

# SPIKED GOODS

Using booze to spice up traditional baking BY AMANDA BURHOP

**Y**esterday I had my first sip of booze in almost a year. It wasn't even hard liquor, just white wine. But the second it rushed through my throat, warming and burning as it went, I was instantly reminded of why I don't drink. I have no tolerance, and I'm not all that interested in building one. But over the course of my transition into a culinary domestic goddess, I've found that the enticing substance can be used for good.

Beyond Jell-O shooters, that college party staple, alcohol is used in a number of baking recipes that are ideal for those who prefer flavor over intoxication. As in cooking, many recipes call for a hint of wine while others take a bolder approach with the use of heavy liquors like cognac or bourbon. There's not enough alcohol in these recipes to produce even a mild buzz, but they challenge the traditionally sweet baked good by offering a milder, almost bitter aftertaste that's sure to please even sweet-tooth skeptics. Here are just two of my favorite booze-injected baking recipes:

## ORANGE CORNMEAL CAKE

Wondering what I was doing with the white wine mentioned earlier? This citrus cake, based on a recipe from Everyday Baking ([www.pbs.org/everydayfood/baking](http://www.pbs.org/everydayfood/baking)), calls for a dry white wine to fuse with the bitterness of grated orange peel. Much like a coffee cake, this one is topped with a crusty, sweet outer shell that encases a moist, wine-infused center.

### INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 2 large eggs
- 1/2 cup dry white wine (I used Hinman Vineyards)
- 1 1/4 cup flour
- 1/2 cup yellow cornmeal
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. salt
- Grated zest of 1 orange
- 1 cup sugar

After preheating the oven to 375 degrees, coat an 8 inch cake pan with olive oil. The pan

also needs to be lined with wax paper, which you then coat with another layer of olive oil.

In a large bowl, mix the oil, eggs, sugar and wine. Then add the flour, cornmeal, baking powder and salt. Grate the orange over the bowl, mixing occasionally. I also used lemon zest for added tartness.

Once it's mixed, pour batter into the pan and coat with 1/4 cup white sugar.

Bake for 35 to 40 minutes, and let cool in pan for 20 more minutes. Don't forget about the wax paper when you're ready to eat. The cake is too good to let waxy paper get in the way.

## CHOCOLATE TRUFFLE

Maybe I never found an affinity for straight booze because of my love for all things chocolate. We can only have so many vices, right? The truffle has many good qualities, among them its nice presentation and small size. Also, you can flavor them any way you please. Choosing an alcohol to accompany your chocolate is a personal decision. Because I'm devoted to the sweet, savory punch of chocolate, my first choice is Kahlua, but an assortment of wines, rum, brandy or cognac have also been recommended with this recipe, which is based on one from [www.joyofbaking.com](http://www.joyofbaking.com)

### INGREDIENTS

- 8 ounces of semisweet or bitter-sweet chocolate. There's no sugar added in this recipe, so go semi-sweet if you don't like bitter chocolate.
- 3/4 cup heavy whipping cream
- 2 Tbsp. unsalted butter
- 2 Tbsp. alcohol of your choosing

Chop chocolate into small segments and place in stainless steel bowl.

Bring cream and butter to a boil, and then pour the mixture over the chocolate. Let it sit for five minutes while the chocolate softens. Whisk mixture gently and add alcohol. The mixture needs to cool in the refrigerator for several hours. Once solid, the chocolate can be rolled into balls and coated. I recommend sifting a sweet cocoa powder onto the truffles. Return the truffles to the fridge and cool until firm. Enjoy! ■

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