

BBBS Community Cookbook



***Big Brothers Big Sisters of Chicago in partnership with the agency's Family Advisory Council have put together a cookbook filled with recipes from our Bigs, Littles, and families! We hope that you find joy in trying a recipe or two, or simply taking a moment to read through these cherished recipes.
Enjoy!***

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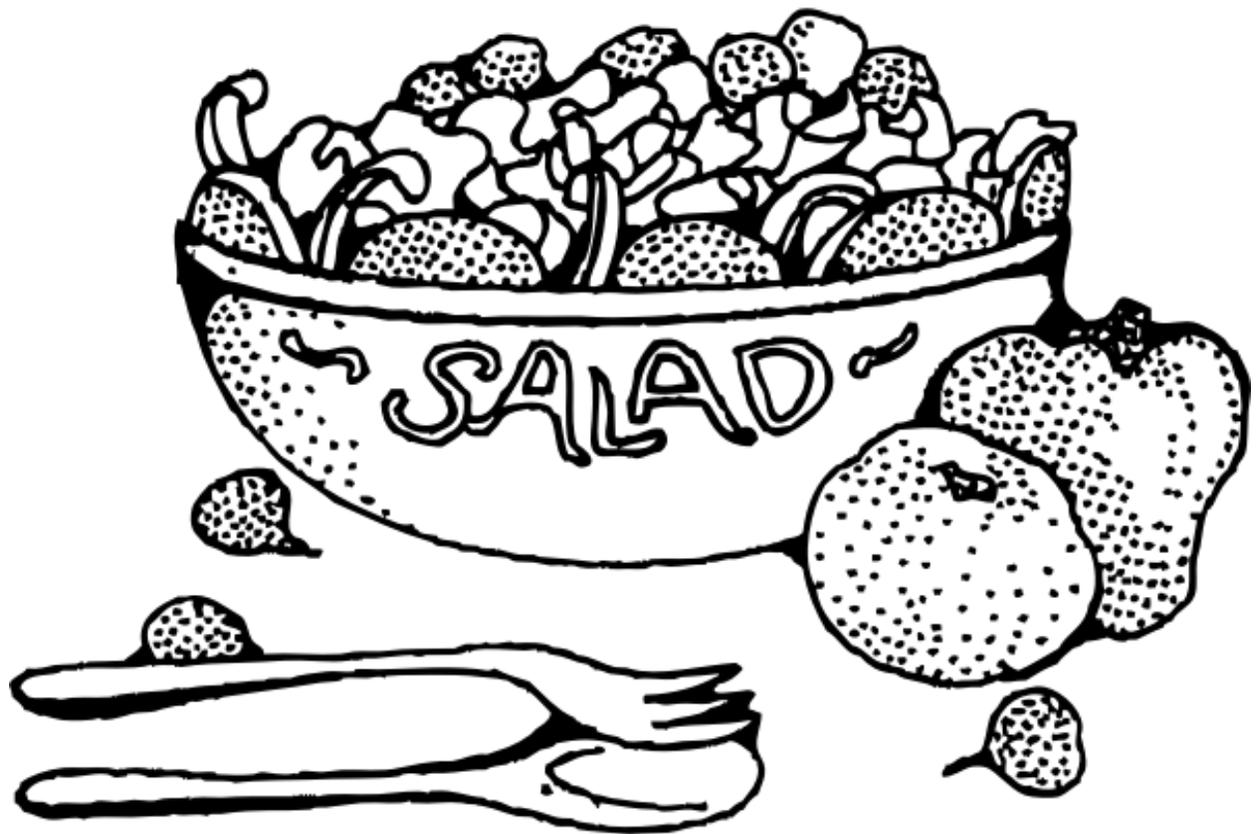
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Starters



Cesar Salad

Recipe contributed by Little Anijsha and Big Linda

Ingredients:

1 clove garlic, cut in half crosswise
1 tsp anchovy paste
1 tsp Dijon mustard
2 Tbsp red wine vinegar, more to taste
2 egg yolks
1 cup grated Parmesan cheese, divided
Head of Romaine lettuce, torn into bite size pieces
5-6 anchovy filets
1 cup croutons

Directions:

Step 1

Rub the interior of the salad bowl with the cut side of the garlic clove.

Step 2

Using a fork, blend the anchovy paste and Dijon mustard together in the salad bowl. Add the red wine vinegar to the mixture and blend until smooth. Add the egg yolks and beat until smooth. Mix in ½ c. of the grated Parmesan. (At this point, it should have the consistency of a thick sauce – you can adjust by adding another egg yolk if too thin or more vinegar if too thick).

Step 3

Toss the lettuce with the dressing. Top with anchovy filets and croutons, toss just enough to mix slightly. Sprinkle remaining Parmesan on top. Serve.

Busiate with Brussels Sprouts, Mint & Two Cheeses

Recipe contributed by Little Anijsha and Big Linda

Recipe adapted from foodandwine.com

Ingredients:

1 lb busiate or other corkscrew pasta
½ cup extra-virgin olive oil
12oz brussels sprouts, thinly sliced on a mandoline (6 cups)
2 shallots, thinly sliced
1 garlic clove
¼ cup fresh ricotta cheese
1 tsp finely grated lemon zest
Pinch of crushed red pepper
Kosher salt and black pepper
¼ cup chopped mint, plus more for garnish
Freshly grated Pecorino Romano cheese, for ganish

Directions:

Step 1

In a pot of salted boiling water, cook the busiate until al dente. Drain, reserving 2 cups of the pasta water. Wipe out the pot.

Step 2

Meanwhile, in a large skillet, heat 3 tablespoons of the olive oil. Add the brussels sprouts and cook over moderate heat, stirring, until softened, about 3 minutes. Add the shallots, garlic and 1 tablespoon of the oil and cook until the brussels sprouts are lightly golden, about 3 minutes. Stir in the ricotta, lemon zest and crushed red pepper and season with salt and black pepper.

Step 3

Return the pasta and pasta water to the pot. Add the brussels sprout mixture, the remaining ¼ cup of oil and the ¼ cup of mint and toss until a sauce forms, 2 minutes. Garnish with black pepper, pecorino and mint and serve.

Artichoke Spinach Dip Pasta

Recipe contributed by Little Anijsha and Big Linda

Recipe adapted from foodandwine.com

Ingredients:

12 oz dried bowtie (farfalle) pasta, cooked al dente according to package directions

1 Tbsp butter

2 cloves garlic

2 cups whole milk

1 package (8 oz) cream cheese, cut into cubes

2 cans (14 oz each) Progresso artichoke hearts, drained and quartered

1/3 cup sun-dried tomatoes packed in oil, chopped

1/2 tsp salt

1 cup grated mozzarella cheese

1/2 cup grated parmesan cheese

2 bags (4-6 oz each) baby spinach leaves or two bunches spinach, stalks removed

Directions:

Step 1

Cook the pasta while preparing the sauce. Melt the butter in a large skillet over medium-high heat and cook the garlic for 2 minutes.

Step 2

Add milk to the pan and heat through. Add cubed cream cheese and whisk to combine until sauce is smooth and no lumps remain. Add salt and simmer for 3 minutes.

Step 3

Add the artichokes and sun-dried tomatoes and simmer for another 3 minutes.

Step 4

Add the mozzarella and Parmesan cheeses and stir until melted. Add the spinach, stir to incorporate, and simmer for 3 minutes or until the spinach is wilted.

Step 5

Add the pasta, stir to thoroughly coat and pour it into a serving dish. Sprinkle with panko breadcrumbs and some shavings of Parmesan cheese, if desired. Serve warm.

Vegetable Dumplings

Recipe contributed by Little Mia and Big Sarah
Recipe adapted from New York Times Cooking

Ingredients:

For the dipping sauce:

¼ cup low-sodium soy sauce

1 Tbsp rice vinegar

1 tsp packed light brown sugar

½ tsp peeled and grated fresh ginger or pinch dried ginger

¼ tsp toasted sesame oil (optional)

For the dumplings:

2 scallions, thinly sliced

2 teaspoons low-sodium soy sauce

2 tsp hoisin sauce

1 tsp peeled and grated fresh ginger or pinch dried ginger

6 tsp canola oil, plus more as needed

1 cup finely shredded green cabbage + 1/3 cup of peeled and shredded carrot, or use a bag of shredded coleslaw mix

Pinch of salt

Cornstarch, for dusting

24 round or square wonton wrapper

Directions:

Step 1

For the dipping sauce: whisk the soy sauce, vinegar, brown sugar, ginger and sesame oil (if using) until sugar dissolves. Cover and set aside.

Step 2

For the wontons: In a small bowl, stir together the scallions, soy sauce, hoisin sauce and ginger.

Step 3

Add 2 teaspoons of canola oil to a large nonstick frying pan. Warm on medium heat for 2 minutes. Add the cabbage and carrot, or coleslaw mix, and sprinkle with a pinch of salt. Cook, stirring often, until vegetables are slightly softened, about 3 minutes. Add scallion mixture and stir to combine. Transfer the dumpling filling to a medium bowl and let cool to room temperature. Wipe out or clean the pan if necessary.

Step 4

Once the filling has cooled, assemble the dumplings. Put 1 cup of water in a medium bowl. Sprinkle a large rimmed baking sheet with 2 to 3 tablespoons of cornstarch.

Step 5

Put 1 wonton wrapper on a clean work surface. Spoon 1 teaspoon of the filling into the center of the wrapper. Dip your fingers into the water and moisten the edges of the wrapper, then fold the wrapper in half (if wrappers are square, fold in half diagonally to form a triangle) and press the edges to seal. Place on the cornstarch-dusted baking sheet.

Step 6

Repeat with remaining wrappers and filling. (Filled wrappers can be frozen in a single layer on the baking sheet. Once frozen, transfer them to a resealable plastic bag and freeze for up to 3 months. Don't thaw before cooking, but add a few minutes to the cooking time).

Step 7

Cook the dumplings: Brush the same frying pan with 2 teaspoons canola oil, set the pan over medium heat and warm up the oil for 2 minutes. Add one dumpling at a time but working quickly, dust off excess cornstarch and add as many dumplings as will comfortably fit in a single layer in the pan (don't crowd them or they won't cook evenly). Let cook (no stirring!) until browned on the bottom, 2 to 3 minutes. Using tongs, gently flip the dumplings. Carefully pour about 1/2 cup water into the pan (it will bubble up and steam!). Cover and cook until the water is mostly absorbed, about 4 minutes.

Repeat until all the dumplings are cooked.

Serve warm, with the dipping sauce.

Grandma's Salad “Oil & Vinegar Coleslaw Salad”

Recipe contributed by Little Isabella & parent Margarita

Ingredients:

1 Bag of Shredded Coleslaw
Olive oil
White vinegar
McCormick ground pepper
Salt

Directions:

Step 1

Combine coleslaw & $\frac{1}{4}$ cup olive oil, mix well

Step 2

Add 4 tablespoons vinegar, mix well

Continue to alternate adding olive oil & vinegar to desired consistency

Step 3

Add a teaspoon of pepper and mix well. Add additional pepper and mix until you can see pepper everywhere in the salad when mixed. Add $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon of salt

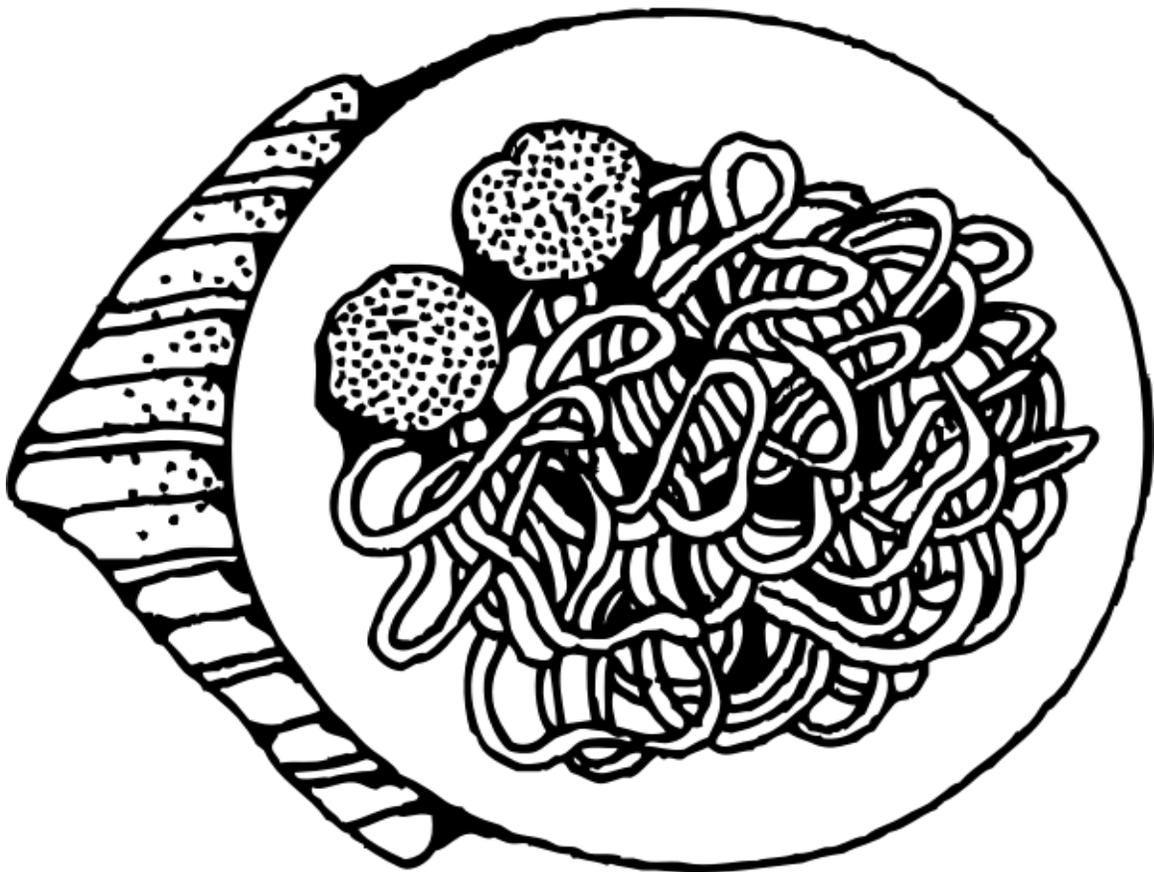
Notes:

We like it on the vinegar side

Very easy to salad to make for on the go mason jars

My kids love it!

Entrees



Slow Cooker Cranberry Chicken

Recipe contributed by Suan Mary via Facebook

Ingredients:

4 large boneless chicken breasts

1 can whole cranberries

1 cup orange juice

Directions:

Step 1

In the bottom of a slow cooker, stir together cranberries and orange juice.

Step 2

Place chicken breasts in a slow cooker. Cook until tender. Serve over rice.

TikTok's Baked Feta Pasta

Recipe contributed by Little Hailey and parent Teena

Recipe adapted from TikTok/ washingtonpost.com

Ingredients:

2 pints (17 1/2 ounces / 500 grams) cherry or grape tomatoes
4 cloves garlic, halved lengthwise
1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil, divided
Kosher salt
1 block (7 ounces / 200 grams) Greek feta cheese
1/2 tsp crushed red pepper flakes
Freshly ground black pepper
12 ounces medium-length dried pasta, such as campanelle, rigatoni or rotini
Fresh basil leaves, for serving

Directions:

Step 1

Position a rack in the middle of the oven and preheat to 400 degrees.

Step 2

In a 9-by-13-inch baking dish, combine the tomatoes, garlic and 1/4 cup of the olive oil. Sprinkle some salt and toss to coat. Place the feta cheese in the center of the tomatoes and garlic, top with the remaining olive oil, and sprinkle the entire dish with red pepper flakes and a little black pepper. Bake for about 40 minutes, until the garlic has softened and the tomatoes have burst their skins.

Step 3

Meanwhile, bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Cook the pasta according to package directions until al dente. Reserve 1 cup of the pasta water and then drain the pasta.

Step 4

Mash the feta and tomatoes with a fork and mix until evenly combined. Mix the sauce with pasta, adding the reserved pasta water as needed if it looks a little dry. Taste and season with additional salt and pepper, if desired. To serve, divide among bowls and top with plenty of basil leaves.

Dee's Pork Chops & Potatoes

Recipe contributed by Little Isabella and parent Margarita

Ingredients:

Pork steak about 3 pounds

if you cannot find pork steak...pork chops with bone in, will do

Potatoes big bag Idaho potatoes (About 5 or 6 potatoes)

Iodine salt

Mccormick ground black pepper

Canola oil

Chicken stock or broth

Equipment:

Tall pot

Directions:

Step 1

First pan fry pork in canola oil, doesn't have to be fully cooked

Step 2

Peel and shave raw potatoes with a mandolin or cut potatoes into thin slices about the same size. In your tall pot put a layer of potatoes first then a layer of pork about 2 or 3 pork chops depending on the size. Then sprinkled salt and pepper don't be shy with the pepper. Repeat the process of potatoes and pork layers. It will be about 3 or 2 layers of pork depending on how much pork you buy.

Step 3

At last put 2 cups of chicken stock into the pot, cover and bring it to a boil. Then simmer until the pork comes apart from the bone.

You can always add more stock so the bottom of the layers don't burn. But not too much so the potatoes don't turn to a mush. All the broth should be evaporated at the end.

Note:

This is a simple recipe where the kids can start helping in the kitchen peeling potatoes or washing the potatoes or putting the spices on top of the meat.

Sablich's Mostaccioli

~Croatian ~ Pasta sauce our version~

Recipe contributed by Little Isabella and parent Margarita

Ingredients:

Up to 2 ½ pounds of ground beef or meat loaf meat package

2 29 oz cans of Contadina tomato sauce

1- Knorr chicken bouillon cube

1tsp ground black pepper

¼ tsp fresh cracked pepper

½ tsp cayenne pepper

¼ tsp allspice (level)

½ tsp nutmeg (heaping)

1 bay leaf

2 tsp salt

*if you love garlic add a pinch of garlic powder

*olive oil Partanna brand

*for toppings fresh grated cheese "Belgioioso" Parmesan or Mexican Añejo cheese "El viajero"

Directions:

Step 1

In a 6qt pot cook meat first and then drain fat. On a skillet, brown 4 cloves of garlic with 5-6 tablespoons of olive oil. (be generous with the oil.) Cook just enough for the garlic to be releasing a garlic scent. Immediately transfer the garlic with meat, so you don't overcook the garlic.

Step 2

Then add 2 cans (29 ounces) of Contadina sauce and one 14 ounce can of hunt's roasted fire tomatoes. Add 14 ounces of water. Stir fry the tomatoes and the oil/garlic, brown for 7-10 minutes. If you want the sauce to be thicker, you can add tomato paste (3.5 ounces) or hunt's roasted fire tomatoes (3.5 ounces).

Step 3

Then add all spices at once except for the crushed red pepper, then simmer the sauce for an hour, with the pan covered.

Step 4

For the last ten minutes of simmering, add the crushed red peppers. Be careful with the allspice because it will not taste good. If it is too dry at the end add red wine to it, cook it uncovered for 4-5 minutes. Cook your pasta, 1 ½ boxes of rigatoni. (Based on 12 ounce boxes.) Our family likes using pasta with lines and texture.

Note: You can adjust the spices by adding heaping spoonful of each measurement (recommended if you are using 2.5LB of meat)

Meat Loaf (Family of 5)

Recipe contributed by Littles Kara and Joshua and parent Samantha

Ingredients:

2 - 2.5 lbs ground beef
2 eggs
1pk shredded cheddar cheese
1 small onion - diced
Salt
Pepper
1 cup milk
30 Ritz Crackers (I like to use original)

(optional for sauce topping)

Ketchup
Mustard
Honey
½ cup brown sugar

Equipment:

Large mixing bowl
Small mixing bowl
Baking pan (9 x 13 cake pan)
Cooking spray or parchment paper
Aluminum foil

Directions:

Step 1

Preheat oven to 375° F

Step 2

In a large mixing bowl mix ground beef, 2 eggs, pinch of salt and pepper to taste. Add diced onion and shredded cheddar cheese, mix well. Crush and add ritz crackers and milk. Mix well.

Step 3

(Optional sauce topping) In a small mixing bowl combine $\frac{1}{2}$ cup brown sugar, 1 tablespoon mustard, 3 tablespoons honey and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of ketchup and mix until creamy. (add additional of any of the above for desired taste & consistency)

Step 4

Line a baking pan with cooking spray (or parchment paper for easy clean up). Place meat into a baking pan and shape. (I use a circle shape approx. 2- $\frac{1}{2}$ " - 3" thick). Spread half the sauce topping over the meatloaf and cover with aluminum foil. Bake for 1- $\frac{1}{2}$ hours.

Step 5

Uncover, add remaining sauce topping and bake uncovered 1- $\frac{1}{2}$ hours or until cooked through. Enjoy

Cajun Seafood & Rice

Recipe contributed by Little Shania & Big Debanoshee

Recipe adapted from TikTok #realchefholmezz

Ingredients:

1lb shrimp
1 salmon filet
4 cups cooked white rice
Chopped parsley
1 stick butter
1/2 cup heavy cream
1 Tbsp olive oil
1 Tbsp garlic powder
1 Tbsp onion powder
1/2 Tbsp Old Bay seasoning
1 tsp lemon pepper seasoning
1 tsp smoke paprika
1 tsp chili powder
1 tsp black pepper
1 tsp Italian season
1/2 tsp cumin
Salt
1 lemon, cut in half

Directions:

Step 1

Cut salmon into cubes. In a small bowl, add onion powder, garlic powder, old bay, lemon pepper, smoke paprika, chili powder, Italian seasoning, cumin and a pinch of salt. Mix well. Season shrimp and salmon on both sides very well. Set aside remaining seasoning (2 tablespoons)

Step 2

In a frying pan coat the bottom with oil & ¼ stick of butter. Cook both shrimp, turning until both sides are golden brown. Squeeze lemon juice onto shrimp before removing from the pan. In the same pan add ¼ stick of butter and cook salmon, turning until golden brown on each side. Squeeze lemon juice on top of salmon before removing from the pan.

Step 3

In a measuring cup add ½ stick of butter, not fully melted, heavy whipping cream and 1 tablespoon of seasoning. Whip together until creamy and set aside.

Step 4

Pour the juice from the pan used to cook the salmon & shrimp over the rice, add 1 tablespoon of remaining seasoning. Mix well. Add salmon and shrimp. Pour creamy sauce over top. Garnish with parsley.

Desserts



Vegan Vanilla Cake

Recipe contributed by Little Wendy and Big Almaz

Cake adapted from noracooks.com and frosting from marthastewart.com

Ingredients for the cake:

1 1/4 cups unsweetened non-dairy milk
2 tsp apple cider vinegar
1/2 cup aquafaba
1/2 cup vegan butter, softened to room temperature
1/2 cup canola oil, or melted coconut oil
1 1/2 cups sugar
1 Tbsp vanilla extract
3 cups cake flour OR all purpose flour*
1 Tbsp baking powder
1/2 tsp salt

Ingredients for the Frosting:

2 cups raspberries
3 Tbsp confectioners' sugar
2 cups cold heavy cream

Directions:

Step 1

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F and prepare 2 round 8-inch cake pans by lining the bottom with parchment paper and spraying well with oil.

Step 2

Make the Vegan Buttermilk: Combine the non-dairy milk and apple cider vinegar. Stir a little, then set aside.

Step 3

Make the Aquafaba: Pour the liquid from a can of chickpeas into a small-medium bowl. Whisk well for a minute, until foamy and light. This acts similar to eggs. You can't taste it at all in the cake, don't worry! You will use 1/2 cup of this, and the liquid from 1 can is just perfect.

Step 4

Using an electric hand mixer or stand mixer with a paddle attachment, cream together the softened vegan butter, canola oil and sugar until creamy and well combined.

Step 5

Measure out 1/2 cup of the aquafaba, and add it to the bowl, along with the vanilla extract. Beat until well combined.

Step 6

In a separate bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder and salt.

Step 7

Using the mixer on low speed, alternate adding the flour mixture and vegan buttermilk, mixing until just combined after each time. The batter should be fairly smooth (a few lumps are okay), but avoid over-mixing.

Step 8

Pour the cake batter evenly into the prepared pans, and bake for 30-35 minutes, until the edges are golden brown, the surface looks and feels set, and a toothpick comes out mostly clean, with no wet batter.

Step 9

Allow the cakes to cool in the pans for 15 minutes, then carefully invert them onto a cooling rack. Allow them to cool completely before frosting. You can place them in the refrigerator to speed the cooling process along if you need to.

Step 10

In a medium bowl, gently mash 1 cup raspberries with a fork. Stir in 1 cup whole raspberries. In a large bowl, using an electric mixer, beat cream and confectioners' sugar on high until soft peaks form, 1 minute. With a rubber spatula, gently fold raspberries into whipped cream. Place 1 cake on a cake stand or serving plate. Spread raspberry cream on top, leaving a 1/4-inch border. Top with the other cake, press gently, and finish with remaining raspberry cream. Serve immediately.

Fluffy 1-Bowl Sugar Cookies (Vegan + GF)

Recipe contributed by Little Ariana and parent Amy

Recipe adapted from minimalistbaker.com

Ingredients:

Cookies:

1/2 cup softened vegan butter (1/2 cup = 1 stick // or dairy butter if not vegan)
2/3 cup organic cane sugar
1 tsp pure vanilla extract
3 Tbsp aquafaba (chickpea brine – the liquid left behind in a can of cooked chickpeas // or sub 1/4 cup (50 g) pumpkin purée* // amount as original recipe is written)
3/4 tsp baking powder
1/4 tsp sea salt
1 2/3 cups gluten-free flour blend
2/3 cup almond flour (not almond meal – the texture and flavor is different)
1/3 cup cornstarch or arrowroot
1 Tbsp unsweetened almond milk

Frosting (optional):

1/2 cup vegan butter (softened // 1/2 cup = 1 stick)
1 1/2 – 2 cups sifted organic powdered sugar (to ensure vegan friendly)
1/4 tsp vanilla extract
1-2 Tbsp unsweetened almond milk
Natural food dyes (like Watkins or Color Kitchen// optional)

Directions:

Step 1

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F (176 C) and line two baking sheets with parchment paper. Set aside.

Step 2

Add softened vegan butter (make sure it's softened – not melted or cold) to a large mixing bowl and beat or whisk until creamy and smooth – about 1 minute.

Step 3

Add sugar and mix on medium speed until fluffy and light – about 1 minute. Then add chickpea brine (or other egg substitute) and vanilla and mix again, scraping down sides as needed.

Step 4

Add baking powder and sea salt and blend or whisk to combine. Then add gluten-free flour blend, almond flour, and cornstarch and mix on low until the ingredients are combined. I had to switch to a wooden spoon toward the end. Add almond milk and stir once more.

Step 5

The dough should be thick, moldable and a little difficult to mix at this point. If too soft, continue adding a mixture of gluten-free flour blend, almond flour, and cornstarch until a thick, moldable dough is formed. If too thick, thin with a bit more almond milk.

Step 6

Transfer dough to the refrigerator and chill for 15 minutes. Once chilled, use a cookie scooper or a Tablespoon to measure out 1 1/2 Tbsp amounts of dough and gently roll into balls – the dough will still be soft so be gentle. Arrange on the parchment-lined baking sheets with 1 inch room between each and press down gently with the palm of your hand to smash slightly.

Step 7

Alternatively, roll out the dough on a well-floured surface until about 1/4-inch thick and dip cookie cutters in gluten-free flour before pressing into the dough. Use a floured spatula to gently scoop onto baking sheets. This recipe works well with both cut outs and traditional circles!

Step 8

Bake cookies for 10-12 minutes or until the cookies appear fluffy and the edges are slightly beginning to dry out. Let cool on a baking sheet for 10 minutes before transferring to a plate to cool completely.

Step 9

To make frosting (optional), add softened vegan butter to a mixing bowl and whisk or beat until soft and fluffy – about 1 minute. Then sift in powdered sugar in small amounts and mix. Around the 1-cup mark, add the vanilla extract and whisk. Continue adding powdered sugar until you have spreadable frosting (I used about 2 cups powdered sugar // amount as the original recipe is written // adjust if altering batch size). If you prefer a thinner frosting, add a little almond milk to thin. If it becomes too thin, add more powdered sugar. If it becomes too thick, add more almond milk. Add natural food coloring at this time (optional).

Step 10

Frost cookies or leave plain! I decorated it with some naturally-dyed sugar sprinkles. Organic cane sugar as a base should ensure vegan friendliness.

Storage: Once cooled, store leftover cookies covered at room temperature for 3-4 days or in the freezer for up to 1 month.

Oreo Pie

Recipe contributed by Littles Kara and Joshua and parent Samantha

Ingredients:

3 cups heavy whipping cream
8oz cream cheese - room temperature
1-½ cup powdered sugar
2 tsp vanilla extract
7 Tbsp salted butter - melted
36 large Oreos
1-½ cup Mini Oreos
Whipped cream, cherries & Oreos for garnish

Equipment:

Pie pan

Directions:

Step 1

In a food processor or blender crush 36 large Oreos. In a mixing bowl combine crushed Oreos and 7 Tbsp of melted butter until blended. Spray the pie pan lightly with cooking spray. Press mixture into pie pan and refrigerate while preparing the filling.

Step 2

In a mixing bowl add cream cheese, powdered sugar, vanilla extract and heavy whipping cream. Start mixer on low gradually increasing speed until mixture spikes.

Step 3

Fold in mini Oreos

Step 4

Pour filling into pie crust and lever off with spatula

Step 5

refrigerate for 6 hours, garnish with whipped cream, Oreos & cherries

Sweet Potato Chocolate Pie

Recipe contributed by Little Anijsha and Big Linda

Recipe adapted from foodandwine.com

Ingredients:

Pie Shell:

2 cups all purpose flour

1 tsp granulated sugar

½ tsp salt

1-½ (6 oz) cold unsalted butter, cut into ½" squares

⅓ cup cold vegetable shortening

3 - 4 Tbsp ice water

Filling:

2-¾ lbs sweet potatoes

1-¼ cups granulated sugar

⅓ cup light brown sugar

¼ tsp cinnamon

⅛ tsp salt

5 large eggs

2 ozs semi-sweet chocolate at room temperature, cut into 1" long matchsticks

Whipped Cream:

1 cup cold heavy whipping cream

1 tbsp granulated sugar

1 tbsp bourbon

½ tsp cinnamon

Directions:

Step 1

In a food processor, pulse the flour, sugar and salt to blend. Add the butter and shortening and pulse until the mixture resembles coarse meal. Drizzle in 3 tablespoons of the ice water and pulse just until the dough can be gathered into a ball; if necessary, gradually add the remaining water. Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured surface and form it into a 9-inch log. Cut off a 4-inch section of the log and pat it into a 6-inch disk for the bottom crust. Wrap the disk in wax paper.

Cut the remaining dough in half and wrap each piece separately in wax paper. Refrigerate all of the dough until chilled, at least 1 hour, or overnight.

Step 2

On a lightly floured surface, roll the disk of dough into a 9-inch round and fit it into the base of a 9-by-2 1/2-inch springform pan. With your hands, roll each of the remaining dough pieces into a 13-inch rope. Fit the ropes around the base of the pan and join the ends to make one continuous rope. Using your fingers, evenly press the dough 2 inches up the sides of the pan to form a seamless shell. Refrigerate the shell.

Step 3

Preheat the oven to 350°. Bake the sweet potatoes on a baking sheet for about 1 hour, or until soft when pierced. Let cool, then remove the skins and puree the potatoes in a food processor.

Step 4

In a medium bowl, combine the granulated sugar and the brown sugar with the cinnamon, nutmeg and salt. In a large bowl, lightly whisk the eggs. Whisk in 3 cups of the pureed sweet potatoes (reserve any extra for another use). Whisk in the sugar mixture. Spoon half the sweet potato custard into the pie shell and sprinkle half of the chocolate on top. Cover with the remaining sweet potato custard and distribute the remaining chocolate decoratively on top.

Step 5

Bake the pie in the center of the oven for about 1 hour, or until the custard is almost set in the middle. Turn off the oven but leave the pie inside until cool.

Step 6

In a chilled bowl, combine the cream with the sugar, bourbon and cinnamon and beat until stiff. Serve the pie at room temperature and pass the whipped cream separately.

Note:

The pie shell and pureed potatoes can be refrigerated for up to 1 day in advance.

Chocolate Brownie Cookies

Recipe contributed by Little Anijsha and Big Linda

Recipe adapted from foodandwine.com

Ingredients:

1 lb semisweet chocolate, chopped
4 Tbsp unsalted butter
4 large eggs
1-½ cups sugar
1 tsp pure vanilla extract
¼ tsp salt
½ cup all-purpose flour, sifted
½ tsp baking powder
1 12 oz bag semisweet chocolate chips

Directions:

Step 1

In a large bowl set over a saucepan of simmering water, melt the chopped chocolate with the butter, stirring a few times, until smooth, about 7 minutes.

Step 2

In another large bowl, using a handheld electric mixer, beat the eggs with the sugar at medium speed until thick and pale, about 5 minutes. Beat in the vanilla and salt. Using a rubber spatula, fold in the melted chocolate, then fold in the flour and baking powder. Stir in the chocolate chips. Scrape the batter into a shallow baking dish, cover and freeze until well chilled and firm, about 1 hour.

Step 3

Preheat the oven to 350° and line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper. Working in batches, scoop 2-tablespoon-size mounds of dough onto the prepared baking sheets, about 2 inches apart. Bake for about 10 minutes, until the cookies are dry around the edges and cracked on top. Let the cookies cool on the baking sheets for 10 minutes, then transfer to a rack to cool completely before serving.

Note: The cookies can be stored in an airtight container for up to 4 days.

DoubleTree Secret Chocolate Chip Cookies

Recipe contributed by Little Journii and Big Kelly

Recipe adapted from newsroom.hilton.com

Ingredients:

½ pound butter, softened (2 sticks)

¾ cup + 1 Tbsp granulated sugar

¾ cup packed light brown sugar

2 large eggs

1 ¼ tsp vanilla extract

¼ tsp freshly squeezed lemon juice

2 ¼ cups flour

½ cup rolled oats

1 tsp baking soda

1 tsp salt

Pinch cinnamon

2 ⅔ cups Nestle Tollhouse semi-sweet chocolate chips

1 ¾ cups chopped walnuts

Directions:

Step 1

Cream butter, sugar and brown sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer on medium speed for about 2 minutes.

Step 2

Add eggs, vanilla and lemon juice, blend with mixer on low speed for 30 seconds, then medium speed for about 2 minutes, or until light and fluffy, scraping down bowl.

Step 3

With the mixer on low speed, add flour, oats, baking soda, salt and cinnamon, blending for about 45 seconds. Do not overmix.

Step 4

Remove bowl from mixer and stir in chocolate chips and walnuts.

Step 5

Portion dough with a scoop (about 3 tablespoons) onto a baking sheet lined with parchment paper about 2 inches apart.

Step 6

Preheat the oven to 300°F. Bake for 20 to 23 minutes, or until the edges are golden brown and the center is still soft.

Step 7

Remove from the oven and cool on a baking sheet for about 1 hour.

Cook's note: You can freeze the unbaked cookies, and there's no need to thaw. Preheat the oven to 300°F and place frozen cookies on a parchment paper-lined baking sheet about 2 inches apart. Bake until the edges are golden brown and the center is still soft.

Reindeer Cookies

Recipe contributed by Little Ezra and Big Traci

Recipe adapted from allrecipes.com

Ingredients:

1 cup butter, softened
1 cup white sugar
1 cup smooth peanut butter
2 eggs
1 tsp vanilla extract
½ tsp salt
3 cups all-purpose flour
2 tsp baking soda
72 small pretzel twists, or as needed
½ cup chocolate chips, or as needed

Directions:

Step 1

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F.

Step 2

Beat butter, sugar, peanut butter, eggs, vanilla extract, and salt together in a bowl until smooth and creamy. Stir flour and baking soda into creamed butter mixture until well incorporated.

Step 3

Roll dough into 36 balls. Flatten each ball and shape into an upside-down triangle. Press two pretzels into the two top corners of each triangle for the antlers. Press two chocolate chips into the center of each triangle for the eyes, and one chocolate chip or M&M on the bottom of the triangle for the nose. Arrange cookies on baking sheets.

Step 4

Bake in the preheated oven until cookies are golden brown, 10 to 15 minutes.

Pistachio Pudding

Recipe contributed by Littles Kara and Joshua and parent Samantha

Ingredients:

2 small boxes pistachio pudding mix

1 can crushed pineapple

1 small bag chopped walnuts or pecans (if desired)

1 bag miniature marshmallows

1 8oz container Cool-Whip

Equipment:

Medium mixing bowl

Large spoon

Large spatula

Directions:

Step 1

Open small boxes of pudding mix into the medium bowl. Open the can of crushed pineapple and drain juice into the bowl of pudding mix. Mix until creamy.

Step 2

Add crushed pineapples and desired nuts and mix until blended.

Step 3

Add miniature marshmallows in the bowl and mix until coated in pudding mixture.

Step 4

Fold in Cool-Whip with the spatula slowly. Do not mix!

Step 5

Refrigerate for 2 hours to set

Snacks



Candied Almonds

Recipe contributed by Little Journii and Big Kelly

Recipe adapted from joyfoodsunshine.com

Ingredients:

16 oz raw almonds (about 3 cups)

1 egg white

1 Tbsp vanilla extract

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup granulated sugar

1 tsp sea salt

2 tsp ground cinnamon

Directions:

Step 1

Preheat the oven to 250 degrees F. Grease a large baking sheet. (Do NOT use parchment paper or foil. Bake directly on the greased pan).

Step 2

In a small bowl, combine sugar, sea salt, and cinnamon, set aside.

Step 3

In a large mixing bowl, whip egg white and vanilla with a whisk until frothy (about 1 minute).

Step 4

Add almonds to the wet mixture and stir until evenly coated.

Step 5

Once almonds are coated, sprinkle the dry ingredients over the almonds and stir until evenly distributed. Make sure to scrape any extra cinnamon sugar mixture off the sides and bottom of the bowl and incorporate it into the almonds.

Step 6

Spread the almonds evenly, in a single layer, on the prepared baking sheet. Bake at 250F for 1 hour. Stir every 15 minutes. Even if they look done after 45 minutes trust me and bake for the full hour.

Step 7

After one hour remove the almonds from the oven, give them a final stir and let them cool on the baking sheet or enjoy them warm!

Step 8

Store in an airtight container at room temperature or in the freezer!

Red Velvet Truffles

Recipe contributed by Littles Kara and Joshua and parent Samantha

Ingredients:

8 oz pack cream cheese
1 pack red velvet Oreos
1 pack white chocolate morsels
1 Tbsp vegetable oil

Directions:

Step 1

Crush oreos until fine. Blend cream cheese and crushed oreos. Roll into a ball about 1" round, freeze for 2 hours.

Step 2

In a double boiler pot mix vegetable oil and white chocolate morsels until melted and smooth. Take oreo balls from the freezer and coat in melted chocolate.

Step 3

Refrigerate