

## **LOVE STARTS IN THE KITCHEN!**

**A HEALTHY HALLOWEEN? IT'S DOABLE WITH THESE TREASURED RECIPES SHARED BY FRIENDS AND FAMILY.**

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### **SPICY VAMPIRE SNACK MIX**

It's the garlic that keeps them away!

1-1/2 cups each: bite size crispy corn cereal squares, rice squares and wheat squares

1 cup small pretzels

1 cup dry roasted peanuts

1/3 cup fat free margarine, melted

2 tablespoons low sodium soy or bit more to taste

1-1/2 to 2 teaspoons chili powder or more to taste

1/2 teaspoon garlic powder or more to taste

Dash cayenne pepper (opt)

Preheat oven to 300.

Toss cereal, pretzels and nuts together in a baggie or bowl. Combine everything else. Pour over cereal mixture and shake or stir to coat. Put on cookie sheet or jelly roll pan in single layer. Bake about 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Remove from oven; let cool. Serves 20 with 1/4 cup servings.

### **GOBLIN GORP**

A take-off on a classic Sloppy Joe recipe, this is great when the kids are having a party. Adults love this, too. The filling can be done ahead and reheated. Let the kids decorate their own buns! Use reduced fat or whole wheat buns for a healthy twist.

#### **Filling:**

1 pound very lean ground beef or poultry

1/4 cup chopped onion or more to taste

1 bottle, approx. 12 oz, Chili Sauce or Sloppy Joe sauce

2-4 tablespoons Splenda or more to taste

1 small diced bell pepper (opt)

Saute beef and onion until beef is cooked. Drain and add remaining ingredients. Stir to heat thoroughly. Pile on buns. Serves 4-6.

#### **Fun Buns:**

4-6 Hamburger Buns

Decorations: sliced stuffed green olives, sliced black olives, pepperoncini or bell pepper slices, Anaheim pepper slices, pretzel sticks, curly parsley, carrot strips, etc.

Make faces on buns: Use olives for eyes, bell pepper slices for brows, pepperoncini or black olive wedges for nose, carrot strips or sliced stuffed green olives for ears, curly parsley for hair, or use pretzel sticks for “shocked” hair.

### **SOUTH-OF-THE BORDER DIP**

I like to serve this with reduced fat tortilla chips or raw veggies. Double for a large crowd and if you like it spicier, go ahead and add more seasoning mix.

1/2 cup light or fat free mayonnaise

1 pouch taco seasoning mix, about 1-1/4 oz

1/2 teaspoon cumin

Shake of powdered garlic

1 cup reduced fat or nonfat sour cream

1 can fat free refried beans

1 bunch green onions, sliced thin

Couple of tomatoes, chopped

1 cup reduced fat shredded sharp Cheddar

1/4 cup chopped olives – either green or black (opt)

Mix the mayo, taco seasoning, cumin, garlic and sour cream together. Spread beans on shallow platter, then spread mayo mixture on top. Sprinkle with tomatoes, onions and cheddar. Top with olives if using. Serves 12-15

## **HERBED PITA WEDGES**

Olive oil cooking spray  
4 whole wheat pitas or garlic & oregano pitas  
Garlic powder  
Dry Italian seasoning

Preheat oven to 350.

Cut pitas in half (use scissors). Open up pockets and cut each half into 2 half circles. Stack two at a time then cut into 3 wedges. You'll have 12 wedges from each whole pita. Spray inside of the inside of each pita wedge. Place on baking sheet, sprayed side up, in single layer. Sprinkle herb seasoning over each wedge and very, very lightly, add a dash of garlic powder. Bake about 10-15 minutes, until golden and crispy. Store in airtight container. Serves 10-12.

## **VERY VEGGIE CHILI**

Salsa to the rescue!  
1 tablespoon Olive oil cooking spray or olive oil  
1 large onion, chopped  
1-3 teaspoons garlic, minced  
28 oz diced tomatoes or tomatoes with chilies  
1 cup salsa or more to taste  
2-3 teaspoons chili powder, or less, or more, to taste  
1-3/4 teaspoons cumin, or more to taste  
2 cans favorite beans, drained – I like chick peas and black beans  
1 large bell pepper, chopped  
1 nice sized zucchini, chunked up  
1 nice sized yellow squash, chunked up (or just use two zucchini)  
Salt to taste

Film pan with olive oil, or put onions and garlic in pan and then spray with cooking spray. Cook for a couple of minutes and then add rest of ingredients. Bring to a boil and then simmer about 20 minutes, or until veggies are tender. Serve with low fat cheddar. Serves 16, 1/2 cup servings, or about 8 with 1 cup servings

## **TOPSY TURVY BLACK NIGHT CAKE**

Remember the upside down pudding cakes? Magically, the cake that's poured in first rises to the top, while the pudding sinks! Here's a healthy version guaranteed to scare away any witches! Wait a minute, this cake is so good it may bring them in.....to your house!

### **Cake:**

1 cup flour  
3/4 Splenda brown sugar blend or 3/4 cup brown sugar  
1 tablespoon plus 2 teaspoons cocoa, unsweetened  
2 teaspoons baking powder  
Dash salt  
1/2 cup fat free milk  
2 tablespoons

### **Pudding:**

1 cup Splenda brown sugar blend or brown sugar  
1/4 cup cocoa, unsweetened  
1-3/4 cups boiling water

Preheat oven to 350.

### **To prepare cake batter:**

Whisk together dry ingredients. Mix milk and oil together and stir into flour mixture until blended. Pour into sprayed 8x8 baking dish. Spread evenly.

### **For pudding:**

Mix together brown sugar and cocoa. Sprinkle over batter. Pour boiling water over top very gently but don't stir. Bake about 35-40 minutes or until top feels a bit dry. Remove and let stand 5 minutes before serving. Dig deep so each serving gets sauce from bottom of pan. Serves 8-10.

## **YOU'RE FRUITY PINEAPPLE DIP**

1 cup lemon fat free yogurt sweetened to taste with stevia or sugar substitute (find Stevia in **Natural Foods**)  
3-4 tablespoons frozen pineapple juice concentrate  
1 tablespoon fat free sour cream

Mix together and chill 30 minutes or so. Serve with fresh fruit. Serves 10-12.

- **TIPS FROM RITA'S KITCHEN:**

- When trying to cut fat but still add flavor, don't spray your pan with cooking spray. Instead, spray the veggies, like onions and garlic. That way, you get better flavor without having the nonstick spray bond to the bottom of your pan.
- Read labels! Some ground poultry products contain a lot of fat, so read labels!

**GUESS WHO'S COMING TO DINNER WITH RITA?  
JOIN ME AND TYLER FLORENCE FROM THE FOOD NETWORK AT MACY'S  
KENWOOD STORE ON WED NOVEMBER 8 at 6:30 FOR A FREE COOKING  
CLASS. TYLER WILL BE SHARING RECIPES AND STORIES AND HE'LL BE  
AUTOGRAPHING HIS COOKBOOK! YOU'LL GET SAMPLINGS, PLUS  
SOME LUCKY PARTICIPANTS WILL WIN PRIZES! CALL (513) 247-6553  
FOR RESERVATIONS. SEATING IS LIMITED.**

**TIPS FROM RITA'S HERB GARDEN: TIME TO CLEAN UP!**

When cleaning up the herb garden, remember that perennial herbs should not be cut back more than a third so they have enough strength to survive the winter. I like to mulch with pine needles after the cold weather is here to stay. And if the weather stays below freezing, and all of a sudden, we have a few warm days (like our Midwestern weather tends to give us) your plants may heave a bit out of the ground. That's due to freezing/thawing. Gently push them back down into the earth. Also remember for herbs wintering over in the garage or sometimes the house, that they may lose very little water and growth may be minimal, so don't overwater. Water sparingly if the soil is dry beyond your first knuckle.