

# Good things come in small packages

A homemade gift from the kitchen is especially meaningful at Christmas. The folks at "Chocolates Unlimited" say that homemade candy is easier to make than cookies and can be just as creative. They suggest two easy, no-fail recipes:

## PEANUT BUTTER CHOCOLATES

Take 1/2 lb. summer coating wafers (milk chocolate flavored) and melt in a double boiler over hot tap water (not on stove). Add one heaping tablespoon peanut butter. Pour into ungreased brownie pan or plastic candy mold. Tap pan lightly on table several times to remove air bubbles. Set in refrigerator approximately 15-20 minutes until cool. If using a brownie pan, cut in squares and then remove with knife. If using a plastic mold, flex mold to remove candy. Enjoy!

## PEANUT BUTTER BALLS

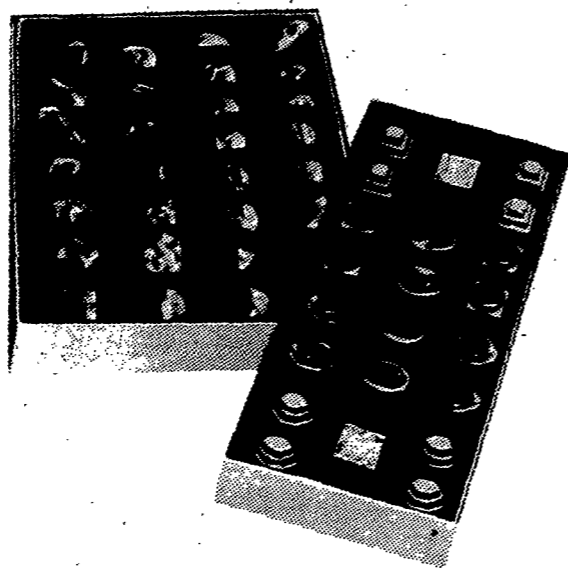
- 1 18-oz. jar, peanut butter
- 1 stick melted butter or margarine
- 1 pound fondant or confectionary sugar

Mix peanut butter and melted butter together with spoon. Add fondant and knead by hand until smooth. (This can be kept in the refrigerator for weeks if you don't want to use it all at once, as it makes a large batch.) Roll in balls and dip in melted summer coating wafers. (Melt in double boiler over hot tap water — do not put on stove.) Enjoy!

## MERINGUE MUSHROOMS

- 4 egg whites, at room temperature
- 1/4 tsp. cream of tartar
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1/4 tsp. almond extract
- 1 c. sugar
- 1/2 c. semisweet-chocolate pieces
- Cocoa for garnish

Preheat oven to 225° F. Cover two cookie sheets with aluminum foil.



In large bowl with mixer at high speed, beat egg whites, cream of tartar and extracts until foamy.

Gradually beat in sugar, 2 T. at a time, beating well after each addition, until sugar is completely dissolved. Whites should stand in stiff glossy peaks.

Spoon meringue into large pastry bag fitted with 1/2" plain tip.

Make stems first: Hold bag straight (vertically) with tip close to foil.

Gently squeeze out meringue while slowly lifting bag straight up to make a 1 1/2" stem.

Make 30 stems. Place on upper rack in oven.

Use remaining meringue to make caps: Hold pastry bag vertically and with tip close to foil (1/4"), gently squeeze a mound of meringue about the size of a silver dollar.

If necessary, smooth tops of caps: Dip finger lightly in cold water and pat gently.

Make 30 caps. Place caps on lower oven rack.

Bake meringues for 1 hour.

Turn oven off and let meringues dry out, door ajar, 1 hour longer.

To assemble: In small sauce pan over low heat, melt chocolate. With small knife, cut tip of stems to make flat surface.

Using a small spatula, spread a thin coat of chocolate on underside of cap and place the trimmed end of stem in chocolate in center.

Allow to dry on wire rack.

Just before serving, sprinkle top of each with a little cocoa. Makes 30 mushrooms.

• Brunch—wholesome, healthy and a terrific way to start a friendly Sunday morning! Try this recipe for GINGERED FRUIT COMPOTE.

## GINGERED FRUIT COMPOTE

Mince enough ginger from 1 jar preserved ginger in syrup to make 4 tsp.

In bowl, combine 6 T. lime juice, 1/4 tsp. salt, minced ginger and 6 T. syrup from ginger.

Peel and slice 2 papayas. Wash and hull 1 pint strawberries.

Combine syrup with fruit; cover and refrigerate until ready to serve.

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## HAVE A MERRY '80s CHRISTMAS

A realistic look at Christmas yields some unusual holiday suggestions. Nancy Evans, *Glamour Magazine's* book columnist, has these clues for you.

When you live in a studio apartment so small you can barely turn around without bumping into the foldup couch or the collapsible dining table or the ever-spidering spider plant, you'd probably never dream of having a Christmas bash. Try these tips:

- Clean your apartment of all the clutter. Put all sundries in the oven and keep extra party supplies in the bathtub or under the bed.

- Make friends with your super. Give him his present early this year, and ask if you can use the basement to store some of your belongings.

- Stagger the arrival time on the invitations to avoid too much of a crowd.

If you're a single parent, fill the house with relatives, friends and neighbors to create a sense of warmth and "family" for your kids.

Get them involved with the invitation list, food and decorations and invite their friends as well as your own to the party.

Make time for bedtime stories—with beautifully illustrated children's books.

And, don't forget to ask if you can help your kids think of presents for their Dad and their grandparents on his side.

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