SPOOKY SOIREE

Get all the delicious treats and more from the “Monster Bash” in the October 2014 issue of Better Homes and Gardens® magazine.
**Macaroni and Cheese**  
**PREP 25 min.  TOTAL 1 hr.**

2 cups dried elbow macaroni (8 oz.)  
1 medium onion, chopped  
2 Tbsp. butter or margarine  
2 Tbsp. all-purpose flour  
¼ tsp. black pepper  
2½ cups milk  
1½ cups shredded cheddar cheese (6 oz.)  
1½ cups shredded American cheese (6 oz.)

1. Cook macaroni according to package directions; drain. Set aside.  
2. Meanwhile, preheat oven to 350°F. For cheese sauce, in a medium saucepan cook onion in hot butter until tender. Stir in flour and pepper. Add milk all at once. Cook and stir over medium heat until slightly thickened and bubbly. Add cheeses, stirring until melted. Stir in cooked macaroni.  
3. Bake, uncovered, 25 to 30 minutes or until bubbly. Let stand 10 minutes before serving.  

Makes 4 servings.

**Saucepan Macaroni and Cheese** Prepare as above, except reduce milk to 2 cups. After draining macaroni, immediately return to saucepan. Prepare cheese sauce as directed and pour over top; stir to coat macaroni with sauce. Cook over low heat 2 to 3 minutes or until heated through, stirring frequently. Let stand 10 minutes before serving.  

**Berry-Apple Cider**  
**PREP 10 min. SLOW COOK 4 hr.**

4 sticks cinnamon  
1½ tsp. whole cloves  
4 cups apple cider or apple juice  
4 cups lower-calorie cranberry-raspberry juice drink  
1 medium apple, quartered, cored, and thinly sliced or chopped

1. For spice bag, cut a 6-inch square from a double thickness of 100-percent-cotton cheesecloth. Place cinnamon and cloves on the cheesecloth. Bring up corners of cheesecloth and tie closed with clean 100-percent-cotton kitchen string.  
2. In a 4-qt. slow cooker combine spice bag, apple cider, and cranberry-raspberry juice.  
3. Cover and cook on low-heat setting 4 to 6 hours or on high-heat setting 2 to 2½ hours.  
4. Discard spice bag. Serve immediately or keep warm, covered, on warm setting or low-heat setting for up to 2 hours. Stir occasionally. Serve with apples. Makes 8 servings.  

**Creamy Pumpkin Soup**  
**START TO FINISH 30 min.**

1 tsp. canola oil  
2 medium leeks (2/3 cup)  
2 14-oz. cans low-sodium chicken broth  
1 15-oz. can pumpkin  
2 tsp. snipped fresh thyme or 1 tsp. dried thyme, crushed  
¼ tsp. ground black pepper  
1 8-oz. carton light sour cream  
Fresh thyme (optional)

1. In a large saucepan heat oil over medium-high heat. Add leeks; cook and stir until tender. Stir in broth, pumpkin, thyme, and pepper. Bring to boiling; reduce heat. Simmer, covered, 20 minutes. Cool slightly.  
2. Transfer mixture to a blender or food processor. Blend or process until smooth. Return to saucepan; heat through. Stir in half the sour cream.  
3. Ladle into soup bowls. Swirl in the remaining sour cream. If desired, garnish with thyme sprigs. Makes 4 servings.

**Each Serving**  
89 cal, 0 g fat, 11 mg sodium, 0 mg chol, 22 g carb, 1 g fiber, 0 g pro.
**Wilted Spinach Salad with Pears and Cranberries**

**START TO FINISH 35 min.**

2 medium pears, cored and thinly sliced  
2 Tbsp. lemon juice  
12 cups packaged fresh baby spinach or torn spinach (12 oz.)  
¼ cup thinly sliced red onion  
4 slices bacon  
Vegetable oil (optional)  
¾ cup thinly sliced red onion  
1 Tbsp. sugar  
½ tsp. dry mustard  
Gorgonzola cheese, crumbled (optional)  
Dried cranberries (optional)

1. Place pears in a bowl; drizzle with lemon juice. Fill bowl with enough water to cover pears. Place a small plate over pears to submerge pears; set aside. In a large bowl combine spinach and red onion. If desired, sprinkle with pepper; set aside.

2. For dressing, in a Dutch oven cook bacon until crisp. Transfer bacon to paper towels, reserving ¼ cup drippings in Dutch oven. (If necessary, add enough oil to drippings to equal ¼ cup). Crumble bacon; set aside. Stir the ½ cup cranberries, vinegar, sugar, and mustard into bacon drippings in the Dutch oven. Bring to boiling; remove from heat. Add spinach mixture. Toss mixture in Dutch oven for 30 to 60 seconds or just until spinach wilts.

3. Transfer spinach mixture to a large bowl. Add bacon; toss to combine. Divide spinach mixture among six plates; drain pears and arrange on top of spinach mixture. If desired, sprinkle with Gorgonzola cheese and additional cranberries. Makes 6 servings.

**Each Serving 214 cal, 11 g fat, 14 mg chol, 225 mg sodium, 25 g carb, 5 g fiber, 5 g pro.**

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**Roasted Garlic-Herb Bread**

**PREP 15 min. ROAST 25 min. BAKE 12 min.**

2 heads fresh garlic  
2 Tbsp. olive oil  
3 Tbsp. snipped fresh parsley  
1 Tbsp. snipped fresh basil, oregano, and/or thyme  
¾ tsp. salt  
¼ tsp. freshly ground black pepper  
1 10- to 12-oz. loaf whole grain Italian bread

1. Preheat oven to 425°F. Peel away the dry outer layers of skin from heads of garlic, leaving skins and cloves intact. Cut off the pointed top portions, leaving bulbs intact but exposing the individual cloves. Place each garlic head, cut side up, in a custard cup. Drizzle each with about ¼ tsp. of the olive oil. Cover with foil. Roast 25 to 35 minutes or until the cloves feel soft when pressed. Set aside until cool.

2. Squeeze garlic from individual cloves into a small bowl. Mash with a fork. Stir in remaining olive oil, parsley, basil, salt, and pepper.

3. Without cutting through bottom crust, cut bread into 12 slices. Spread garlic mixture between slices, spreading on one side only of each slice. Wrap loaf in heavy foil. Bake about 12 minutes or until heated through. Serve warm. Makes 12 servings.

**Each Serving 88 cal, 3 g fat, 0 chol, 122 mg sodium, 12 g carb, 3 g fiber, 4 g pro.**

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**White Chocolate-Cranberry Crispy Treats**

**PREP 30 min. STAND 1 hr.**

¼ cup butter  
5 cups tiny marshmallows  
¼ to ½ tsp. ground nutmeg or ground cinnamon  
6 cups crisp rice cereal  
1 cup white chocolate baking pieces (6 oz.)  
¼ cup dried cranberries  
½ cup finely chopped pecans or walnuts, toasted

1 recipe Marshmallow Topping, below  
Chopped pecans or walnuts, toasted (optional)

1. Lightly grease a 13×9×2-inch pan; set aside. In a 4- to 5-quart Dutch oven heat butter over low heat until melted. Add marshmallows, stirring until melted. Stir in nutmeg. Add cereal, white baking pieces, dried cranberries, and the ¼ cup pecans, stirring until combined.


**Marshmallow Topping** In a medium saucepan melt 1 Tbsp. butter over low heat. Add 1 ½ cups tiny marshmallows, stirring until melted.

**To store** Layer bars between sheets of waxed paper in an airtight container; cover. Store at room temperature for up to 3 days.

**Each Serving 80 cal, 3 g fat, 3 g chol, 57 mg sodium, 12 g carb, 0 g fiber, 1 g pro.**
Meringue-Cookie Skeleton

PREP 40 min. BAKE 1 hr. STAND 1 hr.

4 egg whites
1 cup granulated sugar
$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. cream of tartar
$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. vanilla
3 oz. vanilla-flavor candy coating, chopped
Purchased black decorating icing

1. Fit a large decorating bag with a large ($\frac{1}{2}$-inch) round tip. Line two large cookie sheets with parchment. Set aside.

2. Preheat oven to 200°F. For meringue mixture, in a large heatproof bowl combine egg whites, sugar, and cream of tartar. Place bowl over a pan of simmering water. Beat with an electric mixer on low speed about 4 minutes or until sugar is dissolved and mixture is warm.

3. Remove bowl from water. Beat mixture on high speed about 10 minutes or until stiff peaks form. Beat in vanilla.

4. Immediately spoon meringue mixture into prepared decorating bag. Pipe 2- to 3-inch bone shapes, 1 inch apart, on one of the prepared baking sheets. (Each bone should have two round bumps on each end.) Pipe 2- to 3-inch curved bone shapes (without bumps) for ribs. Pipe 1½- to 2-inch oval shapes onto the other prepared baking sheet for skulls. Pipe 2-inch straight bone shapes for necks.

5. Bake meringues about 1 hour or until crisp. If meringues begin to brown, reduce oven temperature. When done, turn off oven. Let meringues dry in oven for another hour.

6. In a heavy saucepan melt candy coating over very low heat, stirring occasionally. When meringues are dry, carefully peel them from parchment. Spread a thin layer of melted candy coating on the bottom of each meringue. Place on waxed paper to set. Using black decorating icing, pipe eyes and mouths onto oval skulls.

Makes about 50 cookies.

Each serving: 36 cal, 1 g fat, 0 mg chol, 6 mg sodium, 7 g carb, 0 g fiber, 0 g pro.

Red Velvet Cupcakes

PREP 40 min. BAKE 20 min. COOL 45 min.

3 cups all-purpose flour
1 Tbsp. unsweetened cocoa powder
$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. salt
$\frac{1}{4}$ cup butter, room temperature
2¼ cups sugar
3 eggs, room temperature
1 1-oz. bottle red food coloring (2 Tbsp.)
2 Tbsp. milk
1 tsp. vanilla
1½ cups buttermilk
1½ tsp. baking soda
1½ tsp. vinegar
Desired frosting

1. Line twenty-six 2½-inch muffin cups with paper bake cups or parchment. In a medium bowl stir together flour, cocoa powder, and salt. Set aside.

2. Preheat oven to 350°F. In a very large mixing bowl beat butter with an electric mixer on medium to high speed 30 seconds. Gradually add sugar, about 1⁄4 cup at a time, beating on medium speed until combined. Scrape sides of bowl; beat on medium speed about 2 minutes more or until light and fluffy. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Beat in red food coloring, milk, and vanilla. Alternately add flour mixture and buttermilk, beating on low speed after each addition just until combined. In a small bowl combine baking soda and vinegar; fold into batter.

3. Spoon batter into prepared muffin cups, filling each about three-fourths full.

4. Bake about 20 minutes or until tops spring back when lightly touched. Cool cupcakes in muffin cups on wire racks 5 minutes. Remove cupcakes from muffin cups. Cool completely on wire racks. Top with desired frosting.

Makes 26 servings.

Each serving: 258 cal, 10 g fat, 50 mg chol, 230 mg sodium, 49 g carb, 3 g pro.
DECORATING TIPS

1. For spider cake: After frosting cake, pipe chocolate icing onto top using a pastry bag fitted with a fine tip. Start with two circles near the middle, then draw four lines on each side for creepy-crawly legs.

2. For ghost cupcakes: Fit pastry bag with large tip. Pipe a large circle of icing onto each cupcake. Then pipe two smaller circles on top, quickly pulling the tip away from the cupcake to form a small peak at the top. Dip a toothpick in melted milk or dark chocolate to add eyes and a ghostly mouth.