1955

Holiday Reunion

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A full cookie jar, hot spiced tea and friends dropping in are part of Christmas. This vacation have the crowd in for a holiday reunion. Open house, old-fashioned style, needn’t be elaborate during this busy time. A coffee table laden with luscious Christmas “goodies,” the family tree shining from the corner and friends gathered about singing Christmas carols or exchanging news are all you’ll need for a successful party.

When you sit down to address Christmas cards to your friends pen this note inside:

Surprise! I’m having open house, old-fashioned style, at my house this Saturday night. Bring a dime store joke, gift-wrapped, of course.

Once Christmas greetings are deposited in the corner mailbox, you can roll up your sleeves, don Mom’s red cobbler’s apron and devote a wintery afternoon to decorating the house and baking “goodies” for the party. Let your guests feast on such delicacies as pink angel cookies, Christmas tassies and the other party foods listed below.

**MERRY CHRISTMAS BALLS**

32 Graham crackers, finely crushed
1 cup chopped dates
1 cup chopped nuts
2 6-ounce packages chocolate bits
1 15-ounce can condensed milk
1 teaspoon vanilla

1. Crush graham crackers between waxed paper, with rolling pin.
2. Chop nuts and dates.
3. Melt chocolate bits in top of double boiler.
4. Pour condensed milk and vanilla into top of double boiler and stir thoroughly into chocolate.
5. Add remaining ingredients to chocolate mixture and stir.
6. Form into small balls. Roll in powdered sugar.

You may store these holiday balls in a tight container (a home decorated lard pail is excellent!) They will keep very well in a cool place.

**PINK ANGEL ICING**

(a luscious topping for old-fashioned sugar cookies)

1 package strawberry jello
1 cup water, boiling
11/2 cups sugar
1/2 teaspoon salt
5 tablespoons water
1 tablespoon light corn syrup
2 egg whites, unbeaten
1 cup coconut

1. Combine gelatin with boiling water, stirring until dissolved. Set aside until room temperature.
2. In top of double boiler combine sugar, salt, water, corn syrup and egg whites.
3. Place over boiling water and beat until mixture holds its shape, about seven minutes.
4. Remove from heat and add dissolved gelatin liquid. Stir until well blended.
5. Cool, stirring frequently until thickened. Fold in coconut.
6. Frost cookies and sprinkle with more coconut if desired.

**ORANGE SUGARED WALNUTS**

11/2 cups sugar
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 6-ounce can frozen orange juice, undiluted
1 teaspoon vanilla
3 cups English walnut halves (or pecans)

1. Combine sugar, salt and orange juice in saucepan and bring to boil over medium heat. Cook to soft ball stage or 234 degrees F.
2. Remove from heat and add vanilla and nuts. Let stand until cool.
3. Stir until mixture thickens and becomes sugary. Drop from teaspoon onto waxed paper.
CHOCOLATE MERINGUE COOKIES

2 squares chocolate, melted
2 cups sifted, all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon baking soda
2 eggs, beaten
1 cup sugar
½ cup butter
1 teaspoon vanilla

1. Put chocolate in top of double boiler to melt.
2. Sift flour; combine sifted flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt and sift.
4. Cream sugar and butter thoroughly.
5. Add eggs and vanilla to creamed mixture, stirring until smooth and fluffy.
7. Stir in melted chocolate.
8. Chill dough for several hours, or overnight. When ready to bake cookies, make meringue.

MERINGUE

2 egg whites
2 cups brown sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 cup nuts

1. Beat egg whites until stiff.
2. Beat in brown sugar, two tablespoons at a time, to form a fluffy, stiff meringue.
3. Add vanilla and fold in nuts.
4. Set oven at moderate (350 degree) temperature.
5. Grease cookie sheet.
6. Take a rounded teaspoon of the chilled cookie dough, form into small ball and place on cookie sheet. Flatten each cookie with bottom of small glass, lightly dipped in flour. Top each cookie with teaspoon of meringue.
7. Bake about 10 to 12 minutes, or until done.
8. Remove from sheet and place on cake rack to cool.
9. Store in tight container in cool place. These cookies freeze particularly well. Makes 5 to 6 dozen.

CHRISTMAS TASSIES

½ cup chopped pecans
1 cup butter
2 3-ounce packages cream cheese
2 cups flour
1 cup cherry jam
1 package yellow cake mix

1. Chop pecans and measure.
2. Cream butter and cheese until fluffy.
3. Add flour to creamed mixture and blend until smooth. Chill.
4. Set oven at moderate (325 degree) temperature.
5. Grease junior-size muffin tins.
6. Form chilled dough into small balls. Place in muffin tins and with thumb press dough evenly over bottom and sides.
7. Sprinkle ¼ teaspoon chopped pecans over each tassie. Cover with ¼ teaspoon cherry jam.
8. Prepare cake mix as directed on package and top each tassie with 1 teaspoon mix. (Bake left-over cake batter as cupcakes.)
9. Bake 15 to 18 minutes, or until delicately browned.
10. Cool on rack 10 minutes. Remove from pans carefully.
11. If desired frost with red or green icing and decorate with candied fruit and nuts.

SPICED TEA

1 orange rind, grated
1 lemon rind, grated
juice of 4 lemons
1 cup sugar
water to dissolve
⅛ teaspoon cinnamon
⅛ teaspoon cloves or 3-4 whole
5 teaspoons tea
water to make 2 quarts

1. Grate orange and lemon rinds; squeeze lemons.
2. Heat sugar and a little water until dissolved.
3. Add remaining ingredients except tea and water.
4. Make a strong infusion of tea and water. Strain.
5. Combine syrup mixture with tea and add a clove or two; reheat.
6. Serve hot but do not boil.

The Party’s On!

The crowd is filling your house carload by carload. In the front hall is the fireplace log basket and a note reading: Deposit: One gift! You, atop the piano bench, are giving directions for everyone to keep on scarves and mittens. “We’re going caroling!” The crowd scrambles back out to the cars—off for a jolly hour and a half.

The grandfather clock in the entrance hall gongs 9 o’clock, and a ruddy-cheeked crowd piles back into the toasty warmth of the house.

Scattered about the living room floor, hungry guests chatter and nibble Christmas goodies from the vast array on the central coffee table. Pots of hot spiced tea circulate throughout the group.

Musical Gift Exchange

A half hour slips by and you announce that everyone should scoot ‘way back, sit cross-legged and form a wide circle. With little brother stationed as disc jockey at the record player, strains of “Jingle Bells” start a game of musical gift-exchange.

The basket of gifts you collected at the front door is placed in the middle of the ring and everybody divest for a prize. When the music starts, everyone passes his gift clockwise around the circle. When the music stops, the gifts stop. The climax comes with the last tinkle of “Jingle Bells” when wrappings fly and ribbons fall as the crowd tears into the treasures they hold.

Gang Circulates; Party Percolates

With this start, formal entertainment is no longer necessary. Girls chatter gayly, a chess game gets underway and couples dance in the rec room below. From kitchen to den to rec room the gang circulates and the party percolates. And to you, Cheers! “The party was great!…” rings in your ears as one by one your guests filter from the festivity of the house into the winter night.