

FOOD

The Estherville Daily News is proud to bring you the Food page every Tuesday. If you know anyone who should be featured on this page, please send their names and why you think they should be featured to: Managing editor, 10 N. Seventh St., Estherville, 51334 or editor@esthervilledailynews.com

EXTREMELY INTOXICATING

BY MARY ANN MENENDEZ

“X” marks the spot.



also alerts the moving public to be aware of impending movement on railroad tracks that intersect with city streets and country roads.

In the realm of food, there are recipes and food words beginning with the letter X, but not in our native tongue. It seems that only Chinese and Greeks have the upper hand with X recipes.

It is the Greek letter X (Chi) that is the first letter in Christos for Christ. It is this Greek “X” that use to abbreviate the day of his birth to Xmas.

So to avoid any interruptions in my alphabetical listing of recipes, I decided to attribute today’s line-up to one ingredient, or food group in some circles, that in any language is eXciting, eXhilerating and eXceptional - CHOCOLATE. You were thinking of something else?

I remembered my departed Mom as I worked on this column. She was a true chocoholic and it enjoyed it plain, with nuts, fruits and in pies, cookies and cakes, and fudge and every other which way. Nothing put a bigger smile on her face than those times when Dad came home with a box of chocolates for her. For special occasions, she would whip up Chocolate Mayonnaise Cake. It is very moist and very chocolatey. Her favorite ice cream sundae was strawberries on top of chocolate ice cream -- the darker the better.

And one more note on native tongues and foods beginning with the letter X. As I wound up my research on chocolate recipes, I did find the written word used by the Aztecs for chocolate. Believe it or not, it’s Xocolatl! So, I was right on in targeting chocolate for today’s recipe line-up!

Chocolate is a powerful phenomenon in any language. It is intoXicating to the point of being addictive. There are folks who have to have chocolate every day. It’s the icing on the cake, if you will. As we say goodbye to Summer 2009, let’s welcome the autumnal days with a bit of chocolate, as you like it.

Chocolate Pizza

- 1 refrigerated uncooked pie crust
- 1 cup vanilla wafer crumbs (22 to 24 cookies)
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 (14 ounce) can sweetened condensed milk
- 1/3 cup chopped peanuts
- Three-fourths cup candy coated chocolate pieces

Chocolate Glaze:

- 1/3 cup milk chocolate pieces
- 2 teaspoons vegetable shortening

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Roll out pie crust to 13 inches. Press in bottom and up sides of ungreased 12-inch pizza pan. Bake in preheated oven 10 minutes.

Meanwhile, combine cookie crumbs, baking powder and condensed milk. Stir in peanuts. Pour over partially baked crust. Sprinkle top with candy.

Bake an additional 14 to 16 minutes or until set. Cool in pan. With tip of teaspoon, drizzle chocolate glaze over cooled filling. Cut into thin wedges.

Chocolate Glaze:

Heat chocolate pieces and shortening. Stir until smooth.

Chocolate Mousse Bars

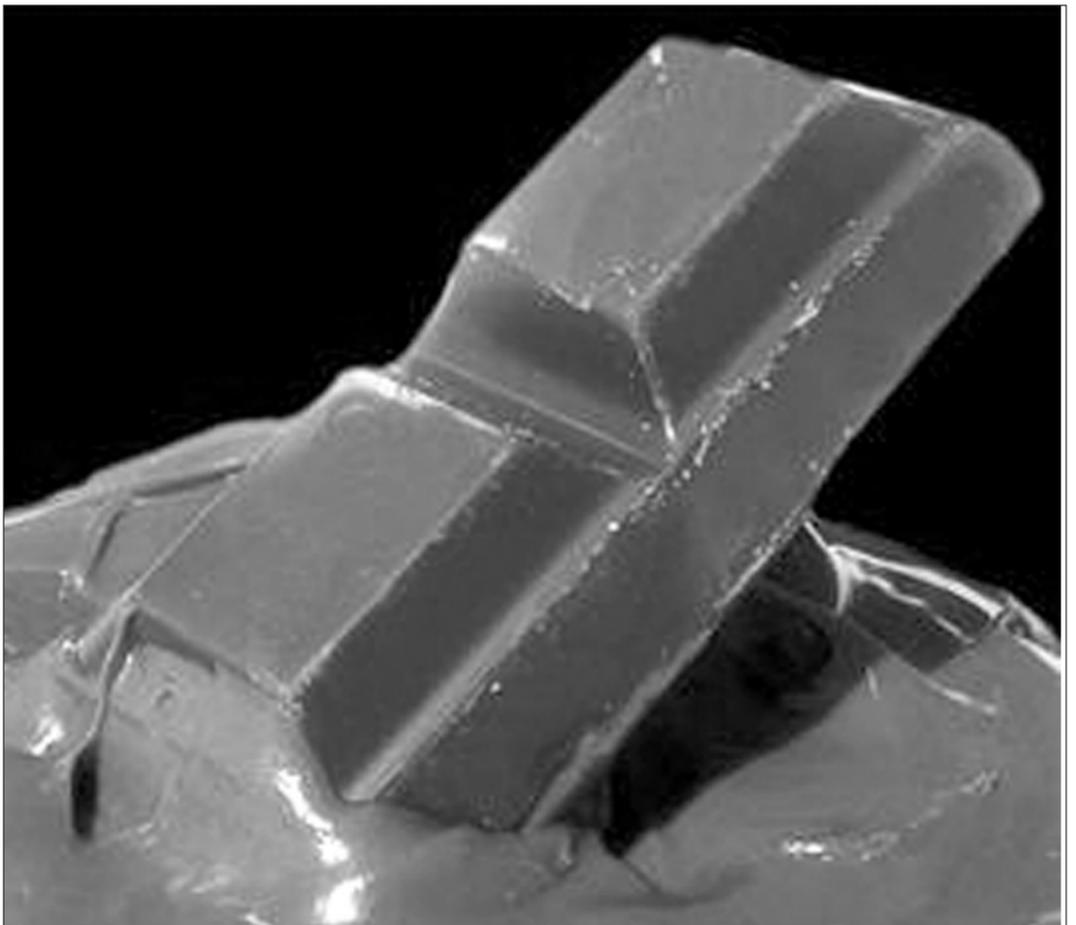
- 1 and 1/2 cups vanilla wafer crumbs (about 40 wafers)
- 1/4 cup butter, melted
- Three-fourths heavy whipping cream
- 1 cup milk chocolate chips
- 3 eggs
- 1/3 cup sugar
- One-eighth teaspoon salt

Chocolate Topping:

- 1/2 cup milk chocolate chips
- 1 tablespoon shortening

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Line an 8 by 8 by 2-inch baking pan with non-stick foil. Combine vanilla wafer crumbs with melted butter until well mixed. Press into the bottom of the baking pan. Bake for 10 minutes. In a double boiler, warm whipping cream and chocolate chips. Stir until melted and smooth. Remove top of double boiler to a trivet or pad and let chocolate cool at least 5 minutes. It needs to remain lukewarm and liquid. In a large bowl, beat eggs, sugar and salt until light and foamy. While constantly stirring, gradually add melted chocolate to the egg mixture. Pour mousse mixture into baking pan on top of the baked crust. Bake 25 to 35 minutes. Center should be slightly puffed up and should spring back when lightly touched. Set on a rack to cool at least 15 minutes while making the chocolate topping. To make topping, melt chocolate chips and shortening in the top of a double boiler, stirring until smooth. Spread on top of cooled mousse bars. Refrigerate at least two hours to firm up before cutting into bars and serving. Refrigerate leftovers.



Choco-Mallo PB Bars

- 1 stick butter, melted, cooled to room temperature
- 1 box (18.25 ounces) dark chocolate cake mix
- 1 (16 ounces) jar marshmallow fluff
- 1 cup peanut butter, chunky or smooth

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line a 9 x 13-inch baking pan with non-stick foil. In a large bowl, combine cake mix and melted butter with a fork until crumbly. Remove three-fourths cup and set aside. Spread the remainder of the cake mix crumbles evenly over the bottom of the prepared baking pan. Remove lid of marshmallow fluff and warm in the microwave on High for 30 seconds. Drop dollops of marshmallow fluff evenly over the cake mix crumbles. Gently smooth marshmallow fluff over the crumbles, without dislodging the bottom layer. Warm the peanut butter in the microwave 30 seconds on High. Drizzle evenly over the marshmallow layer. Sprinkle reserved cake mix crumbles over the top of the top layer. Bake 15 to 20 minutes, until marshmallow pops through and begins to lightly brown. Cool completely before cutting. These are very rich, like candy bars, so cut them small. Store covered at room temperature.



Chocolate Truffle Bites

- 1 package (18.25 ounces) dark chocolate cake mix
- 1/4 cup special dark powdered cocoa
- 1 1/3 cups water
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 3 large eggs, lightly beaten
- 1 container (16 ounces) prepared chocolate frosting
- 1 cup peanut butter chips
- 1 package (about 16 ounces) white or chocolate bark coating mix
- Chocolate sprinkles for decoration, optional

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line a 9 by 13-inch baking pan with nonstick foil. Whisk together dry cake mix and cocoa powder. Add water, vegetable oil, and eggs, mixing only until combined. Spread in prepared pan and bake for 35 minutes. Let cool to room temperature. Crumble the cooled cake into a large mixing bowl. Stir in frosting and peanut butter chips by hand. Shape into 1-inch balls. Place cake balls on a cookie sheet and freeze until solid. Melt bark coating pieces according to package directions. Dip cake balls in coating mix and place on a cookie sheet to let coating set. If using chocolate sprinkles, dip eight cake balls at a time and immediately sprinkle before the coating sets so the sprinkles will adhere. Refrigerate cake ball truffles until ready to serve. Refrigerate leftovers.

Chocolate Chip Drops

- 1 stick butter
- 1/3 cup powdered sugar
- 1/4 vanilla extract
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- One-eighth teaspoon salt
- 1 cup mini chocolate chips
- Additional powdered sugar for coating (about 1 cup)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line cookie sheets with parchment paper. In a large bowl, cream butter, sugar, and vanilla extract together on low speed until smooth. Mix flour and salt together in a separate bowl. Add flour mixture to butter mixture, half at a time, and mix until combined. Fold in chocolate chips by hand until evenly distributed. Chill dough for 30 to 45 minutes to firm up. Roll dough into balls about the diameter of a nickel. Place on lined cookie sheets about 1 inch apart. Bake for 15 to 20 minutes until they just barely begin to brown at the edges. Pour powdered sugar into a bowl. Roll cookie nuggets in powdered sugar while still warm and place on a rack to cool completely before storing. Recipe may be doubled – a good idea as these nuggets disappear quickly!

Chocolate Mayonnaise Cake

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup cocoa
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- 1 cup water
- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

In a large mixing bowl, combine flour, sugar, cocoa and baking soda. Add water, mayonnaise and vanilla; beat at medium speed until thoroughly combined. Pour into a greased 9-inch square pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 30-35 minutes or until cake tests done. Cool completely. Frost with favorite chocolate frosting.

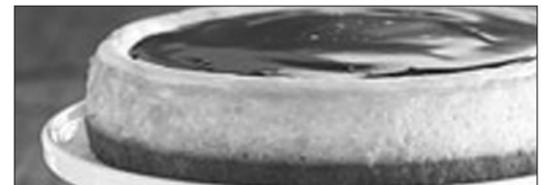
Boston Cream Cheesecake

- 1 pkg. (1-layer size) yellow cake mix
- 3 eight-ounce packages cream cheese, softened
- Three-fourths cup sugar
- 2 teaspoons vanilla, divided
- 3/4 cup sour cream
- 3 eggs
- 2 squares unsweetened chocolate
- 3 tablespoons milk
- 2 tablespoons butter or margarine
- 1 cup powdered sugar

Grease bottom of 9-inch spring form pan. Prepare cake batter as directed on package; pour into prepared pan. Bake at 325 degrees for 25 minutes if using a silver spring form pan. (Bake at 300 degrees for 20 minutes if using a dark nonstick spring form pan.) Cool. Beat cream cheese, granulated sugar and 1 teaspoon of the vanilla in large bowl with electric mixer on medium speed until well blended. Add sour cream; mix well. Add eggs, 1 at a time, mixing on low speed after each addition just until blended. Pour over cake layer in pan.

Bake at 325 degrees for 40 to 45 minutes or until center is almost set if using a silver spring form pan. (Bake at 300 degrees for 40 to 45 minutes or until center is almost set if using a dark nonstick springform pan.) Run knife or metal spatula around rim of pan to loosen cake; cool before removing rim of pan.

Place chocolate squares, milk and butter in medium microwavable bowl. Microwave on HIGH 2 minutes or until butter is melted, stirring after 1 minute. Stir until chocolate is completely melted. Add powdered sugar and remaining 1 teaspoon vanilla; mix well. Spread over cooled cheesecake. Refrigerate 4 hours or overnight. Refrigerate leftovers.



Whole-grain pasta is getting easier to love

JIM ROMANOFF
FOR THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Not so long ago, whole-wheat pasta tasted too much like the boxes it came in.

Much has changed. At many grocers, the whole-wheat or multigrain pasta selection can take up more than a quarter of the section, and the quality and taste have improved considerably.

This is good news because whole-grain pastas, compared to their white-flour equivalents, are a much better source of the fiber and nutrients that get stripped away when grains are refined.

Whole-grain pasta with shrimp, tomatoes and feta cheese

Start to finish: 50 minutes (30 minutes active); **Servings:** 6

- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 medium yellow onion, chopped
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped garlic
- 28-ounce can whole tomatoes, chopped, with 2/3 cup of the juice reserved
- 1/2 cup dry white wine
- 3 tablespoons chopped flat-leaf parsley, divided

- 1/2 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1 pound medium raw shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 12 black olives, coarsely chopped
- 1/2 teaspoon grated lemon zest
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- Ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 pound whole-grain linguine
- 1/2 cup crumbled feta cheese

In a large saucepan over medium, heat the oil. Add the onion and saute until it begins to color, about 4 minutes. Add the garlic and stir for 30 seconds more.

Add the tomatoes with reserved juice, wine, 2 tablespoons of the parsley and the oregano. Bring to a simmer. Cook over low, stirring occasionally, for 20 minutes.

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. While the water heats, add the shrimp, olives and lemon zest to the tomato sauce and simmer until the shrimp are opaque at the center, about 3 to 5 minutes. Season with salt and pepper.

Cook the linguine according to package directions. Drain and serve topped with the sauce and sprinkled with the feta cheese and the remaining 1 tablespoon of chopped parsley.

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