

PARTY

in a glass

The typical Texas winter does not exactly make for a "White Christmas," but moderate temperatures and rainy days do little to prevent anyone determined to spread a little holiday cheer from doing so. Throughout the days of well wishing and yuletide-spreading, these colorful drinks will keep your mind in the holiday spirit and your nose as red as Santa's. The Battalion staff gives their favorites.

The candy cane

This isn't exactly what you will find hanging on your tree Christmas morning, but just as festive. Easy preparation and the perfect way to start your holiday party cheerfully. Served in a shot or on the rocks.

- 1 part (ounce or gallon) Cinnamon Schnapps
- 1 part (ounce or gallon) Peppermint Schnapps

-- Jimmy Hissong

Three Wisemen

Not quite gold, frankincense, or myrrh, but gift-bearing guys nonetheless. Served on the rocks.

Mix equal parts of:

- Jim Beam Bourbon Whiskey
- Jack Daniels Tennessee Whiskey
- Johnny Walker Blended Scotch Whiskey

-- Jimmy Hissong

Egg Nog

(30 servings)

Perfect for a party!

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| 24 eggs, separated | 1 quart heavy cream |
| 2 cups sugar | 2 quart milk |
| 1 quart bourbon | 1 quart vanilla ice cream |
| 2 cup brandy | |
| nutmeg | |

Beat egg yolks and sugar until thick. Add bourbon and brandy and stir thoroughly. (The liquor "cooks" the eggs.) Add cream and milk and continue whipping. Break up the ice cream and add. Beat egg whites until stiff and fold in. Refrigerate for at least 30 minutes before serving. Sprinkle lightly with nutmeg.

-- Jose Cruz

Poinsettia

This cocktail is a holiday version of the mimosa, which is easy to put together and is usually well received. Garnish is optional depending on the type of party one is hosting.

Ingredients:

- champagne
- 1/4 ounce triple sec
- splash of cranberry juice

Combine ingredients in champagne glass and garnish with a twist.

-- Chris Elmi

Hot cran-apple cider

- 2 quarts apple cider
- 1 1/2 quarts cranberry cocktail

- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 3 inch cinnamon sticks
- 1 1/2 teaspoons whole cloves

Heat to boiling. Reduce heat and simmer 15-20 minutes. Strain.

Makes 25 servings.

-- Kim Katopodis



BUDGET GOURMET

Gingerbread cookies

Ingredients:

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| 4 1/2 cups all purpose flour | 2 large eggs |
| 1 tablespoon cinnamon | 1/2 cup butter |
| 1 1/2 teaspoon ginger | ground cloves |
| 1/2 teaspoon nutmeg | |
| 1 teaspoon baking soda | |
| 1/2 teaspoon salt | |
| 3/4 cup molasses | |
| 1/2 cup brown sugar | |

Cooking Instructions:

1. In a large bowl, combine flour, cinnamon, ginger, cloves, nutmeg, baking soda and salt. Mix.
 2. In another large bowl, beat molasses, brown sugar, butter and eggs.
 3. Beat in the flour mixture in thirds into the molasses mixture. Mix thoroughly.
 4. Divide dough into 3 or 4 equal portions and flatten with a disk.
 5. Cover in plastic wrap and put into fridge for 2 hours or until firm enough to roll.
 6. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
 7. Roll out dough, either cut out or use cookie cutters to make shape desired.
 8. Transfer dough to greased baking sheet.
 9. Bake for 10 minutes or until brown around edges.
 10. Remove baking sheet to wire rack to cool for 5 minutes.
 11. Remove cookies onto wire rack to cool thoroughly.
 12. Decorate with icing, sprinkles, or as desired.
- A classic and easy party favorite.

Artichoke Spinach Dip

Ingredients:

- 9 ounces artichoke hearts
- 5 ounces frozen spinach, thawed
- 2 slices fresh white sandwich bread, crusts trimmed
- 12 ounces part-skim ricotta cheese
- 1/2 teaspoon fresh thyme leaves
- 1 teaspoon salt
- pinch cayenne
- 1/4 cup freshly grated parmesan

- vegetable cooking spray
- 2 cloves garlic, minced

Cooking instructions:

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Drain the artichoke hearts and spinach.
 2. In a food processor, pulse the bread to make medium textured crumbs. Transfer crumbs to a small bowl and set aside.
 3. Put the ricotta, thyme, salt and cayenne in the processor and pulse until smooth. Add the artichokes, spinach and parmesan; pulse until evenly mixed but chunky.
 4. Spray a 4-cup dish with cooking spray. Transfer the artichoke mixture to the dish.
- Heat the olive oil in a medium skillet over medium heat. Add garlic, cook until aromatic and lightly toasted about 1 minute. Stir in bread crumbs and cook another minute. Spread the crumbs over the artichoke-spinach mixture. Bake the dip until browned and warmed through about 45 minutes. Serve warm.

Source: foodnetwork.com

Popcorn balls

Ingredients:

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| 5 quarts popped popcorn | 1 cup marshmallows |
| 1/4 cup margarine | 3/4 cup light corn syrup |
| 2 5/8 cups confectioner sugar | 2 teaspoons cold water |

In a saucepan over medium heat, combine the corn syrup, margarine, cold water, confectioner's sugar and marshmallows. Heat and stir until the mixture comes to a boil. Carefully combine the hot mixture with the popcorn, coating each kernel.

Grease hands with vegetable shortening and quickly shape the coated popcorn into balls.

Source: allRecipes.com

