

Almond Toffee Bars ▼

- 12 graham crackers (2 1/2" x 5" / 6 cm x 13 cm)
- 1 1/2 cups butter (no substitutes)
- 1 cup packed brown sugar
- 2 cups sliced almonds

Optional: 1/2 cup chocolate chips, melted

1. Line a cookie sheet with aluminum foil and arrange the graham crackers on the foil.
2. Place the butter and brown sugar in a saucepan over medium

heat. Stirring constantly, bring to a boil. Pour the mixture evenly over the graham crackers. Sprinkle the almonds on top.

3. Bake at 400° F for 3–6 minutes or until bubbly. Cool in the pan for 4 minutes. Cut each cracker into four pieces, then cool completely on wire racks.

4. Optional: Lightly drizzle the melted chocolate over the cooled almond toffee bars.



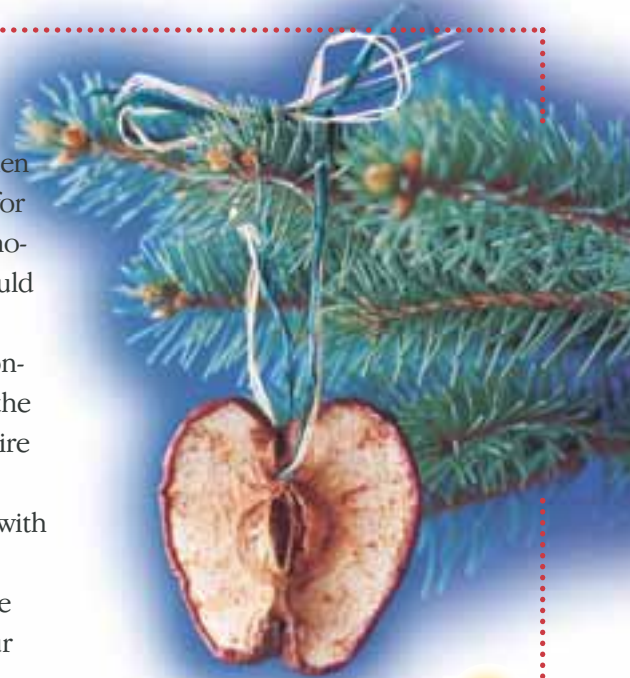
Candy Cane Cookies ▲

- 1/2 cup crushed peppermint candy
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 cups margarine, softened
- 2 cups sifted powdered sugar
- 2 eggs
- 3 teaspoons almond extract
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- 1 teaspoon red food coloring
- 5 cups sifted flour
- 1 teaspoon salt

1. In a small bowl, mix the crushed peppermint candy and sugar. Set aside.

2. In two medium bowls, mix the following ingredients (1 batch per bowl): 1 cup margarine, 1 cup sifted powdered sugar, 1 egg, 1 1/2 teaspoons almond extract, and 1 teaspoon vanilla. Add red food coloring to one batch and leave the other white.

3. Sift 2 1/2 cups flour and 1/2 teaspoon salt into each bowl and mix well. (The red dough may require extra flour to compensate for the food coloring.) Chill the dough for one hour.



4. Shape both the white and red dough into 1/2" (1 cm) balls. Roll the balls into strips 4" (10 cm) long. Twist a red strip with a white strip to form a rope, then shape like a candy cane and place it on an ungreased cookie sheet. Repeat with the remaining strips.

5. Bake at 375° F for 8–9 minutes or until the edges are slightly browned. Remove the cookies from the cookie sheet while still warm and place on wire racks. Sprinkle cookies with peppermint candy mixture. (For easier cleanup, place waxed paper underneath the wire racks beforehand.)

Christmas Gift Box ▼

To make a gift box, you will need: a clean round container with a lid (a peanut can, trimmed-down oatmeal box, or a glass jar works well); scissors; magazines, photos (with permission to use), stickers, stamps, and/or construction paper; white glue; paintbrush; tissue paper; and wrapped treats.

1. Think about the person to

whom you'll be giving the gift. Then cut out decorations appropriate for their gift box from magazines, photos, stickers, stamps, etc. You could also draw your own decorations.

2. Remove the lid from the container. Glue the decorations on the can and the lid, covering the entire surface. Let dry.

3. Paint the container and lid with white glue and let dry.

4. Fill the container with tissue paper and wrapped treats of your choice before delivering.

Apple Ornaments ►

BY SHARON A. SOFFE

These apple slices make pretty Christmas tree decorations and add a spicy scent to the room.

To make apple ornaments, you will need: 1/2 cup bottled lemon juice, 1/2 cup water, 1 tablespoon salt, 5 Red Delicious apples, a plastic straw, newspaper, wire racks, ground cinnamon, and string or very narrow ribbon.

1. Stir the lemon juice, water, and salt in a bowl until the salt dissolves.

2. Slice the unpeeled apples to a thickness of 1/4" (0.6 cm) or less.

You can slice vertically to get the shape of an apple or horizontally to get a circle shape with a star design in the center.

3. Using a plastic straw, cut a hole 1/4" (0.6 cm) below the top of each apple slice.

4. Cover the work area with newspaper. Then put the wire racks on the newspaper.

5. Soak the apple slices, a few at a time, in lemon juice for 4–5 minutes and stir well. Gently shake off the lemon mixture and place the slices on the wire racks to drain. Sprinkle both sides with cinnamon.

6. Carefully place the wire racks with the apples in the oven at 200° F for 2–3 hours, turning the slices occasionally, until they are dry and leathery.

7. Thread string or narrow ribbon through the hole in each apple slice. Tie the ends together to form a loop for hanging. Hang the slices on the tree and enjoy the look and smell of a country Christmas!

