

Lemon Crinkle Cookies

1 pkg lemon cake mix	2 eggs
1/3 cup vegetable oil	zest of 2 lemons
2 tbs. lemon juice	1/2 tsp. Lemon extract
1/2 cup powdered sugar	

Preheat oven to 375F. Line baking sheet with parchment paper. Pour cake mix into a large bowl. Stir in eggs, oil, lemon zest, lemon juice, and lemon extract til well blended. Scoop spoonfuls of dough, form in balls and roll in powdered sugar to coat. Place on baking sheet. Bake for 10 min. or til the edges are lightly browned. Cool for 2-3 min. on the cookie sheet then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely.

Triple Layer Chocolate Cake with Blackout Filling

Filling

1/2 cup + 1 tbs granulated sugar	1 tsp corn syrup
1/2 cup + 2 tbs water	2/3 cups cocoa powder
3 tbs cornstarch	2 tbs butter (softened)
	1/4 tsp vanilla extract

Frosting

13 tbs butter	3.5 oz unsweetened chocolate
6 oz. semisweet chocolate (60 % cocoa)	3/4 cup granulated sugar
	1 pinch of salt
	5 large eggs

Cake

16 tbs butter (softened)	3 cups packed dark brown sugar
4 large eggs	2 tsp vanilla extract
3/4 cup cocoa powder (sifted)	1 tsp baking soda
1/2 tsp salt	3 cups all purpose cake flour
1 1/2 cups sour cream	1 1/2 cups hot water

Filling: In a small saucepan, combine sugar, corn syrup, cocoa powder and 1/2 cup water. Bring to boil over med-high heat, stirring to prevent scorching. In a separate bowl, blend cornstarch and 2 tbs water. Remove cocoa mixture from heat and add cornstarch mixture. Return to med. heat and bring to a boil whisking constantly. Boil about 1 min., til mixture is very thick. Remove from heat. Stir in butter and vanilla. Pour into a glass bowl; cover surface with plastic wrap to prevent film from forming. Cool completely and refrigerate until firm, or overnight.

Frosting: In top of a double boiler, combine butter and chocolates and heat til melted. Stir until combined. In a med. saucepan, whisk eggs; add sugar and salt to mixture, blending thoroughly. Whisk in a scant 1/2 cup water. Place over med. heat and bring to 160F on candy thermometer, stirring constantly to prevent sticking. Strain through fine sieve into a heat resistant container. Whisk into chocolate mixture til thoroughly combined. Cool completely then refrigerate until stiff enough to spread.

Cake: Preheat oven to 350F. Grease three 9-inch round cake pans with butter. In a large bowl, cream together butter and brown sugar on med. speed, about 5 minutes. In a separate bowl, combine eggs and vanilla; add to brown sugar mixture in two batches, mixing on med. speed until incorporated. Scrap bowl thoroughly; beat 1 minute on high speed. Sift together cocoa powder, baking soda and salt; blend with brown sugar mixture. Sift flour and add 1 cup to batter. Add 3/4 cup sour cream to batter; beat on low speed until combined. Alternate additions of flour and sour cream to batter. With mixer on low, slowly add hot water, beating until just combined. Scrape bowl thoroughly; beat batter on low speed about 20 seconds. Scrape bowl thoroughly once more. Divide batter evenly among the 3 pans. Bake 30 min. or until cake pulls away from sides of pan. Cool layers in pan about 30 min., then cool completely on wire racks. Wrap in plastic and refrigerate up to 24 hrs before assembling.

To assemble, level cake layers by slicing off their tops. Place bottom layer on a serving platter cut side up. Spread 1/2 cup filling on top. Place middle layer cut side down on top of bottom layer. Spread remaining filling on top. Place top layer cut side down on top of middle layer. Spread top and sides of cake with frosting.

Peanut Butter Cheesecake

Base

1 1/2 cups chocolate graham or animal cracker crumbs	3 tbs. sugar
	1/4 cup melted butter
	1 tbs. milk

Filling

8 oz cream cheese, softened	3/4 cup sugar
3/4 cup creamy peanut butter	3/4 cup milk
3 eggs	1/2 cup chopped peanuts (optional)

Preheat oven to 350F. For base, combine crumbs and 3 tbs sugar in a small bowl. Combine melted butter and one tablespoon milk. Stir into crumbs. Press lightly into a 9" spring form pan. Bake at 350F for 20 min. For filling, beat cream cheese and peanut butter in a small bowl at med. speed til well blended. Add 3/4 cup sugar, 3/4 cup milk and eggs. Beat well. Stir in chopped nuts (optional). Spread over baked crust. Return to oven. Bake 25 min. or until knife inserted in center comes out clean. Chill before serving.

Bittersweet Chocolate Cake

8 oz. bittersweet or semisweet chocolate (at least 70 % cocoa), coarsely chopped	6 tbs unsalted butter
2/3 cup all-purpose flour	1/2 tsp baking powder
2 large eggs	1/4 tsp salt
2 tsp vanilla extract	1/2 cup sugar
2 tsp cocoa powder infused with vanilla bean (optional)	

Preheat oven to 350F. Butter an 8-inch cake pan or spring form pan. Swirl flour to coat pan and tap out excess. Combine chocolate and butter in the top of a double boiler over simmering water. Stir occasionally until the chocolate is melted. Set aside to cool. Meanwhile, sift the flour, baking powder and salt into a bowl. Whisk together and set aside. Combine the eggs and vanilla extract in a large bowl and beat until foamy. Add the sugar and whisk about 1 min. or til light and frothy. Blend in the chocolate mixture. Add the flour mixture in 2 batches, whisking to blend completely. Pour the batter into the prepared pan. Bake 22 min. or until a skewer inserted 1" from the edge comes out clean. (When the skewer is inserted in the center, a bit of moist batter should cling to it.) Cool the cake on a rack for 10 min., then invert onto a plate. Inert back onto rack so the shiny side is up. Cool the cake completely before sliding it into a serving plate. Sift the infused cocoa over the top (optional).

Chocolate Cream Cheese

12 oz. pkg of Ghiradelli Semi-Sweet Chocolate chips	
3 lbs cream cheese	
1/8 teaspoon chili powder or cayenne pepper	Powdered sugar (optional)

In a double boiler, melt chocolate chips and set aside. In a large mixing bowl, beat cream cheese with a mixer until softened. Gradually add melted chocolate and chili powder scraping sides & bottom of bowl often. Taste. If a sweeter mix is desired, add powdered sugar in 1/2 cup increments until you reach the desired sweetness. Chill overnight and let flavors blend. Form into ball or log and roll in mini-chocolate chips or chopped pecans. Serve with English tea biscuits or a lightly sweetened cookie or cracker.

Black Raspberry Chocolate Upside-down Cake

1 pkg Chocolate Cake Mix
2 cups granulated sugar
4 cups fresh or frozen black raspberries

Sprinkle sugar into the bottom of two 9" round pans. Place berries evenly over sugar layer and set aside.

Prepare cake according to package directions. Pour into prepared pans and bake 25-30 minutes in a 350 oven. Remove from oven and cool in pan for 15 minutes. Run a knife around edge of cake pan. Invert cake and allow juices to drain from pan. Serve warm with vanilla ice cream or a dollop of whipped cream.