SWEET TIPS FOR A Fabulous 4th of JULY

Host a patriotic bash with dazzling desserts

FAMILY FEATURES

It's easy to throw a 4th of July party that looks like you worked on it for weeks, even if you just started the planning process.

Celebrate the holiday in style by serving classic entrees everyone loves and focusing your attention on delicious, easy-to-make desserts. With the right recipes, your sweets will be as captivating as the colorful spectacle of fireworks above.

- **Hot Cinnamon Fireworks Cake:** Crushed cinnamon drops add color and a slight hot cinnamon flavor to the inside of the cake, while simple melted candy details make the cake look like a firework bursting.
- **Quick Pickled Strawberry Hand Pies:** Pies you can hold in your hand are perfect for a picnic, and this one has a special flavor. With the current love affair with all things pickled, we filled the pies with a pickled strawberry filling. The filling balances sweet and sour for an uncommonly delicious mini pie your party guests will love.
- **No-Bake Cheesecake Star Pops:** Fun star-shaped pops of no-bake cheesecake will be a hit with adults and kids alike. Drizzled or dipped in melted Candy Melts candy, these festive star pops are easy to shape in star-shaped silicone treat molds.
- **Mixed Berry and Lemon Mini Icebox Cakes:** Sweet, light and airy, these mini icebox cakes pack a refreshing burst of creamy flavor, perfect for the summer. Vanilla wafer cookies are stacked in a flavor-filled mixture of fruit and whipped cream and refrigerated until ready to serve.

Your party planning confidence will skyrocket with these delicious dessert ideas from the Wilton test kitchen. For more fun and festive party ideas, visit wilton.com.



Hot Cinnamon Fireworks Cake

Yield: 12 servings

- **2 3/4 cups all-purpose flour**
- **2 teaspoons baking powder**
- **1/2 teaspoon salt**
- **2 cups (4 sticks) butter, softened**
- **2 cups granulated sugar**
- **6 eggs**
- **1 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract**
- **1 bottle (6 ounces) Cinnamon Drops, crushed**
- **1 box (1.5 ounces) Blue Colorburst Batter Bits**
- **1 cup sifted confectioners' sugar**
- **3 to 4 tablespoons milk**
- **Red, white and Royal Blue Candy Melts candy, melted**
- **Red, white and blue colored sugars**

Preheat oven to 350°F. Spray Dimensions Cascade Pan with vegetable pan spray.

In large bowl, combine flour, baking powder and salt. In second large bowl, beat butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add eggs one at a time, scraping bottom and sides of bowl often. Add vanilla; beat until well combined. Add flour mixture and beat at low speed until just combined. Fold in Cinnamon Drops and blue Batter Bits. Pour into prepared pan; smooth out top. Bake 60 to 65 minutes or until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool in pan 10 minutes on cooling grid. Remove from pan and cool completely. In large bowl, whisk together confectioners' sugar and milk. Drizzle melted candy onto cake to look like fireworks. Sprinkle sugars onto melted candy.



Quick Pickled Strawberry Hand Pies

Yield: 8 hand pies

- **1 cup red wine vinegar**
- **3/4 cup water**
- **1 cup sugar, plus additional for sprinkling**
- **1/4 teaspoon salt**
- **10 black peppercorns**
- **5 sprigs fresh thyme, plus 1/2 teaspoon roughly chopped fresh thyme leaves, divided**
- **1/2 teaspoon pure vanilla extract**
- **1 pound fresh strawberries, hulled and cut into quarters (or eighths if berries very large)**
- **3 tablespoons cornstarch**
- **1 egg**
- **1 package (14 ounces) refrigerated pie crusts**

In small saucepan, stir together vinegar, water, 1 cup sugar, salt and peppercorns. Add thyme sprigs. Cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until boiling; let boil 3 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in vanilla. Pour over cut strawberries, until fully submerged in liquid. Cover and let sit at room temperature 4 to 8 hours. Preheat oven to 400°F. Line cookie pan with parchment paper. Strain strawberries from pickling liquid and discard peppercorns and thyme. Toss berries with cornstarch until evenly coated. In small bowl, whisk egg with 1 tablespoon water until smooth. Unroll pie crusts and cut with 3 1/2-inch round cutter. Each crust yields 8 rounds. To assemble pies, top half of rounds with about 3 tablespoons of berry mixture each. Brush edges of rounds with egg wash. Cut out a hole or pierce remaining rounds with fork. Place on top of berries. Using a fork, press edges of crusts together tightly to seal. Transfer to prepared cookie pan. Brush tops of pies with egg wash and sprinkle with granulated sugar. Bake 18 to 22 minutes, or until pies are lightly golden and filling is bubbling. Cool slightly before serving.

No-Bake Cheesecake Star Pops

Yield: 6 servings

- **1 envelope (2 1/4 teaspoons) unflavored gelatin**
- **1/4 cup granulated sugar**
- **3/4 cup boiling water**
- **1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese, softened**
- **1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract**
- **1/8 teaspoon salt**
- **1 bag (12 ounces) royal blue Candy Melts candy**
- **Lollipop Sticks**

Prepare 6-cavity Mini Star Silicone Mold with vegetable pan spray. In small bowl, combine gelatin, sugar and water; whisk until completely dissolved. In large bowl, beat cream cheese, vanilla and salt with electric mixer until smooth. Gradually add gelatin mixture, beating well. Scrape bottom and sides of bowl. Continue beating until fully combined. Pour into prepared pan. Refrigerate 2 hours or until completely set. Carefully unmold cheesecakes onto cookie pan. Melt small amount of Candy Melts candy. Dip lollipop stick in melted candy and insert 3/4 way into cheesecake stars. Freeze 30 minutes or until firm. In large bowl, melt remaining Candy Melts according to package directions. Drizzle or pipe candy over cheesecake stars as desired. Refrigerate 10 minutes or until set. Keep refrigerated until ready to serve.

Note: Some cream cheeses are firmer than others. Firm is best for this recipe. Choose a brand name, full fat cream cheese for best results.



Mixed Berry and Lemon Mini Icebox Cakes

Yield: 12 mini cakes

- **2 cups fresh or frozen mixed berries**
- **2/3 cup granulated sugar**
- **2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice**
- **2 cups heavy whipping cream**
- **1 tablespoon lemon zest (about 1 lemon)**
- **1 package (4.9 ounces) vanilla wafer cookies**
- **Blueberries, raspberries or blackberries, for garnish**

Line muffin pan with plastic wrap, pressing plastic into each cavity and letting plastic hang over edge of pan. In large skillet, combine mixed berries, sugar and lemon juice. Bring to a gentle boil over medium heat. Reduce heat to medium-low and continue simmering until berries soften and liquid reduces to 1 cup, about 20 to 25 minutes. Gently mash berries with wooden spoon. Transfer to medium bowl and cool completely. In large bowl, whip cream on medium-high speed until cream holds stiff peaks, about 4 to 5 minutes. Gently fold in berry mixture and zest until completely combined. Place whipped cream in decorating bag and cut off pointed end. To assemble, pipe small amount of whipped cream mixture into each muffin cavity. Lightly press a cookie into whipped cream. Continue layering whipped cream and cookies until cavities are full, finishing with whipped cream layer. You should have 3 layers of cookies. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight. Remove pan from refrigerator. Remove plastic wrap from top and carefully flip out onto serving platter. Remove wrap from mini cakes. Garnish with additional berries, if desired. Serve immediately.