FOOD

Christmas Tree-**Trimming Party**

Light the fire, stir the cocoa and sing along with the carolers: it's time to decorate the tree! Mini French dip sandwiches, little individual cheese balls, and bacon-cheddar mushrooms will keep your decorating crew well-fed. For the finale, set out the delicious chocolate earthquake cake and commence with a ceremonial lighting of the tree.



Bacon Cheddar Stuffed Mushrooms



Ingredients

- · 3 slices bacon
- · 8 portabella mushrooms
- · 1 Tbs. butter
- · 1 Tbs. chopped onion
- 3/4 cup shredded Cheddar cheese
- · 1/4 cup bread crumbs

"With their

small cheese balls

creamy, nutty

flavor, these

work great for

entertaining!"

"This appetizer is an impressive and irresistible accompaniment to any meal." 1. Place bacon in a large, deep skillet. Cook over medium high heat until evenly brown. 2. Drain, dice and set aside.

- 3. Preheat oven to 400 degrees F (200 degrees C). 4. Remove mushroom stems. Set aside caps. Chop the
- 5. In a large saucepan over medium heat, melt the butter. Slowly cook and stir the chopped stems and onion until the onion is soft. Remove from heat.
- 6. In a medium bowl, stir together the mushroom stem mixture, bacon, bread crumbs and 1/2 cup Cheddar. Mix well and scoop the mixture into the mushroom caps.
- 7. Bake, in the preheated oven 15 minutes, or until the cheese has melted.
- 8. Remove the mushrooms from the oven, and sprinkle with the remaining cheese.

Individual Cheese Balls

Ingredients

- 1 cup shredded Cheddar cheese
- · 1 Tbs. chopped onion
- · 1 Tbs. chopped fresh parsley
- 1 tsp. lemon juice
- 1 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
- 1 1/2-cups ground walnuts
- · 2 (8 ounce) packages cream cheese, softened

In a small bowl, combine the first six ingredients; mix well. Shape into 1-1/2-inch balls. Roll in nuts. Chill thoroughly. Serve with crackers.

The Night Before

- · Pick up roast for French dip and gather all recipe ingredients.
- · Add mini sandwich rolls to the shopping list to replace full size French rolls.
- · Round up supplies for ornaments and garland: popcorn, cranberries, construction paper, glitter, and tape.
- Cook appetizers. Place in serving dishs; cover and refrigerate.
- Let kids roll mini cheese balls in nuts, chopped parsley, or poppy seeds; refrigerate.

On Party Day

- The best rule of thumb for a perfect tree: lights, and more lights. So put up the tree and string it with plenty of lights. (Don't forget to check them before stringing them on the tree.)
- Add roast to slow cooker around noon; put your feet up and relax.
- · Mid afternoon: turn on holiday music and start making ornaments and garland.
- Just before party starts, fix Candy Cane Cocoa and coffee. Keep warm in thermal carafes, in a slow cooker, or on the stove.
- · Place drink toppers, and mix-ins (whipped cream, chocolate syrup, liqueurs) near beverages and let everyone add their own finishing touches.
- · Sip beverages, nibble on appetizers, and start decorating.

As decorators finish, serve dessert. Let everyone plop on the floor or couch and admire their handiwork as they indulge in a chocolate reward.

Chocolate Earthquake Cake Ingredients **Directions**

just for more of this delicious cake! 1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Grease one 9x12 inch

"Santa will visit your home twice;

- 1 (3.5 ounce) package flaked coconut
 - tions. Pour batter over chopped nuts and coconut.

 - 42 minutes. Please note: you cannot test for doneness, as the cake will

"This makes a

dip sandwich,

perfect for the

delicious French

· 1 cup chopped wal-

 1(18.25 ounce) package German chocolate cake mix

nuts

- 1/2 cup butter · 8 ounces cream
- cheese
- 3 cups confectioners' sugar
- cake pan. Cover the bottom of the cake pan with the chopped nuts and the flaked coconut.
- 2. Prepare cake mix according to package direc-
- 3. Melt butter or margarine; add cream cheese and confectioner's sugar. Stir until blended. Spoon this mixture over unbaked cake batter.
- 4. Bake at 350 degrees F (175 degrees C) for 40 to
- appear sticky even when it is done. The icing sinks into the batter as it bakes, forming the white ribbon inside. Makes 16 servings.

SUNDAY SLOW COOKER Easy Slow Cooker French Dip

- Ingredients
- 4 pounds rump roast
- 2 Tbs. butter
- 1 (10.5 ounce) can beef broth
- 1 (12 fluid ounce) can or bottle beer
- · 6 French rolls, quartered or mini rolls
- 1 (10.5 ounce) can cond. French onion soup
- busy holiday season!

Directions

- 1. Trim excess fat from the rump roast, and place in a slow cooker. Add the beef broth, onion soup and beer. Cook on Low setting for 7 hours.
- 2. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C).
- 3. Split French rolls, and spread with butter. Bake 10 minutes, or until heated through. 4. Slice the meat on the diagonal, and place on the rolls. Serve the sauce for dipping.
- Chocolate Coffee Kiss

Ingredients

- · 3/4 fluid ounce coffee liqueur
- · 3/4 fluid ounce Irish cream liqueur
- · 1/2 fluid ounce crème de cacao liqueur
- 1 tsp. brandy-based orange liqueur (Grand Marnier)
- · 1 cup hot brewed coffee · 2 Tbs. whipped cream
- 1 1/2 fluid ounces chocolate syrup
- · 1 maraschino cherry

"This is a sweet coffee drink, for all you coffee lovers who want an extra kick in your java."

Directions

In a coffee mug, combine coffee liqueur, Irish cream, crème de cacao and Grand Marnier. Fill mug with hot coffee. Top with a dollop of whipped cream, drizzle with chocolate syrup and garnish with a maraschino cherry.

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