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Holiday fun for the whole family

(Family Features) Celebrating the holidays with family meals and activities is what the season is all about, and when those moments and at-home projects are kid-friendly, you can get the whole gang involved.

A simple weeknight at home during the holiday season can turn into family fun time starting with a recipe like these Reindeer Hot Dogs, a dish that requires little prep time and allows for help from little ones. Made with Gwaltney Hot Dogs, a tasty, kid-friendly dinner solution requires just a handful of easy-to-find ingredients.

Once everyone is finished eating and all have pitched in to help with cleanup, turn your attention to a family activity that transforms everyday supplies into this Wooden Snowman Ornament for seasonal decor to hang on a tree or elsewhere in the house.

Find more kid-friendly recipes to involve the whole family at gwaltneyfoods.com.

Reindeer Hot Dogs

Prep time: 20 minutes
Servings: 10

1 can refrigerated crescent rolls
1 package Gwaltney Hot Dogs
1 slice white cheese
black olives
ketchup

Heat oven according to crescent roll package directions.

Cut hot dogs into three equal sections.

Lay out crescent rolls and wrap around middle sections of hot dog pieces.

Cut triangles out of end sections to look like antlers.

Cut two slits at top of dough; press end hot dog pieces into slits.

Bake according to crescent roll package directions. Cut out small circles from sliced cheese for reindeer eyes. Cover cheese pieces with small slices of black olives for pupils. Add ketchup to hot dogs for red noses.



Wooden Snowman Ornament
Craft courtesy of Gwaltney

7 ice pop sticks
Hot glue gun
Foam paintbrush
Black paint

Glitter
White paint
Googly eyes
Colored craft foam
Sequins
Buttons
String

Line up six ice pop sticks



next to each other vertically.

Place line of hot glue horizontally across sticks, about one-third of the way down, and adhere seventh stick to create brim of snowman's hat.

Using black paint, brush top third (brim to top of hat) and let dry.

Mix glitter into white paint and brush lower two-thirds of sticks, creating snowman's face.

Use googly eyes, colored craft foam, sequins and buttons to create details of face and hat, such as mouth, nose and hat decor.

Glue piece of string to backside to hang ornament.

#14536
Source: Gwaltney

Ring in the holidays with regionally inspired recipes

(Family Features) When Thanksgiving hosts and their guests ponder must-have desserts, one of the most common favorites is an oh-so-delicious pie. More specifically, with nearly endless possibilities and its familiar festive flavor, pecan pie is one of America's most beloved holiday treats.

From nods to the Northeast's love of maple to celebrating sweet tastes of the West Coast with a citrus twist, the American Pecan Promotion Board is celebrating regionally inspired recipes. While the classic pecan pie is a hit at the Thanksgiving table, you can make it a perfect palette for creativity this year by enjoying local flavors that take the festivities up a notch.

For example, putting a festive spin on the holiday favorite can be as easy as this sweet and savory Bourbon Bacon Pecan Pie that's a mouthwatering take on tradition. Or, if you're in need of a quick snack everyone can share while mingling, opt for this Chocolate Cherry Pecan Snack Mix that takes just 20 minutes to prepare. It includes chocolate-glazed pecans tossed with yogurt-covered raisins, pretzels and dried tart cherries - a staple of the

North.

When it comes to pecans, great taste is just the beginning. They're the ultimate supernut due to their flavor versatility and nutritional benefits. Next time you're shopping for pie ingredients, remember you can pick up an extra bag to add to favorite appetizers, snacks, meals, desserts and more all holiday season long.

Find more regional recipe inspiration by visiting eatpecans.com.

Bourbon Bacon Pecan Pie

Recipe courtesy of Emily Caruso of "Jelly Toast" on behalf of the American Pecan Promotion Board

Prep time: 20 minutes
Cook time: 70 minutes
Servings: 10

1 pie dough (9 inches)
4 strips thick-cut bacon
1/2 cup dark corn syrup
1/2 cup light corn syrup
1 cup light brown sugar
2 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
2 tablespoons bourbon
3 large eggs
1/2 teaspoon salt
2 1/2 cups raw pecan halves

Place baking sheet in oven. Preheat oven to 350 F.

Gently line pie pan with rolled out pie dough. Press into edges and up sides. Use fingers or fork to create decorative edge. Set aside.

In skillet, fry bacon until crisp. Remove from pan and drain on paper towels then chop into small pieces and set aside. Reserve 1/4 cup bacon grease.

In large bowl, whisk dark corn syrup, light corn syrup, brown sugar, reserved bacon grease, butter and bourbon. Add eggs and salt; whisk until mixture is even. Fold in pecan halves and chopped bacon.

Pour mixture into pie crust and spread evenly with spatula. Gently cover edges of pie crust with aluminum foil. Place pie on preheated baking sheet and bake 60-70 minutes, or until pie is set in center. Remove pie from oven and cool completely before serving or chilling.

Notes: Pie can be made 1 day ahead and refrigerated overnight. Allow pie to come to room temperature before serving.



Chocolate Cherry Pecan Snack Mix

Recipe courtesy of Emily Caruso of "Jelly Toast" on behalf of the American Pecan Promotion Board

Prep time: 5 minutes
Cook time: 20 minutes
Servings: 20

1 large egg white
1/4 cup light brown sugar
1 1/2 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon water

1 1/2 cups pecan halves
1 cup dried tart cherries
1 cup small pretzels
3/4 cup yogurt-covered raisins

Heat oven to 325 F.

In bowl, whisk egg white, brown sugar, cocoa powder, vanilla extract and salt until well blended. Add water to thin mixture slightly. Fold in pecan halves until well coated.

Spread mixture onto parchment-lined baking sheet.

Bake 15-20 minutes, or until mixture is well set. Stir mixture several times during baking. Allow pecans to cool completely and transfer to bowl. Mix in dried cherries, pretzels and raisins.

Source: American Pecan Promotion Board

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Pet-friendly holiday entertaining

The holidays are a time to spend with friends and family. Celebrating and entertaining are large components of what makes Thanksgiving, Christmas, Chanukah, and New Years festivities so enjoyable. Holiday hosts with pets must consider companion animals when planning the festivities.

The holiday season brings added dangers for pets. The American Veterinary Association notes that, by keeping hazards in mind, pet owners can ensure their four-legged friends enjoy the season as much as everyone else.

- Secure the tree. Securely anchor the Christmas tree so that it won't tip over on anyone, including rambunctious pets. Also, stagnant tree stand water can grow bacteria. If a pet should drink the water, it may end up with nausea or diarrhea. Replenish the tree basin with fresh water daily.
- Skip the candles. When creat-



ing mood lighting, opt for electronic or battery-powered lights instead of open flames. Pets may knock over candles, and that can be an instant fire hazard.

- Keep food out of reach. Situ-

ate food buffets beyond the reach of hungry and curious animals. Warn guests to promptly throw out their leftovers so that dogs and cats do not sneak away with scraps that may cause stomach

upset or worse. Real Simple magazine warns that fatty foods can promote pancreatitis — a potentially dangerous inflammation of the pancreas that produces toxic enzymes and causes illness and dehydration. Small bones can get lodged in a pet's throat or intestines as well.

- Avoid artificial sweeteners. Exercise caution when baking sugar-free desserts. The artificial sweetener xylitol can cause dogs' blood pressure to drop to dangerously low levels. Xylitol is found in some toothpastes and gum, so tell overnight guests to keep their toiletries secure to avoid accidental exposure.
- Be cautious with cocktails. If the celebration will include alcoholic beverages, the ASPCA says to place unattended adult beverages where pets cannot reach them. Ingested alcohol can make pets ill, weak and even induce comas.

• Be picky about plants. Mistletoe, holly and poinsettias can be dangerous in pet-friendly households. These plants can cause gastrointestinal upset and may lead to other problems if ingested. Opt for artificial replicas instead. If guests bring flowers, confirm they are nontoxic to pets before putting them on display.

• Watch the door. Guests going in and out may inadvertently leave doors open. In such instances, pets who get scared or are door dashers may be able to escape the house. Put a note by the door to watch for escaping pets.

• Designate a safe space for pets. If the holiday hustle proves too much for cats, dogs, birds, and more, give the pet a safe, quiet spot away from the crowds.

Holiday hosts should factor in pet safety when they open their homes to guests.

PERFECTLY PUMPKIN

(Culinary.net) Fill your house with the aroma of fall with warm slices of this Pumpkin Loaf dolloped with butter.

Find more seasonal dessert recipes at Culinary.net.

Pumpkin Loaf

- Nonstick cooking spray
- 4 eggs
- 3 1/2 cups flour
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 sticks butter
- 2 cups sugar
- 1 can (15 ounces) pumpkin puree

- 1 cup chocolate chips
- 1 cup walnuts, chopped

Heat oven to 350 F.

Prepare loaf and muffin pans with nonstick cooking spray.

In bowl, whisk eggs. Set aside.

In separate bowl, sift flour, baking soda, cinnamon, nutmeg and salt together. Set aside.

In another bowl, cream butter and sugar. Add whisked eggs and mix until blended.

Alternately add flour mix-



ture and pumpkin puree to egg mixture, beating until blended. Fold in chocolate chips and walnuts.

Pour batter into loaf and muffin pans. Bake 40-45

minutes, or until toothpick inserted into center comes out clean.

Cool 10 minutes before removing from pans.



■ HAPPY HOLIDAYS ■

DID YOU KNOW?

The holiday season is rife with tradition. Some holiday traditions, such as holiday lighting displays, are impossible to miss, while others are more subtle and possibly even unknown to many celebrants. One tradition that falls into the latter category involves the placing of oranges into Christmas stockings. The origins of Christmas stockings are rooted in legend, and one of the more popular tales involves a widowed father of three beautiful girls. According to Smithsonian.com, this father was struggling to make ends meet and was concerned that his financial struggles would affect his daughters' ability to find a spouse. As the legend goes, St. Nicholas was wandering through the man's town and heard of his concerns. Recognizing that the man was unlikely to accept charity, St. Nicholas slid down the chimney of his house and placed three gold balls in the girls' recently laundered stockings, which were hanging by the fire to dry. The value of the gold balls, which were discovered the following morning, was enough to ensure the girls could eventually wed. So what does that have to do with oranges? Those who wanted to replicate the tale could not so easily come upon gold balls to place in stockings, so they chose something similar in appearance: oranges.



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DELECTABLY SWEET WHOOPIE PIES!



(Culinary.net) If you’re looking for an easy dessert, this Whoopie Pie recipe is the perfect way to cap off weeknight meals.

Find more dessert recipes at Culinary.net.

Whoopie Pies

- 1 box spice cake mix
- 1 1/2 cups apple butter
- 1/2 cup canola oil
- 2 eggs
- 8 ounces cream cheese
- 4 tablespoons butter
- 3 cups powdered sugar

- 2 tablespoons milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla

Heat oven to 350 F.

Line baking sheet with parchment paper.

In large bowl, whisk spice cake mix, apple butter, oil and eggs.

With ice cream scoop or large tablespoon, spoon batter into rounded heaps, about 2-3 inches in diameter, onto parchment paper. Space spooned batter 2 inches apart.

Bake 14 minutes. Let cool.

In large bowl, beat cream cheese, butter and powdered sugar until smooth. Add milk and vanilla; beat until blended.

Frost flat sides of pie halves and place halves together.

Refrigerate and store in sealed container.

DELICIOUS WHITE HOT CHOCOLATE

When it’s cold outside, start up the fireplace, get your favorite slippers on, wrap up in a warm blanket and snuggle on the couch with this delicious White Hot Chocolate. Find more recipes at Culinary.net.

White Hot Chocolate

- 3 cups Half & Half
- 2/3 cup white chocolate baking pieces
- 1 3 inch cinnamon stick
- 1/8 tsp ground nutmeg

- 1 tsp vanilla
- 1/4 tsp almond extract
- Ground Cinnamon (optional)
- Whipped Cream (optional)

1. In a medium saucepan combine 1/4 of the half & half, white chocolate baking pieces, cinnamon stick and nutmeg. Stir over low to medium heat until white chocolate is melted.
2. Add remaining half & half. Stir and cook until heated through. Remove from heat. Discard cinnamon

- stick.
3. Add in vanilla and almond extract. Stir until mixed through.
4. Pour into your favorite mug(s). Top with whipped cream and sprinkle with ground cinnamon.
5. Recipe adapted from Better Homes and Gardens Cookbook. Watch this video to see how to make this delicious recipe!



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Savor the season with comfort foods

(Family Features) Few things go together quite like the holidays and comforting seasonal recipes.

When time is short during the season's hustle and bustle but you're craving a savory meal, reach for an ingredient like READ German Potato Salad, which can be the shortcut you need to get Potato, Turkey and Veggie Casserole on the table quickly.

Dessert is a must during the holidays, and this Cranberry-Beet Bundt Cake with Orange-Walnut Glaze draws its unique flavor from Aunt Nellie's Beets and a sweet blend of spices and seasonings.

Find more seasonal recipes at READSalads.com and AuntNellies.com.

Cranberry-Beet Bundt Cake with Orange-Walnut Glaze

Prep time: 50 minutes
Cook time: 45 minutes
Servings: 16

1 jar (16 ounces) Aunt Nel-

lie's Sliced Pickled Beets, drained
2 1/4 cups granulated sugar, divided
1 1/4 cups dried sweetened cranberries
2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg
4 large eggs, room temperature
1 1/2 sticks (12 tablespoons) unsalted butter, softened
1/4 cup vegetable oil
1 orange, zest only, finely grated
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
1/2 cup buttermilk

Orange-Walnut Glaze:
2 1/2 cups confectioners' sugar, sifted
1 orange, zest only, finely grated
1/4 cup orange juice, plus additional (optional)
1 1/2 tablespoons unsalted

butter, melted
1 cup finely chopped walnuts

Heat oven to 350 F. Butter and lightly flour fluted 10-inch Bundt pan.

In food processor, puree beets and 1 cup sugar until smooth, about 30 seconds, scraping down sides of bowl once.

In small bowl, cover cranberries with hot water.

In medium mixing bowl, sift flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, cinnamon and nutmeg.

In large mixing bowl using electric mixer on medium-high, beat remaining sugar, eggs, butter and oil 2-3 minutes until light and smooth. Blend in beet puree. Add orange zest and vanilla; mix until blended. Add half of flour mixture; beat on low until smooth. Add buttermilk; beat on low until smooth then add remaining flour mixture, beating until blended. Drain cranberries; fold into batter.

Turn batter into prepared pan, spreading evenly. Bake on center rack 45-50 minutes. When done, cake will pull away from sides of pan and toothpick, inserted into center will come out clean.

Cool 15 minutes then invert cake onto rack.

To make Orange-Walnut Glaze: In large mixing bowl, combine sugar and orange zest. Add orange juice; whisk until smooth. Whisk in butter. Add



additional juice, if necessary. Spoon glaze over cake while still warm. Sprinkle with walnuts.

Potato, Turkey and Veggie Casserole
Prep time: 15 minutes
Cook time: 30 minutes
Servings: 6

1 tablespoon, plus 1 teaspoon, olive oil
3/4 pound extra-lean ground turkey breast
1/2 teaspoon dried thyme leaves
1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
1/2 teaspoon ground black

pepper
1/2 teaspoon salt (optional)
1 can (15 ounces) READ German Potato Salad
1/2 cup light sour cream
2 cups frozen, thawed or canned mixed vegetables, drained

nonstick cooking spray
1/2 cup bread crumbs

Heat oven to 350 F. In large, nonstick skillet over medium heat, heat 1 tablespoon oil. Add turkey, thyme, garlic powder, pepper and salt, if desired. Cook 5-7 minutes, until cooked through, stirring occasionally

and breaking turkey into large crumbles.

Stir in potato salad and sour cream. Add vegetables; stir to combine. Spray 2-quart casserole dish with nonstick cooking spray. Spoon in casserole mixture.

Toss together bread crumbs and remaining oil. Sprinkle over casserole. Bake 30 minutes, or until bubbly and heated through.

Substitution: Leftover chopped turkey (about 1 1/2 cups) can be cooked 2-3 minutes in skillet in place of ground turkey.

#14529Source: Seneca Foods



Easy holiday hosting and toasting

(Family Features) If the very notion of holiday hosting has you feeling a bit overwhelmed, get organized with these simple ideas that can help you serve up a successful holiday celebration.

Entertainment: Ensure guests enjoy a good time by offering entertainment that is suitable for their personality types. If your guests are more drawn to energetic activities, choose light-hearted, competitive games like charades. For guests who are more laid back, organize classic board games. There are many popular games available in special holiday editions for extra-festive fun. You can also simply play holiday movies and music in the background for crowds that would rather just mingle.

Beverages: Stock up on refreshments all ages can enjoy. Keep a kid-friendly favorite like lemonade on hand, and tea is a traditionally well-received option for the grownups. Put a special holiday touch on your drink menu with a recipe like this Holiday Hot Tea featuring Milo's Famous Sweet Tea, which has been fresh brewed from custom-blended tea leaves with no added acids or preservatives for generations.

Favors: Send guests home with a sweet memory of the event, such as an ornament that connects to the party's theme or a bag of seasonal treats like homemade cookies or candy to nibble on during the trip back home.

Simple Snacks: Building your menu around simple snacks and finger foods guests can nibble on while they mingle is perfectly acceptable for almost any type of holiday gathering. Include options that can satisfy all the taste buds. You can even combine sweet and sour with a seasonal crowd-pleaser like this Lemonade Cranberry Orange Bread, which draws its flavor from a secret ingredient: Milo's All Natural Lemonade.

Find more holiday hosting ideas and recipes at drinkmilos.com.

Lemonade Cranberry Orange Bread

Prep time: 15 minutes
Cook time: 1 hour
Servings: 8

1 can cranberry sauce
3/4 cup Milo's All Natural Lemonade
1 orange, zest only
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
1 egg
2 cups flour
1 cup sugar
1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon baking soda

Heat oven to 350 F. In large bowl, mash cranberry sauce into small pieces. Add lemonade, orange zest, vegetable oil and egg; mix until blended.

In separate bowl, combine flour, sugar, baking powder, salt and baking soda. Combine wet and dry ingredients; mix until batter is formed.

Pour batter into greased loaf pan. Bake 1 hour. Let cool 20 minutes before slicing and serving.

Holiday Hot Tea

Prep time: 5 minutes
Cook time: 2 hours, 30 minutes
Servings: 12

12 cups Milo's Famous Sweet Tea
2 cans (12 ounces each) frozen limeade juice concentrate
1 orange, thinly sliced, plus additional for garnish (optional)

12 whole cloves
4 cinnamon sticks
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 cup fresh cranberries
1 cup ginger ale
raw sugar, for garnish (optional)

In large slow-cooker, combine sweet tea, limeade concentrate, orange slices, cloves, cinnamon sticks, vanilla, cranberries and ginger ale; stir.

Heat on high 30 minutes then reduce heat to low for 2 hours, or heat on low 2 hours then reduce setting to warm overnight.

Invert moistened glass rims in sugar then fit orange slice over rim, if desired.

Note: For easier serving, place cloves in tea ball or double layer of coffee filters sealed with kitchen twine.

Photo courtesy of Getty Images (Lemonade Cranberry Orange Bread#14555 Source: Milo's Tea Company

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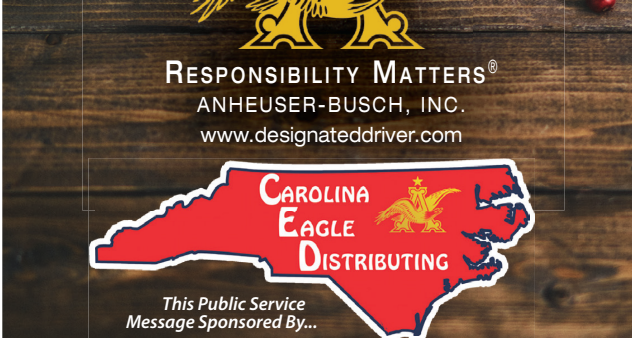
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