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SOUPS AND SALADS

**DESSERTS—BREADS, CAKES,
COOKIES, PIES**

HELPFUL INFORMATION

INDEX--2016

SOUPS AND SALADS

PESTO PEA SALAD
LAYERED LETTUCE/SPINACH SALAD
5 CUP SALAD
GRAPE SALAD (1)
BOW-TIE CHICKEN SALAD
FROZEN ENGLISH PEA-CASHEW SALAD
TEXAS CITRUS SALAD (With Gulf Coast Shrimp)
GRILLED CORN SALAD OR SALSA
TUNA MACARONI SALAD
BLACK BEAN AND CORN SALAD
SPICY SHRIMP SALAD
GRAPE SALAD (2)
WATERMELON SALAD WITH MINT LEAVES
ASIAN STYLE SLAW

DESSERTS, BREADS, CAKES, COOKIES AND PIES

RAINBOW LAYERED JELL-O
ALMOND FLOUR BROWNIES—gluten free
STRAWBERRY RASPBERRY TRIFLE
STRAWBERRY JELL-O PRETZEL SALAD (1)
PATRIOTIC BERRY TRIFLE
KENTUCKY WOODS BOURBON BARREL CAKE
SEVEN LAYER COOKIES
PECAN PRALINE COOKIE TRIANGLES (or squares)
SWEETHEART CHERRY CHEESE DANISH
DEATH BY CHOCOLATE
STRAWBERRY TIRAMISU
INCREDIBLY DELICIOUS ITALIAN CREAM CAKE
STRAWBERRY PRETZEL JELL-O SALAD (2)
COCONUT CAKE

HELPFUL INFORMATION

FLOWERS YOU CAN EAT
Learn How to Grow and Harvest Edible Flowers

SOUPS AND SALADS

PESTO PEA SALAD

Barbara Atkins (*Barefoot Contessa*)

1/4 lb. baby spinach leaves, washed and spun dry
1 10-oz. package frozen peas, defrosted
1/2 cup prepared pesto (I use the Costco brand—better than homemade!)
1/4 cup Parmesan cheese
1 tsp. Kosher salt
2 T toasted pine nuts (I used a half cup!! 'cause I like 'em)

Wash spinach, spin dry. Place peas and spinach in a large bowl. Mix pesto and Parmesan and stir into spinach to coat. Add salt. Toss well. Add toasted pine nuts. Serves 8.

To toast pine nuts, place in a dry saute' pan and toss frequently for 5-10 minutes over medium heat.

PESTO:

4 medium cloves garlic
Pinch of sea salt
4 oz. bunch of fresh sweet basil
2 T pine nuts
2 1/2 T grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese
2 1/2 T Pecorino Romano cheese
1/2 cup plus 2 T EVOO (olive oil)

Blend in food processor in order listed and place in refrigerator jar, **OR** buy Kirkland brand pesto at COSTCO!!

LAYERED LETTUCE/SPINACH SALAD

Helen Morris

Yield: 12 servings

2 heads iceberg lettuce, chopped
8 oz. baby spinach, washed and dried
Salt and pepper to taste
8 whole hard-boiled eggs, chopped
16 oz. weight bacon, cooked and chopped
4 whole tomatoes, chopped
1 bunch green onions, thinly sliced
8 oz. weight cheddar cheese grated
1 bag (10 oz.) frozen peas, partially thawed

Dressing:

1/2 cup real mayonnaise
1/2 cup sour cream
1 T sugar (more to taste)
Fresh dill, chopped

In a clear glass bowl, layer salad ingredients in the order listed, concentrating ingredients around the perimeter of the bowl and filling in the center with lettuce, if needed. End with the layer of peas.

Combine dressing ingredients in a separate bowl and mix well. Pour over the top of the peas and spread to cover, bringing dressing all the way out to the edges of the bowl. Sprinkle with fresh dill.

Cover and refrigerate for up to 8 hours. Toss just before serving.

5 CUP SALAD

Dee Huston

- 1 cup coconut
- 1 cup pineapple, drained
- 1 cup miniature marshmallows
- 1 cup mandarin oranges, drained
- 1 cup whipped topping.

Mix together. Chill and serve.

GRAPE SALAD (1)

Barbara Nunn

- 2 lbs. green seedless grapes, washed and pull off stems
- 2 lbs. red seedless grapes, washed and pulled off stems

- Mix together with mixer:
- 8 oz. cream cheese, softened
 - 8 oz. sour cream
 - 1/2 cup sugar
 - 1 tsp. vanilla

Toss with grapes and chill. Just before serving, top with chopped pecans and brown sugar.

BOW-TIE CHICKEN SALAD

- 6 cups cooked chicken, diced
- 1 bag of bow-tie pasta, cooked and drained
- 1/2 bunch of green onions, or to taste

Dressing:

- 1 8-oz. bottle of Kraft Pourable Coleslaw Dressing
(Can add more coleslaw dressing if not moist enough)
- 2 cups mayonnaise
- Salt and pepper to taste

Mix all of the above the night before serving and chill.

Before serving add:

- 1 large can of pineapple tidbits, drained
- 1 lb. seedless red grapes, halved
- 1 cup celery, chopped
- 4 – 5 diced apples (Galas are good)
- 1 pkg. slivered almonds, optional

FROZEN ENGLISH PEA-CASHEW SALAD

Barbara Williams

- 3 12-oz. packages English peas, thaw partially
- 1 cup onions, chopped—green or white
- 8 oz. cashews
- 16 oz. sour cream
- 4 oz. shredded cheese or cubes
- Salt and pepper, as served

Mix together. Chill. May need to remix just before serving. Could use mayonnaise or Miracle Whip.

TEXAS CITRUS SALAD (With Gulf Coast Shrimp)

Lindle O'Neil

3 T fresh orange juice
1 T white wine vinegar
1 T grape seed oil
Fresh ground pepper
Sea Salt
1 tsp. ground cumin
1 garlic clove, crushed
10 cups loosely packed assorted lettuce, spinach, torn into bite-sized pieces
1 cup fresh orange slices
1 cup fresh ruby red grapefruit sections
1/4 cup julienne cut sweet red peppers
1/4 cup thinly sliced Texas sweet white onions, separated into rings

Combine orange juice, vinegar, oil, pepper, cumin and garlic in a jar with lid. Cover tightly and shake vigorously. Refrigerate for 3 hours.

Combine lettuce, oranges, grapefruit, peppers and onions in a large bowl. Pour vinaigrette over salad. Toss gently to coat. Service immediately.

Optional: you may use fresh or frozen cooked shrimp, thawed and dried. Arrange around greens before serving.

GRILLED CORN SALAD OR SALSA

Pat Mingus

10 large ears of corn
Salt and fresh ground pepper
1 cup diced red onion 1/4-inch diced
1/2 cup julienne fresh basil leaves
1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil—more for brushing
8 vine ripe tomatoes (about 1 pound)
4 T red wine vinegar

Brush corn with olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Grill, turning every few minutes until light gold all over and cook—about 12 minutes. Let cool and cut off cob.

Core tomatoes and cut a small X on the bottom of each. Brush with olive oil; season with salt and pepper. Place on grill X side down, away from direct heat. Cover the grill and cook until they begin to soften, but not cooked all the way through—12-15 minutes. Set aside to cool, then peel. Cut in half crosswise, squeeze out juice and seeds through a sieve into a bowl. Reserve juices and flesh.

Put onions in medium bowl, toss with 2 T of the vinegar, let marinate until color changes, about 10 minutes.

Add chopped tomatoes, reserved juice, onions, basil and 1/3 cup olive oil to cover corn. Toss well. Taste, adjust salt and pepper and remaining vinegar.

Best eaten the same day, but good covered in the refrigerator a day or so!

TUNA MACARONI SALAD

Karen Pafford

2 cups elbow macaroni, uncooked
4 hard-boiled eggs, peeled and chopped
1/3 cup finely diced mixture of celery, green bell pepper,
and onion
1/4 cup dill relish
2 T sweet relish
2 6-oz. cans tuna, drained
1 1/2 cups mayonnaise
Black pepper, Old Bay, seasoning salt to taste
Parsley, paprika, garnish

Cook pasta according to package and rinse with cold water when done. Drain and set aside.

In a large bowl, add cold pasta, chopped eggs, celery, bell pepper and onion mixture. Toss to combine.

Add dill relish, sweet relish and tuna. Stir to combine. Stir in mayonnaise.

Season to taste with black pepper, Old Bay and seasoning salt, if needed.

Spread into a casserole dish
Garnish with paprika and parsley flakes.

Refrigerate for at least 2 hours or overnight.

If needed before serving, add more mayo.

BLACK BEAN AND CORN SALAD

Linda Krimm

Serves 10

1 can Black Beans, drained and rinsed
1 green bell pepper, roasted, peeled and sliced
1 red bell pepper, roasted, peeled and sliced
2 cups chopped plum tomato
1 cup sliced scallions, green and white parts
1 can sweet yellow corn, drained
2 tsp. cumin seeds
1 tsp coriander seeds
2 T white wine vinegar
1/2 T olive oil
2 T fresh lime juice
1 T grated lime zest
1/4 tsp. crushed red pepper flakes
Ground Salt & Ground Pepper to taste
1/2 cup chopped fresh cilantro

Combine peppers, tomato, scallion corn and beans

Toast the cumin and coriander seeds over medium heat until fragrant. Pulverize the seeds to a powder in spice grinder

Whisk vinegar and oil. Add cumin/coriander powder, lime juice, lime zest, red pepper flakes, salt and pepper.

Pour dressing over bean & corn mixture. Stir to combine. Fold in cilantro, cover and chill for 1 hr. Serve at room temperature.

Calories 199 Carb 37g. Protein 11g. Fat 2 gr.

SPICY SHRIMP SALAD

Greg Braak

2 lbs. large shrimp (or smaller shrimp if you prefer)
One lemon
4 fresh bay leaves or 2 dried
1 cup celery, finely diced
3 thinly-sliced green onions – both white and green parts
1/2 cup mayonnaise
2 tsp. Sriracha Hot Chili Sauce or Tabasco
Black pepper

Bring a pot of water to boil with the bay leaves and lemon cut into eights. Add the shrimp and cook for only 3-4 minutes – do not overcook. Drain the shrimp and cut them into thirds if using large ones; discard the lemon and bay leaves and let the shrimp cool.

Mix the mayonnaise and hot sauce together.

Combine the cooled shrimp, the mayonnaise mixture, the celery and the green onions and a few grinds of black pepper and toss. Can refrigerate overnight to meld the flavors.

Adapted from Central Market's version

GRAPE SALAD (2)

Joetta King

Via Bev Campisi 5/16

Grapes – washed & dried

Mix together in a large bowl:
8 oz. whipped cream cheese
8 oz. light sour cream
1/4 cup sugar

Blend grapes into this mixture and place in a 9 x 13" dish or a pretty bowl.

Top with brown sugar & chopped pecans.

Refrigerate.

WATERMELON SALAD WITH MINT LEAVES

Ann Fuller

From Paula Deen

20 minutes/Easy

6 salad course servings

Ingredients

1 (5 pound) watermelon
1 Vidalia or other sweet onion
1/4 cup red wine vinegar
Salt and pepper
1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
2 T chopped fresh mint
4 oz. feta cheese, crumbled
6 whole mint leaves

Directions

Cut the flesh from the melon and cut into bite-sized pieces, removing and discarding the seeds. Set aside. Peel and slice the onion into rings.

In a small bowl, combine the vinegar, salt, pepper, and whisk until salt is dissolved. Slowly whisk in the olive oil, a few drops at a time. Add in the chopped mint, taste, and adjust seasonings.

In a large bowl, combine melon, onion, and feta cheese. Pour the dressing over the melon mixture and toss gently until everything is coated and evenly mixed. Garnish with mint sprigs.

To serve, divide salad among individual plates and garnish with mint leaves.

ASIAN STYLE SLAW

Joe Krimm

Modified food network recipe

6 scallions, trimmed and thinly sliced
2 16-oz. bags coleslaw mix
1 small red onion, thinly sliced
1/4 cup soy sauce
1/4 cup lemon juice
1/4 cup vegetable oil
2 T ginger, freshly grated (about 1")
2 T white vinegar
2 T brown sugar
2 T Asian sesame oil
4-6 T peanuts (optional)
1 tsp. salt
Black pepper—20 grinds on the pepper mill

In a large bowl, separate scallions and toss coleslaw with red onion slices. Can make one day in advance and store in a large Ziplock bag refrigerated until needed.

Dressing: In a separate bowl, mix remaining ingredients together. Within one hour of serving, pour dressing over salad mixture and toss.

Easy to prepare and great with BBQ!

DESSERTS—BREADS, CAKES, COOKIES, PIES

For any new member who may have missed this beautiful salad in other recipe books, here 'tis again!

RAINBOW LAYERED JELL-O

Peggy Harris

3 oz. packages of Jell-O one each of the following flavors:

This is for the regular Jell-O – if you use the no sugar kind the volume for each box is less.

Black Cherry, Strawberry, Raspberry, Cherry, Orange, Lemon, Lime

16 oz. sour cream plus 1/3 cup – total – the lite works well.

1 cup boiling water per 1 box of Jell-O

Select a bowl big enough, as it will require almost 10 cups volume once it is finished.

A large straight side truffle bowl works well. (You can use a 9" x 13" glass pan, but the layers will be very thin, which looks more like ribbon and I have had trouble keeping the pan level.)

Put the bowl in the fridge. Put it on the shelf with head room to be able to pour each layer of Jell-O into the bowl. Pouring the Jell-O will cause a splash onto the sides of the bowl, which spoils the effect. Also try to avoid causing bubbles while dissolving the Jell-O – stir very gently, or remove the bubbles with a spoon before you pour the Jell-O into the bowl.

Prepare one box of Jell-O. Start with the darkest or lightest color.

Put one box of Jell-O in a small cup. Add 1 cup of boiling water. Stir thoroughly.

Pour 1/2 of the Jell-O into another cup. It will be about 2/3 cup in each cup.

In one cup add 1/3 cup sour cream and mix well. This is the cloudy mix.

In the other cup add 3 Tablespoons of cold water. This is the clear mix.

Pour one layer (cloudy or clear) in the bowl in the fridge.

Let it gel. It will take at least 60 minutes. You want this first layer to be very firm before you do the next layer.

Leave the other cup (cloudy or clear) on the counter.

After the first layer is firm, pour the second layer in the bowl in the fridge. Let it set 30 minutes, or more, until firm.

Then prepare the next box of Jell-O.

Pour in the first layer in the bowl in the fridge. Use either the cloudy or clear, depending on which you did with the first box. Let it set until firm.

Pour in the second layer gently into the bowl. Let it set until firm.

It doesn't take quite as long to get firm with the second box.

Then prepare each of the rest of the boxes of Jell-O. At this point you can prepare 2 boxes at the same time (4 cups on the counter) and leave them on the counter until the current layer is firm. This will be about 15 minutes each or so. If you pour too early it will 'dig' up the prior layer and it spoils the look, but it will still taste good!

You can decorate the top of the bowl with gel cake decoration or fresh organic flowers.

ALMOND FLOUR BROWNIES—gluten free

Sharon Pignolet

3/4 cup blanched almond flour
2/3 cup agave nectar
1/2 cup chopped walnuts (optional)
2 eggs
5 T unsweetened cocoa powder
1/4 cup coconut oil
1 tsp. vanilla extract

Preheat oven to 350°.

Mix almond flour, agave nectar, walnuts, eggs, cocoa powder, coconut oil and vanilla extract together in a bowl; spread into an 8-inch square baking dish.

Bake until edges of brownies begin to pull from sides of dish, about 30 minutes. Let brownies cool slightly before slicing, about 5 minutes.

STRAWBERRY RASPBERRY TRIFLE

Julie Garza

Yield 14 servings

3 cups cold fat-free milk
2 packages (1 oz. each) sugar-free instant white chocolate pudding mix
1 prepared angel food cake (8 – 10 oz.) cut into 1-inch cubes
3 cups sliced fresh strawberries
3 cups fresh raspberries
1 carton (8 oz.) frozen reduced-fat whipped topping, thawed
3 whole strawberries, quartered

In large bowl, whisk milk and pudding mix for 2 minutes. Mixture will be thick.

Place a third of the cake cubes in a trifle bowl or 3 1/2-quart glass serving bowl. Top with a third of the pudding mix, 1 cup sliced strawberries, 1 1/2 cups raspberries and a third of the whipped topping. Layer with a third of the cake and pudding, 1 cup strawberries and a third of the whipped topping.

Top with remaining cake, pudding, strawberries, raspberries and whipped topping. Garnish with quartered strawberries. Serve immediately or cover and chill until serving.

STRAWBERRY JELL-O PRETZEL SALAD (1)

Joan Kowalski Serves 16

1 1/2 cups crushed pretzels
4 1/2 T sugar
3/4 cup melted butter
1 cup sugar
2 8-oz. packages cream cheese
1 8-oz. Cool Whip
2 6-oz. packages strawberry Jell-O
4 cups boiling water
1 32-oz. package fresh sliced strawberries

Preheat oven to 350°. Mix together pretzels, 4 1/2 T sugar and melted butter. Press into the bottom of sprayed 9 x 13-inch pan. Bake for 10 minutes. Cool.

In a medium bowl stir together Jell-O and boiling water. Mix in strawberries. Chill until slightly thickened.

In a medium bowl beat the sugar and cream cheese until smooth. Fold in Cool Whip. Spread evenly over pretzel crust.

Pour Jell-O/strawberry mixture over cream cheese layer. Refrigerate for at least one (1) hour.

PATRIOTIC BERRY TRIFLE

1/4 cup plus 2/3 cup sugar
1/4 cup fresh lemon juice
1/4 tsp. almond extract
1 pre-made angel food cake, cut into 1-inch slices
2 8-oz. pkgs. cream cheese, at room temperature
2 cups heavy cream, at room temperature
2 pints blueberries
2 pints strawberries, hulled and sliced

Heat 1/4 cup sugar, lemon juice and 1/4 cup water in saucepan over medium heat, stirring until the sugar dissolves. Remove from heat and stir in almond extract.

Brush both sides of each slice of cake with the syrup. Cut slices into 1-inch cubes.

Beat remaining 2/3 cup sugar and cream cheese with a mixer at medium speed until smooth. Add the cream and beat on medium-high until smooth and consistency of whipped cream.

Arrange half of the cake cubes in bottom of a 13-cup trifle bowl. Sprinkle evenly with 1/3 of the blueberries. Dollop half of the cream mixture over blueberries and gently spread. Top with 1/2 of strawberries. Layer with the remaining cake cubes, then another layer of blueberries and top with the remaining cream cheese mixture. Finish with the remaining strawberries and blueberries. Cover and refrigerate at least 1 hour.

KENTUCKY WOODS BOURBON BARREL CAKE

Thierrie Mazur, Marty Mazur, Sef Crollett, Sr.

Kentucky Bourbon aged in an oak barrel has a very rich and unique taste. It is what makes our cake so rich in flavor. Anyone of any age can eat a slice of Kentucky Woods Bourbon Barrel Cake. After baking, the cake retains its rich bourbon taste through a unique recipe that preserves the essence of the bourbon flavor without any alcohol. Rich in flavor, rich in heritage.

A Kentucky Woods Bourbon Barrel Cake is best served at room temperature. Some real whipped cream or fresh vanilla ice cream goes well with it. For an adult experience rich in flavor and bourbon, soak lightly in a jigger of your favorite aged Kentucky bourbon.

www.KentuckyWoods.com

SEVEN LAYER COOKIES

Dee Huston

Melt 1 stick margarine in 8 x 8 pan.

Spread over above:

1 cup graham cracker crumbs

1 cup coconut

1 6-oz. butterscotch chips

1 6-oz. chocolate chips

1 cup chopped nuts

Pour over this 1 can 14-oz. Eagle Brand Condensed Milk.

Bake at 350° for 30-35 minutes or until done.

PECAN PRALINE COOKIE TRIANGLES (or squares)

Ella Barber

Crust:

2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour

3/4 cup powdered sugar

1 tsp. baking soda

3/4 cup butter (unsalted is best), melted

Filling:

3 cups pecans, chopped

2 cups packed brown sugar

3 eggs

4 T butter, melted

1 tsp. vanilla

1/4 tsp. salt

Preheat oven to 350°. For crust, combine flour, powdered sugar and baking soda in large bowl. Add butter, mix until crumbly. Lightly press crumbs over bottom of large bar pan or jelly roll pan. If you line the pan with parchment paper, it will lift out and is easy to cut. Bake for 15 minutes. Remove and cool.

Meanwhile, combine chopped pecans, brown sugar, eggs, butter, vanilla and salt. Mix well. Pour filling over warm crust, spread to the edge. Bake for 17-19 minutes or until filling is set in the center. Remove from oven, cool completely.

Cut into 32 squares and then you can cut each square in half diagonally. Sprinkle with powdered sugar.

SWEETHEART CHERRY CHEESE DANISH

Evelyn Urbanosky

2 8-oz. tubes refrigerated crescent dough sheets or crescent dinner rolls
1 8 oz. package cream cheese, softened
1 cup plus 1 T granulated sugar
1 tsp. vanilla
1 21-oz. can Lucky Leaf Regular or Premium Cherry Pie Filling
1 T butter melted
1/2 cup sliced almonds

Preheat oven to 350°. Unroll 1 package of crescent dough and fit into the bottom of an ungreased 9 x 13" baking dish.

In a bowl, mix together cream cheese, 1 cup of sugar and vanilla.

Spread mixture over dough in baking dish. Next spread a layer of Lucky Leaf Cherry Pie Filling over the cream cheese mixture. Unroll remaining crescent dough and lay on top of the pie filling.

Mix together 1 T sugar, almonds, and melted butter. Sprinkle over the top of dough. Bake 30 minutes or until golden brown.

DEATH BY CHOCOLATE

Andrea Marshall

1 18 to 20-oz. brownie mix (plus any other ingredients needed to prepare mix, such as eggs and oil).

Hint: Use cake-style brownie mix without chocolate syrup.

3 small boxes instant chocolate pudding
4 1/2 cups milk
8 oz. Cool Whip
12 oz. Cool Whip
10 oz. package Heath almond toffee bits

Prepare brownies according to package directions in a 9 x 13-inch pan. Make them fudge-like, rather than cake-like. Bake and cool.

Prepare chocolate mousse: Mix pudding mix with milk for about 2 minutes. Fold in 8 oz. Cool Whip. Break up brownies and layer 1/2 in a clear 4.5-qt. bowl. Layer 1/2 of chocolate mousse over brownies. Layer 1/2 of 12-oz. Cool Whip over mousse. Sprinkle 1/2 Heath bits over Cool Whip. Repeat layers.

Notes: Cool Whip must thaw in the refrigerator 4-6 hours before you can use it. Heath toffee bits can usually be found in the section with the chocolate chips. If you can't find them, you can buy Heath candy bars and crush them with a hammer. Tastes best if you can let it sit in the refrigerator overnight before serving.

I use skim milk and Lite Cool Whip. You can also use a low-fat brownie mix, but it is better with regular full-of-eggs-and-oil brownies!

STRAWBERRY TIRAMISU

Lindle O'Neil

3/4 lb. mascarpone cheese (1 ½ cups) at room temperature
3 T confectioners' sugar
3 T orange-flavored liqueur
1 1/2 cups heavy cream
1 pint strawberries, rinsed, hulled
1/4 cup granulated sugar
1/4 cup orange juice concentrate
24 imported Italian savoiardi cookies (crisp ladyfingers)
OR
2 pkgs. of sponge ladyfingers

Garnish:

Ground sweet chocolate or cocoa powder
9 whole strawberries, sliced or fanned

In a medium bowl, with an electric mixer, mix mascarpone cheese, confectioners' sugar and 1 T of the orange liqueur, until well blended.

In a large chilled bowl with electric mixer at medium speed, beat heavy cream until soft peaks form; gently fold whipped cream in mascarpone mixture until blended.

In blender or food processor, blend together remaining strawberries, 2 T orange liqueur, granulated sugar and orange juice to a smooth puree. Pour strawberry mixture in shallow bowl.

Dip 12 crisp lady fingers into strawberry mixture to coat: arrange in 9-inch square glass dish or 2-qt. casserole, side by side in two rows touching. Spread 1/2 cup strawberry mixture over rows. Spread half of the cream mixture on top. Repeat with remaining ladyfingers; arrange over cream layer. Spread with remaining strawberry mixture, then with remaining cream; smooth top with spatula (some of strawberry mixture may come through top cream layer).

Cover and refrigerate at least 8 hours or preferably overnight until ladyfingers have softened.

To serve: Cut into 9 squares and place on dessert plates. Dust each with ground chocolate or cocoa powder and top with sliced strawberry.

If mascarpone cheese is unavailable, puree in blender or food processor 2 T of heavy cream with 1 1/2 cup cream cheese and 1 T of lemon juice until smooth.

I use sponge ladyfingers, do not separate into individual fingers: split horizontally into strips of 6 attached ladyfingers. Use 1 package (4 strips) per layer.

INCREDIBLY DELICIOUS ITALIAN CREAM CAKE

Carole Lee -- Allrecipes.com

Time: approx. 35 minutes. Ready in approx. 1 hour 35 minutes. Makes one 3-layer 9-inch round cake (12 services)

Cake ingredients:

1 cup buttermilk
1 tsp. baking soda
1/2 cup butter
1/2 cup shortening
2 cups white sugar
5 eggs
1 tsp. vanilla extract
1 cup flaked coconut
1 tsp. baking powder
2 cups all-purpose flour

Frosting ingredients:

8 oz. cream cheese
1/2 cup butter
1 tsp. vanilla extract
4 cups confectioners' sugar
2 T (or less) light cream (but milk is ok)
1/2 cup chopped walnuts
1 cup flaked coconut

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350°. Grease three 9-inch round cake pans.

In a small bowl, dissolve the baking soda in the buttermilk; set aside.

In a large bowl, cream together 1/2 cup butter, shortening and white sugar until light and fluffy.

Mix in the eggs, buttermilk mixture, 1 tsp. vanilla, 1 cup coconut, baking powder and flour. Stir until just combined. Pour batter into the prepared pans.

Bake in the preheated oven for 30-35 minutes (a few minutes less for dark cake pans), or until a toothpick inserted into the center of the cake comes out clean. Allow to cool.

To make frosting:

In a medium bowl, combine cream cheese, 1/2 cup butter, 1 tsp. vanilla and confectioners' sugar.

Beat until light and fluffy.

Mix in small amount of cream to attain the desired consistency.

Stir in chopped nuts and remaining flaked coconut.

Spread between layers and on top and sides of cooled cake.

STRAWBERRY PRETZEL JELL-O SALAD (2)

Babs Sidorowicz

6 oz. strawberry Jell-O
2 cups boiling water
1 1/2 cup crushed pretzels
3/4 cup melted butter
1 T sugar
1 T ground cinnamon
8 oz. cream cheese
8 oz. whipped topping
3/4 cup sugar
1 1/2 lb. strawberries cut

Dissolve Jell-O in boiling water. Set aside to cool. Mix crushed pretzels, melted butter, sugar and cinnamon. Press into bottom of 9 x 13" glass pan. Bake at 400° for 8 to 10 minutes. Cool.

Beat cream cheese and sugar well. Add whipped topping and beat well. Spread on cooled pretzel mixture. Cool.

Arrange sliced strawberries on top. Slowly pour room temperature Jell-O on top. (Caution: this may cause strawberries to float out of your arrangement.)

Refrigerate for several hours or overnight until Jell-O is set. Slice and serve. Makes 12 to 24 servings.

COCONUT CAKE

Sue Eichelberger

1 18 oz. white cake mix
Bake according to package directions.

1 8 oz. Cool Whip
1 can cream of coconut
1 8 oz. package sweetened flake coconut

While cake is hot from the oven, punch holes with a fork all over the top. Stir cream of coconut and pour over hot cake.

Refrigerate 2 hours.

Spread Cool whip over cake and sprinkle coconut flakes.

Refrigerate 2 hours. Enjoy!

FLOWERS YOU CAN EAT

Learn How to Grow and Harvest Edible Flowers

Check out www.whatscookingamerica.net/edibleflowers for more information.

Nothing says "gourmet" like a sprinkling of colorful flower petals in a salad, a tiny bouquet of Johnny jump-ups on a birthday cake or a sautéed daylily bud in a stir fry.

Edible flowers are a fun and easy way to add color and flavor to all sorts of dishes — especially when you can pick them right from your own garden.

Most edible flowers are best eaten raw—simply pick and rinse with water. Flowers will taste and look their best right after they have opened, rather than after they have been open for a few days.

There are only two important things to remember about edible flowers: First is that not every flower is edible. In fact, some flowers can be poisonous. So stick with flowers on the list below, or do sufficient research to ensure your safety. The second caution is to avoid flowers that may have been sprayed with an insecticide, fungicide or herbicide. Because most edible flowers—except for roses—are easy to grow, this is rarely a problem. Be sure to take dandelions off the list unless you have **an organic lawn**.

For flowers that look good as well as taste good, consider some of the following:

Alliums. Chives, leeks and garlic are all delicious in green salads, potato and pasta salads and dips. Remove the central stem from the flower cluster to release the separate florets.

Nasturtiums. Blossoms have a peppery flavor like watercress. All colors and varieties are tasty in salads or as garnishes. Leaves can be eaten, too.

Marigolds. Use the tiny flowers of signet marigolds, such as Lemon Gem and Tangerine Gem. Their blossoms have a citrus taste.

Pansies and Johnny jump-ups. These flowers have a wintergreen flavor and are pretty on cakes and other desserts. Glaze with warmed jelly for a jeweled look.

Calendula. An easy and prolific edible flower that's easy to grow from seed right in the garden. Separate the petals from

the center of the flower and sprinkle the petals into salads. Colors range from pure yellow to orange and red. Remove spent flowers and the plants will bloom continuously from early summer into late fall.

Anise hyssop. If you like anise, this is the edible flower for you. Separate the florets and add them to sweet or savory dishes. Or use the full flowers to garnish a cheese plate.

Honeysuckle. The blossoms make a pretty addition to salads. Don't use the berries; they're poisonous.

Scarlet runner beans. Mix these bright-red flowers into salads, or in with steamed veggies.

Borage. This fuzzy-leaved herb has sky-blue flowers with a light cucumber taste. Add to fruit salads, green salads or freeze in ice cubes for cold drinks.

Bee balm. This member of the mint family has minty-tasting flowers. Colors range from bright red to purple and pink.

Chamomile. English chamomile has small, daisy-like flowers with an apple-like flavor. If you're allergic to ragweed, you might want to avoid chamomile.

Daylily. Daylily buds and flowers taste a bit like asparagus. They can be used as a garnish, or can be stuffed or made into fritters. Good in stir-fry, too.

Mint. Like bee balm, all flowers of the mint family are edible and have a pleasant taste. Try lemon balm or spearmint in iced tea.

Squash blossoms. Use these as you would daylilies (see above).

CAUTION: Not All Flowers Are Edible

Flowers that come from a florist, greenhouse or plant nursery should never be eaten. These flowers are not labeled as a food crop and **will probably contain dangerous pesticides**.

- Never eat a flower unless you are certain it is edible. If there is a doubt, do not consume it.
- Don't assume the flowers you see in food magazines are edible. Research the flower to make sure it is safe and not poisonous. Many flowers are used in food magazines simply as decoration.
- Known poisonous flowers include: lily of the valley, daffodils, calla lily, crocus, foxglove, rhododendron and azaleas.
- When you first start eating flowers, you should start slow. Non-poisonous flowers may slightly affect your digestive system if they are eaten in large quantities.