Mini Apple Pies
(8 servings)

Ingredients

- For crust:
  - 2 ½ cups all-purpose flour
  - 2 teaspoons sugar
  - 1 teaspoon salt
  - ½ cup cold unsalted butter (cubed)
  - ½ cup cold vegetable shortening (cut into a few pieces)
  - ½ cup ice water
  - Optional: buy 2 store bought pie crusts, unbaked
- For filling:
  - 2 ½ cups chopped apples
  - ¼ cup granulated sugar
  - 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
  - 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
  - 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
  - 1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg

Instructions

1. For crust: In a large mixing bowl whisk together the flour, sugar, and salt until well combined. Add the cold cubed butter and cold vegetable shortening to the pea-sized crumbs (some larger pieces are okay).
2. Slowly drizzle in one tablespoon of ice water at a time and gently mix it in. Once the dough starts to come together, turn it out onto a lightly floured surface and pack it into a ball. Cover tightly with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least one hour.
3. Preheat oven to 425°F.
4. Roll the pie crusts out to 1/8” thickness on a lightly floured surface. Using a 3.5-inch cookie cutter (or a cup) cut out 12 circles from the pie crusts. Re-roll any scrap pieces of pie dough as needed to cut out the circles.
5. Place each circle of pie crust in each cavity of a standard 12-count muffin pan. Gently press the dough down and around the sides, making sure the dough fits snugly in each cavity of the muffin pan. Transfer the muffin pan and any leftover pie crust dough to the refrigerator while you make the filling.
6. In a large mixing bowl, mix together the chopped apples, sugar, flour, ground cinnamon, vanilla extract, and ground nutmeg until fully combined. Remove the muffin pan from the refrigerator and evenly distribute the apple pie filling between all of the cavities in the muffin pan (about 2-3 tablespoons per mini pie).
7. Remove the extra pie dough from the refrigerator, cut out your designs for the tops of the pies, and place them on top.
8. Bake at 425°F for 20-25 minutes or until the pie crust is lightly golden brown and the filling is bubbly. Remove from the oven and set aside to cool for 10-15 minutes. Carefully remove the mini pies from the pan and transfer to a wire rack to finish cooling.
Vanilla Chocolate Swirl Cupcakes

**Ingredients**
- 1 and 2/3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup unsalted butter, melted
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 large egg, room temperature
- 1/4 cup yogurt
- 3/4 cup + 1 Tablespoon milk, divided
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1/4 cup unsweetened natural cocoa powder

**Instructions**
1. Preheat oven to 350°F (177°C). Line muffin pan with 12 cupcake liners and an additional pan with 2 liners. This recipe makes about 14 cupcakes. Set them aside.
2. In a medium bowl, mix together flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt. Set aside.
   In a large microwave-safe bowl, melt butter in the microwave. Whisk in sugar—mixture will be gritty. Chill in the refrigerator for 1 minute. Stir in egg, yogurt, 3/4 cup milk, and vanilla extract until combined. Slowly mix in dry ingredients until no lumps remain. Batter will be thick. Transfer 3/4 cup of batter to another medium bowl. Mix in cocoa powder and 1 Tablespoon milk until combined. Chocolate batter will be extremely thick.
3. Spoon 1 Tablespoon of vanilla batter into each cupcake liner. Top with a spoonful of chocolate batter, then more vanilla batter on top until all batters have been used up. At this point you may swirl the batters together very lightly using a toothpick or leave them as is, as I explained in the post. Bake the cupcakes for 20-24 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. (Bake for 9-10 minutes if making mini cupcakes.) Allow cupcakes to cool completely before frosting.

**Chocolate Frosting**

**Ingredients**
- 4 cups powdered sugar
- 3/4 cup butter
- 1/2 cup cocoa
- Dash of salt
- Enough warm milk for spreading

**Instructions**
1. Beat all ingredients except milk on low speed until combined.
2. Add enough milk for spreading and beat on low speed until blended.

**Vanilla Buttercream Frosting** *(enough to frost 24 cupcakes)*

**Ingredients**
- 1 cup unsalted butter
- 1/2 cup shortening*
- 6 cups (690g) powdered sugar
- 1/8 tsp salt
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tablespoon corn syrup (or honey)
- 4–6 tablespoon water or milk

**Instructions**
1. Beat the butter and shortening together until smooth.
2. Slowly add half of the powdered sugar and the salt and mix until smooth.
3. Add the vanilla extract, corn syrup and 4 tablespoons of water or milk and mix until smooth.
4. Slowly add the remaining powdered sugar and mix until smooth. Add additional water or milk, as needed to get the right consistency of frosting.

*Note: The original recipe uses shortening as an alternative to butter for health reasons.**
**Brownies (24 servings)**

**Ingredients**
- 4 bars (4 oz.) Hershey’s unsweetened baking chocolate, broken into pieces
- ¾ cup (1 ½ sticks) butter
- 2 cups sugar
- 3 eggs
- 1 ½ teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 cup chopped nuts (optional)

**Instructions**
1. Heat oven to 350 degrees and grease a 9x13-inch baking pan
2. Place chocolate and butter in a large microwave-safe bowl
3. Microwave on high 1 ½ to 2 minutes or until chocolate is melted and mixture is smooth when stirred
4. Add sugar, stir with a spoon until well blended. Add eggs and vanilla, mix well. Add flour and nuts, if desired, and stir until well blended
5. Bake 30-35 minutes or until wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool completely in pan on wire rack.

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**Strawberry Shortcake Lasagna (10 servings)**

**Ingredients**
- 4 cups heavy cream
- ½ cup powdered sugar, plus some for dusting
- 2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
- 1 ½ boxes vanilla wafers (the big boxes)
- 1 pound strawberries, thinly sliced

**Instructions**
1. In a large bowl using a hand mixer, beat heavy cream, powdered sugar, and vanilla until medium peaks form.
2. Assemble lasagna: in a 9”x13” pan, spread a thin layer of Nilla Wafers and spread a thick layer of strawberries. Repeat two times, ending with strawberries. Sprinkle with crushed Nilla Wafers.
3. Refrigerate until Nilla Wafers are totally soft, 3 hours, or up to overnight.
4. Sprinkle with more powdered sugar, then slice and serve.
THURSDAY

Cut-out sugar cookies

Ingredients
- 2 ¼ cups flour
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- ½ cup butter
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 eggs beaten
- 1 tablespoon milk (to consistency)

Instructions
1. Mix flour, salt, and baking powder together, set aside.
2. Cream vanilla, butter, sugar, eggs, and milk until fluffy. Add dry ingredients and mix until incorporated.
3. Roll out cookie dough to about ¼ inch thick and cut with cookie cutters.
4. Bake at 350 degrees for 10 minutes
5. Let cool completely before decorating

BUCKEYES (ABOUT 4 DOZEN)

Ingredients
- 1 stick butter
- 1 cup peanut butter
- 3 cups powdered sugar
- Dash of salt
- Coating chocolate (my grandma always used Mercken’s coating milk chocolate—it is the best!)

Instructions
1. Mix butter, peanut butter, powdered sugar, and salt together until well combined
2. Roll about 1 ½ tablespoons of mixture into a ball
3. Place on baking sheet lined with parchment paper and refrigerate for about an hour or until firm
4. Poke ball with toothpick, dip into melted coating chocolate leaving a hole at the top, then return to baking sheet
5. To make it look like a true buckeye, run a knife under warm water and smooth holes on top
**Vanilla Sheet Cake**  
*(1 cake, 25-30 slices)*

**Ingredients**
- 2 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 1/2 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 3/4 cup unsalted butter, room temperature
- 1/4 cup vegetable oil
- 1 1/2 cups sugar
- 4 large eggs
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup milk

**Instructions**
1. Prepare a 12x18 inch sheet pan/jelly roll pan with non-stick baking spray. Preheat oven to 350°F (176°C).
2. Combine the flour, baking powder and salt in a medium sized bowl and set aside.
3. Add the butter, sugar, and oil to a large mixer bowl and beat together until light in color and fluffy, about 3-4 minutes. Do not skimp on the creaming time.
4. Add the eggs two at a time, mixing until mostly combined after each addition. Scrape down the sides of the bowl as needed to be sure all ingredients are well incorporated.
5. Add half of the dry ingredients to the batter and mix until mostly combined.
6. Slowly add the milk and vanilla extract and mix until well combined.
7. Add the remaining dry ingredients and mix until well combined and smooth. Scrape down the sides of the bowl as needed to be sure all ingredients are well incorporated. Do not over mix the batter.
8. Spread the batter evenly into the prepared pan and bake for 12-15 minutes, or until a toothpick comes out clean.
9. Remove the cake from the oven and allow to cool.

**Chocolate Sheet Cake**  
*(Texas Sheet cake)*

**Ingredients**
For cake:
- 2 sticks butter
- 1 cup water
- 4 tablespoon cocoa
- 2 cups flour
- 2 cups granulated sugar
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 eggs
- ½ cup sour cream
- 1 teaspoon baking soda

For frosting:
- 1 stick butter
- 4 tablespoons cocoa
- 6 tablespoons milk
- 3 ½ cups powdered sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- ¼ cup peanut butter

**Instructions**
1. To make cake, bring to a boil the butter, water, and cocoa
2. After this is boiling, put the mixture in a mixing bowl and add flour, sugar, and salt and beat
3. Add eggs, sour cream, and baking soda, beat, and then pour out on a greased cookie sheet with edge (18x12)
4. Bake at 325 degrees for 25 minutes
5. While the cake is baking, make the frosting
6. Bring the butter, cocoa, and milk to a boil, then add the last three
7. Frost the cake while still hot (I usually pour it over the cake)