 2    ○ VOLUME 17    ○ DECEMBER 2008

# Christmas Magic for Pennies

Do you want to make gifts from your kitchen just a little more special? Here are some ideas that will add a thoughtful dimension to a food gift.

◇ Pack your gifts into a year-round useful container & leave the recipient with something useful or simply “nice to have” item for after the yummys are eaten.

◇ Any type of container can be used as long as a clear plastic bag is used for protection.

◇ Pickles, party dips, relishes, etc., may be packed in the bowls of a revolving susan, as long as you use tight fitting lids.

◇ A nice big sieve is a good kitchen item when filled with cracked pecans – or other goodies.

◇ A good looking letter tray will be nice on Dad’s desk after he has shared his Pecan Roll with friends.

◇ A grain scoop or garden trowel will hold a good dipperful of cereal snacks or salted nuts. Place first in a plastic bag.

◇ A steel box organizer (the kind with several plastic see-through drawers) makes a good place for candies, sugared nuts, etc., before finding its final destination in the workshop.

◇ Sharing your favorite recipe is a nice gesture. It gives the recipient the opportunity to remember and reproduce your

thoughtfulness throughout the year. A basket or tin box makes an ideal container.

◇ A child’s gift may be wrapped in comic strips and topped with a candy cane.

◇ Sheet music is a good gift wrap for the music lover.

◇ A gift box may be covered with fabric. It would be reusable and much more sturdy.

◇ Cellophane, tissue paper, and crepe paper make good wrappings for food items.

◇ An abandoned lunch pail creates an exciting gift – just decorate to please the receiver.

◇ Fill a child’s toy with “goodies” to make an even more exciting gift.

## CHRISTMAS GIFTS FROM MY HOUSE TO YOURS

**A Bucket of Fun:** In a colorful tin bucket or child’s sand pail, place a coloring book, small package of crayons, small stuffed animal, and a bag of homemade cookies.

**Muffins in a Muffin Tin:** Place a half dozen of your favorite homemade muffins in a new muffin tin. Cover with a clear wrap and tie with a ribbon. Include the recipe.

**Chocolate Lover Basket:** In a decorated basket, place a few brownies (homemade or from a mix), chocolate candies, and a few

individual hot cocoa mixes. It's a chocolate lover's delight!

**Decorated Mugs:** Personalize a plastic mug with a person's name or fill a pretty one with hot cocoa mix, spiced tea, or coffee beans in a baggy with a bow tying the top closed.

**Midnight Treat:** In a small box or basket that has been decorated, place a few favorite new paperback books and some homemade peanut brittle.

**Ranger Cookies in Oatmeal Box:** Cover a used oatmeal box with clear contact paper or spray with clear sealant. Fill with oatmeal, cowboy or ranger cookies. Add a red bow to the lid. Be sure to include the recipe.

**Stenciled Paper Bags:** Plain lunch bags can be hand-stamped with potato prints of Christmas stamps for a bag of cookies, popcorn, or other food items.

### A NIGHT AT THE MOVIES



What family wouldn't enjoy a basket filled with popcorn? Add a carton of a favorite soft drink & a free movie rental, and you have a family night at the movies.

### **POPPYCOCK POPCORN**

4 quarts popped popcorn (1/3 cup un-popped corn = 2 1/2 quarts popped popcorn)

1 cup peanuts

1 cup sugar

1 cup light corn syrup

1 cup peanut butter

2 tablespoons margarine

Combine popcorn & peanuts in a large oven-proof pan and set in warm oven. In heavy saucepan, mix together sugar & corn syrup; bring to a boil. Remove from heat and stir in peanut butter. Pour peanut butter mixture over popcorn mixture; gently stir to coat evenly. Spread on waxed paper. Cool & break into pieces.

### **MEXICAN POPCORN**

3 quarts popped popcorn

4 cups rice squares cereal

1 cup peanuts

1/2 cup margarine

1 package taco seasoning

1/4 cup brown sugar

Mix popcorn, cereal & peanuts together in large pan. Melt margarine; mix with taco seasoning & brown sugar. Drizzle over mixture. Bake at 300°F for 8-10 minutes, stirring occasionally.



Place in a decorative tin or popcorn bag, tie with a ribbon, & presto – a great, economical gift for the entire family.

### **HERBED BREAD**

1 stick margarine

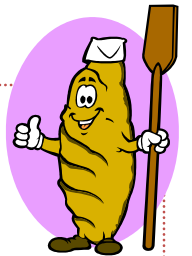
1 tablespoon parsley, snipped

1 teaspoon dill weed

1 teaspoon lemon juice

2 cans biscuits

Melt margarine; add parsley, dill weed and lemon juice. Dip each biscuit in butter mixture. Place in tube or bundt pan, standing up. Overlap each biscuit, making a ring. Bake at 375°F for 20 minutes or until golden. Turn out in plate or basket. Give in a tube pan wrapped in cellophane or on a pretty plate or in a fabric-lined basket.



**DINNER TIP:** There is never a shortage of occasions to eat this time of year so baked gifts are often the most appreciated. Small-sized baked goods are certain crowd pleasers.

## MIXES IN JARS

These mixes are unique because, first, they are made by you and, second, they are layered in jars and are quite decorative once completed. Simply layer the ingredients in a quart-size, wide-mouth jar; top with a fancy lid or tie with a raffia bow. Then attach the recipe and you have a wonderful, home-made gift every one will love. Or add all of the ingredients into a fancy plastic bag, seal closed and attach a home-made label.



Pick up pretty plates & platters at yard sales, flea markets, thrift stores, etc. fairly inexpensively to use for giving cookies & cakes.

## PEANUT BUTTER COOKIE MIX

- ¾ cup chopped salted peanuts
- ¾ cup packed brown sugar
- ¾ cup sugar
- ¾ cup peanut butter chips
- 1 ½ cups self-rising flour

Layer ingredients in a quart-size, wide-mouth jar in the order given. Press each layer down firmly in place before adding the next. Add a card with the following directions:

### PEANUT BUTTER COOKIES



Empty cookie mix in large mixing bowl; stir. Add ½ cup softened margarine, ½ cup creamy peanut butter, 1 slightly beaten egg, and 1 teaspoon vanilla; mix until completely blended. Roll dough into walnut-sized balls. Place 2 inches apart on a lightly greased cookie sheet. Bake at 350°F for 11-13 minutes or until edges are lightly browned. Cool 5 minutes on baking sheet. Remove to wire racks to cool completely. Yield: 3 dozen.

Line metal tins with non-reactive tissue paper before loading in goodies. Wrap moist foods in cellophane or plastic wrap.



## COWBOY COOKIE MIX

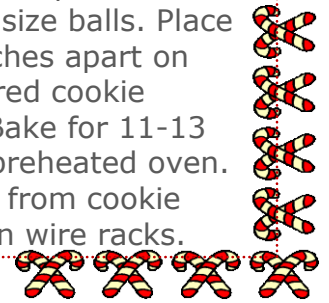
- 1 ⅓ cups quick cooking oats
- ½ cup packed brown sugar
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- ½ cup chopped pecans
- 1 cup semisweet chocolate chips
- 1 ⅓ cup all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- ¼ teaspoon salt

Layer the ingredients in quart-size, wide mouth jar in the order given. Press each layer firmly in place before adding the next one. Attach the following directions:



Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease cookie sheets. In medium bowl, cream together ½ cup butter or margarine, 1 egg & 1 tsp. vanilla. Empty contents of jar. Shape into walnut-size balls. Place 2-inches apart on prepared cookie sheets. Bake for 11-13 minutes in preheated oven.

Remove from cookie sheets & cool on wire racks.



## M&M® COOKIE MIX

- 1 ¼ cup sugar
- 1 cup M&Ms®
- 2 cups all-purpose flour mixed with ½ tsp. baking soda & ½ tsp. baking powder

Combine sugar, flour, baking soda, & baking powder in bowl; stir well. Place flour mixture in jar; tap jar lightly on counter. Add candies. Attach the following instructions:

### **M&M® COOKIES**



Empty cookie mix in large mixing bowl; stir to combine. Add ½ cup softened margarine, 1 slightly beaten egg, and 1 tsp. vanilla. Mix until blended. Roll dough into walnut-size balls. Place 2" apart on a lightly greased cookie sheet. Bake at 375°F for 12 to 14 minutes or until edges are lightly browned. Cool for 5 minutes on baking sheet. Remove to wire racks to cool.

### **HOT DRINK MIXES**



Mix the dry ingredients and attach directions for gift-giving. A decorative idea might be to put the ingredients in a plastic bag, tie securely & wrap with a bow. Put this inside a pretty Christmas cup and attach a cinnamon stick, peppermint, chocolate spoon or candied stirrer.

Wrap your mixes in plastic wrap and put inside a festive mug. Fill the cup slightly above the rim with goodies. Place on center of a large piece of colored cellophane, gather the ends at the top and secure with a ribbon.



### **FRENCH-STYLE CINNAMON COFFEE MIX**

- ¼ cup non-dairy powdered coffee creamer
- ⅓ cup sugar
- ¼ cup instant coffee
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon

Blend ingredients in blender. Attach directions below:

### **FRENCH-STYLE CINNAMON COFFEE**

For 1 cup of beverage, use 1 Tbsp. mix to 6 ounces boiling water. Serve with a cinnamon stick & a dollop of whipping cream!



### **SWISS MOCHA MIX**

- 1 cup cocoa
- 2 cups sugar
- 2 cups non-fat instant milk
- 2 cups non-dairy powdered coffee creamer
- ½ cup instant coffee

Mix thoroughly. Add a vanilla bean to the mixture for flavor if desired. Let it stay in the mixture a few days before use. Attach a card with the following directions:

### **SWISS MOCHA**

For one cup of beverage, use 3 Tbsp. mix to 6 ounces boiling water.



### **INSTANT SPICED TEA MIX**

- 1 (9-oz) jar flavored orange powdered drink (i.e. Tang)
- 1 cup instant tea
- 1 (6.2-oz) package lemonade mix
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon cloves
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon

Mix ingredients together. Store in a tightly covered jar. Attach the following directions:

### **INSTANT SPICED TEA**

Put 2 teaspoons mix in cup; add boiling water.



### **HOT CHOCOLATE MIX**

- 1 (8-qt.) box instant non-fat dry milk
- 1 (1 lb.) box powdered sugar
- 1 (6 oz.) jar instant powdered coffee creamer
- 1 (2 lb.) container instant hot cocoa mix



Mix all ingredients. Store in a tightly covered container. Attach directions:



### **HOT CHOCOLATE**

Use 3 to 4 tablespoons mix per cup of hot water.

### **DECORATIVE HOT DRINK ADDITIONS**

To make the above mixes more decorative, put a few chocolate or candied spoons in a coffee mug, along with some individual hot cocoa or coffee packets and you have a great gift for those chilly nights.

### **CHOCOLATE SPOONS**

Get good quality plastic spoons. Try using gold or silver (clear is okay, too). Dip them in chocolate (melted chocolate chips work well) & shake off the excess. Place them on wax paper and sprinkle with crushed peppermint candy. After they dry, wrap in cellophane and tie with a ribbon.



### **CANDIED TEA STIRRERS**



Vegetable cooking spray  
34 pieces of fruit flavored hard candy – crushed lemon, cinnamon, etc.  
2 tablespoons light corn syrup

Heavy weight plastic spoons

Line a cookie sheet with waxed paper. Spray with cooking spray. In a small heavy saucepan, combine crushed candies & corn syrup; melt over low heat, stirring frequently. Spoon candy into the bowl of each spoon. Place spoons on prepared cookie sheet with handles on rims and spoons level. Allow to harden. Store in an air-tight container.

### **FOOD FROM YOUR KITCHEN**

Give the following in a tube pan wrapped in cellophane or on a pretty plate or fabric-lined basket.



### **CHOCOLATE CHIP PIE MIX**

1 cup sugar  
½ cup all-purpose flour  
1 cup semisweet chocolate morsels  
½ cup flaked coconut  
½ cup chopped pecans

Layer chocolate chips, coconut & pecans in a one-quart, wide mouth jar. Combine sugar & flour in an airtight zipper bag & seal. Place sugar & flour mixture on top of other ingredients. Place seal & ring on top of jar. Decorate the lid with raffia, holiday fabric... Attach the recipe with the following:

Combine ¼ cup melted butter, dry ingredients package & 2 large eggs in a mixing bowl. Stir until dry ingredients are moistened. Stir in remaining jar contents. Spoon into an un-baked 9-inch pastry shell. Bake at 350°F for 35-40 minutes.



### **BIG DIPPERS**

2 ½ packages (8 oz. each) semisweet chocolate squares  
12 (about 8-inches long) baked pretzel rods

Toppings: chopped toasted nuts, chopped dried fruit, flaked coconut, almond brickle chips, mini peanut butter pieces, green & red sprinkles



Place chocolate in 4-cup measuring cup or large glass bowl. In 3 quart saucepan, heat chocolate over low heat, stirring frequently, until melted & smooth. Meanwhile, place each topping choice on a sheet of waxed paper.

Hold one pretzel rod at a time over melted chocolate & spoon chocolate over it, leaving about 2" uncoated at one end. Immediately sprinkle coated pretzel with choice of topping.

Carefully place coated pretzel rods in pie plate or shallow bowl, leaning uncoated portion on edge (try to keep pretzels from touching one another) and refrigerate about 15 minutes to set. Apply second coating of melted chocolate & topping choice to each pretzel; refrigerate about 15 minutes to set each layer. Store at room temperature in tightly covered container, with waxed paper between layers, up to 2 weeks. NOTE: We do not recommend using semisweet chocolate pieces for coating as it will not set as well.

### ***NINE BEAN SOUP MIX***

- 1 (14 oz) pkg. barley
- 1 (16 oz) pkg. dried red beans
- 1 (16 oz) pkg. dried pinto beans
- 1 (16 oz.) pkg. dried lentils
- 1 (16 oz.) pkg. dried black-eyed peas
- 1 (16 oz.) pkg. dried black beans
- 1 (16 oz.) pkg. dried navy beans
- 1 (16 oz.) pkg. dried great Northern beans
- 1 (16 oz.) pkg. dried green split peas



Combine all ingredients in a large bowl. Store in an airtight container. Yield: 19 cups.

### ***SUPER EASY FUDGE***

1 package cream drop candy (the old-fashioned white paper package)



$\frac{3}{4}$  cup peanut butter

Butter-flavored cooking spray

Spray an 8" square pan with cooking spray. Combine cream drops & peanut butter in microwave-safe bowl. Microwave 1 minute; stir & microwave 30 seconds more.

### ***HONEY BUN COFFEE CAKE***

- 1 yellow cake mix
- 4 eggs
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup oil
- 1 (8 oz.) carton sour cream
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup granulated sugar
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 4 teaspoons cinnamon
- 1 cup raisins (optional)
- 1 cup chopped pecans (optional)

#### **ICING:**

- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup confectioners' sugar
- 6 tablespoons margarine, melted

Mix cake mix, eggs, sour cream, granulated sugar and oil together. Pour into a greased & floured 13x9-inch baking pan. Mix brown sugar, cinnamon, raisins and pecans; sprinkle over top of cake. Swirl mixture into cake batter with a knife. Bake at 325°F for about 1 hour (until center tests done). Cool slightly. Combine confectioners' sugar & margarine until smooth. Spread over the cake.

### ***ORANGE CRANBERRY DELIGHT***

- 1 cup low-fat cream cheese, softened
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup orange juice concentrate
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup chopped pecans (optional)
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup dried cranberries
- $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup granulated sugar



Beat cream cheese until fluffy with an electric mixer; add orange juice concentrate. Stir in pecans, cranberries & sugar. Refrigerate overnight and serve with crackers.

Sincerely,

*Carla M. Haley*  
Carla M. Haley

Co. Extension Agent- Family & Consumer Sciences

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