

THE CHECKED KITCHEN

57

GLUTEN-FREE HALLOWEEN RECIPES

Party food, dinner, sweets and drinks



Start Here

Halloween is the one night of the year built entirely out of food nobody checks.

It arrives in a bag, unwrapped and unlabeled. It comes on a shared tray with somebody else's fingers in it. It gets handed to a child at a door by a neighbor who means well and has no idea what they are holding. For most families this is a pleasant evening. For a celiac household it is the hardest night on the calendar to run safely, and the hardest one to opt out of without a child noticing they have been left out of something.

This collection is the answer to that: 57 recipes, from the party table to dinner to the sweets, every one of them gluten-free, and every processed ingredient named on the line where it appears so you know exactly what needs checking before you shop.

What actually catches people

Not the obvious things. Almost nobody with a diagnosis is caught out by a sandwich. The traps at Halloween are the ingredients that look like they could not possibly be a problem.

Crisped rice cereal. The treat that looks safest in the room. Standard crisped rice is made with malt, and malt comes from barley. This is the single most common mistake in gluten-free Halloween baking.

Condensed tomato soup. Several of the best-known brands thicken it with wheat flour. It turns up in stuffed peppers, in casseroles, in half the recipes people cook on a night they are busy.

Taco seasoning packets and chili powder. Blends, not spices. Wheat flour and anti-caking agents both appear.

Barbecue sauce. Barley malt, malt extract and malt vinegar all live in it, and none of them has to be flagged in United States labeling. Soy sauce is in there too; its wheat is declared, but on a long ingredient list it is easy to read past.

Candy corn, sprinkles and candy eyes. Decorations are a separate product with a separate label, and the same brand can be safe in one country and not in another.

Broth. The most-missed ingredient in gluten-free savory cooking anywhere, and the reason a pot of soup made from scratch can still be unsafe.

Every recipe in this book names these where they occur. When a line says *certified gluten-free*, it is not padding: it is the line to read before it goes in the trolley.

The shared table

Cross-contamination at a party is not evenly distributed, and it helps to know where the real risk sits rather than worrying about all of it at once.

Researchers have measured this. Shared pasta water is the clearest danger there is: in twelve sampled pots, every single one exceeded the legal threshold, at 39 to 116 parts per million. A gluten-free pasta needs a clean pot and fresh water, full stop. By contrast, washed knives, rinsed pans and even toasters performed far better than their reputation suggests.

What travels at a party is not the pots. It is **crumbs and flour dust in the air**, and the **communal bowl** that thirty hands go into. So the practical rules for the night are short:

- Put the gluten-free version out **first**, in its own bowl, with its own spoon.
- Keep it away from the wheat crackers and the pretzels, not next to them.
- Serve the naturally safe things in quantity — raw vegetables, fruit, plain popcorn, cheese. Nobody has to ask about a carrot.
- If children are serving themselves, portion the safe food onto plates before they start.

Fifty milligrams of gluten a day is enough to cause measurable intestinal damage, and in some people the threshold is as low as 10 mg. Safety guidance is built on that lower figure. Ten milligrams is roughly what sits on the tip of a pencil, and roughly what a shared bowl of snack mix can transfer in one evening.

The bag at the end of the night

Trick-or-treat candy is not a lost cause, and telling a child it is will not go well. Sort it on the table when they get home. Plain chocolate, hard candy and most gummies are usually fine, brand by brand. Licorice, wafer bars, malted milk balls and anything with a cookie center are out.

Then do what makes it painless: trade. The bark, the bag of snack mix, the mummy pretzels and the peanut butter eyeball truffles in this book are all made to be swapped in for what came out of the bag, one for one, so the child ends the night with more than they started, not less.

How to use this book

The recipes are grouped by when you need them — the party table, dinner, bakes, sweets, drinks. Each one carries its yield, its timings, what to check, and how far ahead it can be made, because on 31 October the thing in shortest supply is not ingredients. It is the hour between getting home and the doorbell.

Contents

Every recipe starts on its own page. Tap a title to jump to it.

THE PARTY TABLE

Spiced Roasted Pumpkin Seeds	8
Spider Deviled Eggs	9
Spiderweb Layered Dip	10
Pumpkin-Shaped Cheese Ball	11
Halloween Snack Mix	12
Bone-Yard Vegetable Platter with Ranch Dip	13
Jalapeño Popper Mummies	14
Blood-Red Beet Hummus	15

DINNER ON HALLOWEEN NIGHT

Mummy-Wrapped Hot Dogs	16
Roasted Pumpkin Soup	18
Jack-o'-Lantern Stuffed Peppers	19
Pumpkin and Black Bean Chili	20
Monster Eyeball Meatballs with Spaghetti	21
Piped Mashed Potato Ghosts	23
One-Pot Pumpkin Macaroni and Cheese	24
Sausage and Rice Stuffed Pumpkins	25
Monster Bones (Baked Barbecue Drumsticks)	26
Spiderweb and Mummy Pizzas	27
Witches' Cauldron Black Bean Soup	29
Cornbread Muffins	30
Maple Roasted Acorn Squash Rings	31
Pumpkin Risotto	32

THE BAKING TRAY

Pumpkin Cupcakes with Cream Cheese Frosting	33
Almond Flour Pumpkin Loaf	35
Pumpkin Pancakes	36
Pumpkin Chocolate Chip Muffins	37
Pumpkin Spice Energy Balls	38
Baked Pumpkin Donuts	39

SWEETS AND SPOOKS

Stovetop Caramel Apples	41
Meringue Ghosts	43
Halloween Candy Bark	44
Molasses Popcorn Balls	45
Witches' Finger Cookies	46
Apple Monster Mouths	47
Frozen Banana Ghosts	48
Gravedigger Dirt Cups	49
Cinnamon Candy Apples	50
Monster Cookies	51
Crispy Rice Pumpkins	52
Ghost-Dipped Strawberries	53
Pumpkin Pie with Almond Flour Crust	54
Peanut Butter Eyeball Truffles	56
Flourless Brownies	57
No-Bake Pumpkin Cheesecake	58
Mummy Pretzel Rods	60
Oven Caramel Corn	61
Caramel Apple Nachos	62
Vanilla Panna Cotta with Blood Sauce	63
Pumpkin Fudge	64

Apple Crisp	65
No-Bake Chocolate Spiders	67

SOMETHING TO DRINK

Mulled Apple Cider	68
Green Monster Smoothie	69
Witches' Brew Punch	70
Pumpkin Spice Hot Chocolate	71
Pumpkin Spice Latte	72
Blood Orange Punch	73

The Party Table

Dips, bites and the bowls that sit out all evening.



Spiced Roasted Pumpkin Seeds

Yield: 240 ml (1 cup) / Prep: 5 min / Cook: 12 min / Total: 17 min

INGREDIENTS

- 240 ml (1 cup) raw pepitas (shelled pumpkin seeds)
- 22.5 ml (1 1/2 Tbsp) olive oil
- 7.5 ml (1 1/2 tsp) ground cinnamon
- 2.5 ml (1/2 tsp) gluten-free yellow curry powder
- 1.25 ml (1/4 tsp) ground cloves
- 1.25 ml (1/4 tsp) ground cardamom
- 1.25 ml (1/4 tsp) cayenne pepper
- 2.5 ml (1/2 tsp) kosher salt, plus a few pinches for the top

METHOD

- 1 Heat the oven to 200 C (400 F) with a rack in the upper half, so the seeds sit close to the heat.
- 2 Put the pepitas in a bowl, pour over the oil and toss until every seed is coated. Add the cinnamon, curry powder, cloves, cardamom, cayenne and salt and stir until the spices are evenly spread.
- 3 Tip onto a half sheet pan in a single layer and add a few more pinches of salt.
- 4 Roast 8 to 12 min. You will hear the seeds start to crack. Cool on the pan; they crisp as they cool.

NOTES / VARIATIONS

- Curry powder is a blend, not a single spice, and blends are where anti-caking agents and fillers appear. It is the one line in this recipe that needs a label check.
- If you are scooping seeds out of a carving pumpkin, rinse them, dry them thoroughly overnight and roast 15 to 20 min; whole seeds take longer than shelled pepitas.

MAKE-AHEAD / STORAGE

- Airtight at room temperature up to 1 week.



Spider Deviled Eggs

Yield: 16 halves / Prep: 25 min / Cook: 12 min / Chill: 2 h / Total: 2 h 37 min

INGREDIENTS

- 8 large eggs
- 60 ml (4 Tbsp) mayonnaise
- 30 ml (2 Tbsp) mustard
- 15 ml (1 Tbsp) dried minced onion (optional)
- 5 ml (1 tsp) celery seed (optional)
- 1 pinch smoked paprika, to taste (optional)
- 1 pinch salt, to taste
- Green gel food coloring
- 18 large black olives
- Whole black peppercorns, for eyes (optional)

METHOD

- 1 Put the eggs in a saucepan with cold water covering them by 2.5 cm (1 inch). Bring to a rolling boil, take the pan off the heat, cover it and leave the eggs 10 to 12 min. Drain and cool them under running water.
- 2 Peel the eggs, halve them lengthways and scoop the yolks into a bowl. Set the whites on a tray.
- 3 Break the yolks up with a fork, then mash in the mayonnaise, mustard, dried onion, celery seed, smoked paprika, salt and a little green coloring until smooth. Taste and adjust.
- 4 Pipe or spoon the filling back into the whites, 15 to 30 ml (1 to 2 Tbsp) each.
- 5 Halve the olives lengthways. Set one half dome-side up on each egg for the spider's body, then cut the remaining halves into thin strips and lay 3 to 4 on each side as legs.
- 6 Add two peppercorn eyes if you like. Chill at least 2 h before serving.

NOTES / VARIATIONS

- To make the marbled “spiderweb” eggs some tables use, crack the shells all over after boiling without peeling them, seal the eggs in a bag with black gel coloring overnight, then peel. The dye follows the cracks.
- Eggs, mayonnaise and olives carry no gluten in any brand, which makes this the safest thing you can put on a shared party table.

MAKE-AHEAD / STORAGE

- Covered in the refrigerator up to 2 days. Do not freeze.



Spiderweb Layered Dip

Yield: 12 servings / Prep: 15 min / Total: 15 min

INGREDIENTS

- 454 g (16 oz) gluten-free refried beans
- 454 g (16 oz) guacamole
- 420 ml (1 3/4 cups) sour cream
- 1 packet (28 g / 1 oz) gluten-free taco seasoning
- 454 g (16 oz) salsa
- 480 ml (2 cups) shredded cheddar cheese
- 60 ml (1/4 cup) diced tomatoes
- 60 ml (1/4 cup) diced green bell pepper
- 64 g (2.25 oz) canned sliced black olives, drained
- Gluten-free tortilla chips, to serve

METHOD

- 1 Spread the refried beans over the base of a 2 liter (2 quart) round dish, then spread the guacamole over them.
- 2 Set aside 60 ml (1/4 cup) of the sour cream. Stir the taco seasoning into the rest and spread it over the guacamole. Spoon the salsa over that.
- 3 Chop the cheddar finely and scatter it over the salsa.
- 4 Put the reserved sour cream in a piping bag or a plastic bag with one corner snipped off. Pipe a cross over the dish, turn the dish 90 degrees and pipe a second cross, then join the spokes with three curved lines in each section to make the web.
- 5 Edge the dish with the diced tomato, green pepper and sliced olives.
- 6 Serve at once with tortilla chips, or cover and refrigerate.

NOTES / VARIATIONS

- Taco seasoning packets are one of the most reliable sources of hidden wheat flour in party food. This is the line to check first.
- Tortilla chips are a second check: corn chips are usually fine, but shared fryers and wheat-flour dusting both happen.
- If you use plastic spider rings for decoration, count them out and count them back in before the dip is served to children.

MAKE-AHEAD / STORAGE

- Covered in the refrigerator up to 2 days. The web will soften; pipe it again before serving.



Pumpkin-Shaped Cheese Ball

Yield: 10 servings / Prep: 15 min / Chill: 2 h / Total: 2 h 15 min

INGREDIENTS

- 226 g (8 oz) cream cheese, softened
- 30 ml (2 Tbsp) butter, softened
- 226 g (8 oz) sharp cheddar cheese, finely grated
- 2.5 ml (1/2 tsp) smoked paprika
- 1.25 ml (1/4 tsp) garlic powder
- 1.25 ml (1/4 tsp) onion powder
- 1.25 ml (1/4 tsp) black pepper
- 240 ml (1 cup) crushed gluten-free cheese crackers, or finely crushed gluten-free corn chips
- 1 green bell pepper stem
- Gluten-free crackers or vegetable sticks, to serve

METHOD

- 1 Put the cream cheese, butter, cheddar, smoked paprika, garlic powder, onion powder and black pepper in a bowl and stir until completely combined.
- 2 Tip the mixture onto a large sheet of plastic wrap and gather it into a ball. Wrap it, add a second layer of wrap, then stretch two wide rubber bands around it on opposite sides, and two more between them, to press in the ribs of a pumpkin.
- 3 Chill at least 2 h.
- 4 Unwrap the ball and remove the bands. Spread the cracker crumbs on a plate and roll the ball in them until the outside is orange.
- 5 Press the pepper stem into the top and serve with gluten-free crackers or vegetable sticks.

NOTES / VARIATIONS

- The original of this appetizer is rolled in wheat cheese crackers. Crushed gluten-free cheese crackers give the same color; crushed plain corn chips give a better crunch.
- Carrot and celery sticks are worth putting out alongside the crackers. On a mixed table, a naked vegetable is the one thing nobody has to ask about.

MAKE-AHEAD / STORAGE

- Wrapped in the refrigerator up to 4 days. Roll it in the crumbs on the day you serve it, or they go soft.



Halloween Snack Mix

Yield: 20 servings / Prep: 15 min / Total: 15 min

INGREDIENTS

- 1.9 liters (8 cups) popped popcorn, from about 60 ml (1/4 cup) kernels
- 480 ml (2 cups) certified gluten-free rice cereal squares
- 240 ml (1 cup) gluten-free pretzel sticks
- 240 ml (1 cup) peanuts
- 340 g (12 oz) certified gluten-free white chocolate chips
- 15 ml (1 Tbsp) coconut or vegetable oil
- 240 ml (1 cup) certified gluten-free peanut butter candy pieces
- 240 ml (1 cup) candy corn, checked gluten-free
- Gluten-free Halloween sprinkles (optional)
- Coarse sea salt (optional)
- Certified gluten-free candy eyes (optional)

METHOD

- 1 Line two large baking sheets with parchment or silicone mats.
- 2 Combine the popcorn, cereal squares, pretzel sticks and peanuts in a very large bowl, or split between two.
- 3 Put the white chocolate chips and oil in a microwave-safe bowl. Microwave 30 seconds, stir, then continue in 10-second bursts, stirring each time, until smooth.
- 4 Drizzle the chocolate over the mixture and fold gently with a spatula until everything is streaked with white. Fold in the candy pieces and candy corn.
- 5 Spread the mix in an even layer on the sheets and scatter the sprinkles, salt and candy eyes over while the chocolate is wet, pressing them in lightly.
- 6 Leave until the chocolate sets, then break it up.

NOTES / VARIATIONS

- Gluten-free pretzels are what make this bowl possible; ordinary pretzels are wheat and the crumbs go everywhere, which is exactly how a shared snack bowl becomes unsafe for one child.
- Make a second, smaller batch in a separate bowl with separate hands if the party also has a wheat version out. Crumbs travel between bowls faster than people think.

MAKE-AHEAD / STORAGE

- Airtight at room temperature up to 1 week.



Bone-Yard Vegetable Platter with Ranch Dip

Yield: 320 ml (1 1/3 cups) dip, 10 servings / Prep: 20 min / Chill: 2 h / Total: 2 h 20 min

INGREDIENTS

Dip

- 240 ml (1 cup) sour cream or plain Greek yogurt
- 80 ml (1/3 cup) mayonnaise
- 80 ml (1/3 cup) chives, very finely chopped
- 5 ml (1 tsp) garlic powder
- 2.5 ml (1/2 tsp) fine sea salt, plus more to taste
- 1.25 ml (1/4 tsp) freshly ground black pepper

Platter

- Cauliflower florets, for the skull
- Celery sticks, trimmed and split at the ends, for the long bones
- Baby carrots, for the fingers
- Sliced cucumber, for the vertebrae
- Cherry tomatoes and olives, for the eyes

METHOD

- 1 Whisk the sour cream, mayonnaise, chives, garlic powder, salt and pepper together in a medium bowl.
- 2 Cover and refrigerate at least 2 h, or overnight; the garlic and chives need time to come forward.
- 3 Lay the skeleton out on a large board: a mound of cauliflower for the skull, two tomato or olive eyes, a column of cucumber slices for the spine, celery sticks with split ends for arm and leg bones, and carrots fanned out as fingers and toes.
- 4 Set the bowl of dip where the ribcage would be and serve.

NOTES / VARIATIONS

- Bottled ranch dressing and seasoning packets both commonly carry wheat starch or modified starch, and this takes five minutes to make instead.
- A raw vegetable platter is the one thing on a Halloween table nobody has to interrogate. On a mixed table, put it out first and put it out big.

MAKE-AHEAD / STORAGE

- The dip keeps in an airtight container in the refrigerator up to 5 days. Cut vegetables keep 2 days in water in the refrigerator.



Jalapeño Popper Mummies

Yield: 16 pieces / Prep: 30 min / Cook: 15 min / Total: 45 min

INGREDIENTS

- 8 large jalapeño peppers
- 226 g (8 oz) cream cheese, softened
- 240 ml (1 cup) shredded Mexican-style cheese
- 120 ml (1/2 cup) certified gluten-free bacon bits
- 15 ml (1 Tbsp) dried parsley flakes
- 10 ml (2 tsp) garlic powder
- 226 g (8 oz) gluten-free crescent roll dough, or gluten-free pizza dough rolled thin
- Certified gluten-free candy eyes (optional)

METHOD

- 1 Heat the oven to 175 C (350 F) and line a baking sheet.
- 2 Rinse the jalapeños and halve them lengthways, leaving the stems on. Scrape out the ribs and seeds with a small spoon; they carry most of the heat.
- 3 Lay the halves cut-side up on the sheet.
- 4 Mix the cream cheese, shredded cheese, bacon bits, parsley and garlic powder until even.
- 5 Spread about 30 ml (2 Tbsp) of the filling into each pepper half.
- 6 Roll the dough out and cut it into strips 8 mm to 12 mm (1/3 to 1/2 inch) wide with a pizza wheel.
- 7 Wrap the strips around each pepper from top to bottom, leaving gaps so it looks bandaged.
- 8 Bake 15 min, until the dough is golden.
- 9 Press on candy eyes and serve warm.

NOTES / VARIATIONS

- Bacon bits are the surprise on this list. The real-bacon kind is usually safe; the shelf-stable imitation kind is often made from soy protein with wheat in the flavoring.
- Gluten-free crescent dough is not sold everywhere. Gluten-free pizza dough or the pastry from the mummy hot dog recipe both cut into strips and bake in the same time.

MAKE-AHEAD / STORAGE

- Best straight from the oven. Refrigerate up to 2 days and reheat at 175 C (350 F) for 8 min; the microwave makes the dough tough.



Blood-Red Beet Hummus

Yield: 6 servings / Prep: 10 min / Cook: 40 min / Total: 50 min

INGREDIENTS

- 1 small beet, trimmed
- 360 ml (1 1/2 cups) cooked chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 80 ml (1/3 cup) smooth tahini
- 30 ml (2 Tbsp) extra-virgin olive oil, plus more to drizzle
- 30 ml (2 Tbsp) fresh lemon juice, plus more to taste
- 1 garlic clove
- 2.5 ml (1/2 tsp) ground coriander
- 2.5 ml (1/2 tsp) ground cumin
- 2.5 ml (1/2 tsp) sea salt, plus more to taste
- 75 ml (5 Tbsp) water, plus more as needed
- Sesame seeds, lemon zest and chopped parsley or mint, to garnish
- Gluten-free crackers, flatbread or raw vegetables, to serve

METHOD

- 1 Heat the oven to 200 C (400 F).
- 2 Set the beet on a sheet of foil, drizzle it generously with olive oil, sprinkle with salt and wrap it tightly. Roast on a baking sheet 35 to 50 min, until a fork goes through easily.
- 3 Unwrap and cool. Rub the skin off under running water and chop the beet roughly.
- 4 Put the beet, chickpeas, tahini, olive oil, lemon juice, garlic, coriander, cumin, salt and water in a food processor and run it until very smooth, adding more water a spoonful at a time.
- 5 Taste and adjust the lemon and salt.
- 6 Spread in a shallow bowl, drizzle with oil and scatter the sesame seeds, lemon zest and herbs over.

NOTES / VARIATIONS

- The color is not food dye; it is one roasted beet. Dragged through with the back of a spoon it looks unnervingly like a wound, which is the entire point on 31 October.
- Chickpeas, tahini and lemon are naturally gluten-free. What is served alongside is the check: crackers, flatbread, breadsticks.

MAKE-AHEAD / STORAGE

- Airtight in the refrigerator up to 5 days. It thickens; loosen with water, not oil.

Dinner on Halloween Night

What goes on the table before anyone leaves the house.



Mummy-Wrapped Hot Dogs

Yield: 14 mummy dogs / Prep: 1 h / Chill: 30 min / Cook: 25 min / Total: 1 h 55 min

INGREDIENTS

- 1 package (about 450 g / 16 oz) gluten-free pie crust mix
- 240 ml (16 Tbsp) cold butter, cubed
- 90 ml (6 Tbsp) ice water, plus more as needed
- 14 certified gluten-free hot dogs
- 30 ml (2 Tbsp) butter, melted
- Certified gluten-free candy eyes (or use mustard dots)
- Gluten-free mustard and ketchup, to serve

METHOD

- 1 Make the pastry with the pie crust mix, cold butter and ice water, following the package directions for the mix. Add extra ice water 5 ml (1 tsp) at a time only if the dough will not hold together.
- 2 Divide the dough into two disks, wrap each one and chill at least 30 min. The dough can stay wrapped in the refrigerator overnight.
- 3 Heat the oven to 190 C (375 F). Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper.
- 4 Roll the first disk between two sheets of plastic to a thickness of 6 mm to 12 mm (1/4 to 1/2 inch). Cut it into thin, uneven strips with a pizza wheel; the strips are meant to look like bandages, so they do not need to match.
- 5 Wind the strips around each hot dog, leaving a gap near one end for the face. Set the wrapped dogs on the lined sheet. Repeat with the second disk.
- 6 Brush the pastry with melted butter. Bake 20 to 30 min, until the pastry is golden.
- 7 Cool a few minutes. Put two dots of mustard in the gap you left and press on the candy eyes. Serve warm with mustard and ketchup.

NOTES / VARIATIONS

- Hot dogs are one of the most common hidden-gluten items in this kind of party food: fillers and flavorings vary by brand, so read the label on the package you buy rather than the brand you remember.
- Candy eyes are decorations, not food you check once; many brands are made on shared lines. If you cannot confirm one, pipe two small mustard or mayonnaise dots instead.

MAKE-AHEAD / STORAGE

- Best within an hour of baking. Refrigerate leftovers up to 2 days and reheat 8 to 10 min at 175 C (350 F); the microwave makes the pastry soft.



Roasted Pumpkin Soup

Yield: 4 to 6 bowls / Prep: 15 min / Cook: 1 h 10 min / Total: 1 h 25 min

INGREDIENTS

- 1 sugar pie pumpkin, about 1.8 kg (4 lb)
- 60 ml (4 Tbsp) olive oil, divided
- 1 large yellow onion, chopped
- 4 large or 6 medium garlic cloves, minced
- 2.5 ml (1/2 tsp) sea salt
- 2.5 ml (1/2 tsp) ground cinnamon
- 2.5 ml (1/2 tsp) ground nutmeg
- 0.6 ml (1/8 tsp) ground cloves
- 1 tiny dash cayenne pepper (optional)
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 960 ml (4 cups) certified gluten-free vegetable broth
- 120 ml (1/2 cup) full-fat coconut milk or heavy cream
- 30 ml (2 Tbsp) maple syrup or honey
- 60 ml (1/4 cup) pepitas, to serve

METHOD

- 1 Heat the oven to 220 C (425 F) and line a baking sheet with parchment. Halve the pumpkin, scrape out the seeds and cut it into quarters. Brush the flesh with 15 ml (1 Tbsp) of the oil, lay the pieces cut-side down and roast 35 min or more, until a knife slides in easily. Let cool enough to handle.
- 2 Warm the remaining 45 ml (3 Tbsp) oil in a large heavy pot over medium heat. Add the onion, garlic and salt and cook 8 to 10 min, until translucent. Meanwhile peel the skin off the pumpkin and discard it.
- 3 Add the pumpkin flesh, cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves, cayenne if using, and several grinds of black pepper. Break the pumpkin up with a spoon.
- 4 Pour in the broth, bring to a boil, then lower the heat and simmer 15 min.
- 5 While it simmers, toast the pepitas in a dry skillet over medium-low heat, stirring often, until fragrant and golden. Tip them out.
- 6 Stir the coconut milk and maple syrup into the soup and let it cool a few minutes. Blend until smooth with a stick blender in the pot, or in batches in a countertop blender, never filling it more than half full with hot liquid.
- 7 Taste, adjust the salt and spice, ladle into bowls and scatter the pepitas over.

NOTES / VARIATIONS

- Broth is the single most-missed ingredient in savory gluten-free cooking. Stock cubes and cartons routinely carry wheat or barley; buy one certified brand and keep it.
- Hollow out the smallest pumpkin you can find, warm it in the oven and serve the soup in it for a table centerpiece that costs nothing extra.

MAKE-AHEAD / STORAGE

- Cool completely, then refrigerate up to 4 days or freeze up to 3 months.



Jack-o'-Lantern Stuffed Peppers

Yield: 6 servings / Prep: 20 min / Cook: 50 min / Total: 1 h 10 min

INGREDIENTS

- 6 orange bell peppers
- 454 g (1 lb) ground beef
- 480 ml (2 cups) cooked white rice
- 425 g (15 oz) canned tomato sauce
- 305 g (10.75 oz) canned gluten-free condensed tomato soup
- 5 ml (1 tsp) ground cumin
- 2.5 ml (1/2 tsp) gluten-free chili powder
- 2.5 ml (1/2 tsp) garlic powder
- 2.5 ml (1/2 tsp) salt
- 1.25 ml (1/4 tsp) black pepper

METHOD

- 1 Heat the oven to 175 C (350 F).
- 2 Cut the tops off the peppers and keep them. Pull out the ribs and seeds. With a small sharp knife, cut a jack-o'-lantern face into one side of each pepper. Stand them upright in a baking dish.
- 3 Brown the beef in a large skillet over medium heat, breaking it up, then drain off the fat.
- 4 Stir in the rice, tomato sauce, tomato soup, cumin, chili powder, garlic powder, salt and pepper. Simmer 1 to 2 min.
- 5 Fill each pepper, leaving a small well at the top, and set the pepper tops back on like lids.
- 6 Cover the dish with foil and bake 50 min, until the peppers are as tender as you like them.

NOTES / VARIATIONS

- Condensed tomato soup is the trap in this recipe. Several of the best-known brands thicken it with wheat flour. Buy one labeled gluten-free or replace it with 305 g (10.75 oz) more tomato sauce and 60 ml (1/4 cup) water.
- Chili powder is a blend and needs the same check; single spices such as cumin do not.

MAKE-AHEAD / STORAGE

- Refrigerate up to 3 days. Reheat covered at 175 C (350 F) for 20 min.



Pumpkin and Black Bean Chili

Yield: 4 servings / Prep: 15 min / Cook: 3 h / Total: 3 h 15 min

INGREDIENTS

- 15 ml (1 Tbsp) olive oil
- 1 medium white onion, chopped
- 1 jalapeño, seeded and finely diced
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 454 g (1 lb) extra-lean ground turkey
- 37.5 ml (2 1/2 Tbsp) gluten-free chili powder
- 7.5 ml (1 1/2 tsp) ground cumin
- 1.25 ml (1/4 tsp) cayenne pepper
- 1.25 ml (1/4 tsp) ground cinnamon
- 0.6 ml (1/8 tsp) ground cloves
- 5 ml (1 tsp) salt, plus more to taste
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 30 ml (2 Tbsp) pure maple syrup or brown sugar
- 794 g (28 oz) canned diced tomatoes, preferably no salt added
- 180 ml (3/4 cup) certified gluten-free low-sodium chicken broth
- 425 g (15 oz) canned pumpkin puree
- 425 g (15 oz) canned black beans, rinsed and drained
- To serve: cilantro, sour cream or Greek yogurt, guacamole, grated cheddar

METHOD

- 1 Heat the oil in a large pot over medium-high heat. Add the onion, jalapeño and garlic and cook 2 min.
- 2 Add the turkey, break it up and cook about 5 min, until no pink remains.
- 3 Stir in the chili powder, cumin, cayenne, cinnamon, cloves, salt and pepper and cook 30 seconds more, then transfer everything to a slow cooker.
- 4 Add the maple syrup, tomatoes, broth, pumpkin puree and black beans and stir well.
- 5 Cover and cook 2 to 3 h on high or 6 to 7 h on low.
- 6 Taste for salt and serve in bowls with the toppings.

NOTES / VARIATIONS

- Two lines here decide whether the pot is safe: chili powder, which is a blend and often carries flour or an anti-caking agent, and broth. Both have certified versions; buy them once and stop worrying.
- Pumpkin puree is not pumpkin pie filling. The filling is sweetened and spiced and will make this inedible.

MAKE-AHEAD / STORAGE

- Refrigerate up to 4 days or freeze up to 3 months. It thickens overnight; loosen with a splash of broth.



Monster Eyeball Meatballs with Spaghetti

Yield: 4 servings (24 meatballs) / Prep: 30 min / Cook: 20 min / Total: 50 min

INGREDIENTS

- 227 g (1/2 lb) ground beef
- 227 g (1/2 lb) ground pork
- 50 g (1/2 cup) grated Parmesan cheese
- 54 g (1/2 cup) gluten-free breadcrumbs
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 large egg, at room temperature
- 5 ml (1 tsp) gluten-free dried Italian seasoning
- 1.25 ml (1/4 tsp) red pepper flakes
- 1 small package mini mozzarella balls
- 1 small jar black olives
- 113 g (4 oz) gluten-free spaghetti
- 227 g (8 oz) tomato sauce
- Basil, oregano or parsley, to serve

METHOD

- 1 Heat the oven to 200 C (400 F) and lightly grease a baking sheet.
- 2 Combine the beef, pork, Parmesan, breadcrumbs, garlic, egg, Italian seasoning and pepper flakes with your hands, stopping as soon as it comes together; overworked meatballs turn rubbery.
- 3 Roll 24 balls about 2.5 cm (1 inch) across and space them 2.5 cm (1 inch) apart on the sheet.
- 4 Bake 14 to 17 min, until the center reaches 71 C (160 F).
- 5 Meanwhile cook the spaghetti to the package directions and reserve 60 ml (1/4 cup) of the cooking water before draining.
- 6 Halve the mozzarella balls lengthways and pat them dry. Trim the tops and bottoms off the olives to get flat discs and pat those dry too.
- 7 Lay a mozzarella half on each meatball and return them to the oven 2 to 3 min, until the cheese just slumps.
- 8 Press an olive disc into the center of each mozzarella eye.
- 9 Warm the tomato sauce in the empty pasta pot with 30 ml (2 Tbsp) of the reserved water, adding the rest if it is tight. Toss the spaghetti through it.
- 10 Serve the pasta with the eyeballs on top and herbs scattered over.

NOTES / VARIATIONS

- Gluten-free pasta water is the one thing in this recipe you cannot borrow from someone else's pot. Measured samples of shared pasta water have run at 39 to 116 ppm gluten, well over the legal limit, so the pasta needs a clean pot and fresh water.
- Breadcrumbs are the other check. Gluten-free crumbs absorb more liquid than wheat ones, so if the mixture feels dry add 15 ml (1 Tbsp) milk.

MAKE-AHEAD / STORAGE

- Refrigerate meatballs and sauce up to 3 days; they also freeze for 3 months. Assemble the eyes after reheating.



Piped Mashed Potato Ghosts

Yield: 12 ghosts (4 side servings) / Prep: 30 min / Cook: 20 min / Total: 50 min

INGREDIENTS

- 680 g (1 1/2 lb) russet potatoes, peeled and quartered lengthways
- 2.5 ml (1/2 tsp) salt, for the cooking water
- 30 ml (2 Tbsp) butter
- 30 ml (2 Tbsp) heavy cream
- 15 ml (1 Tbsp) reserved potato cooking water, plus more as needed
- Salt and white pepper, to taste
- 60 ml (1/4 cup) grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 large egg, beaten
- Black peppercorns or black sesame seeds, for eyes

METHOD

- 1 Put the potatoes in a saucepan with the salt and enough water to cover. Bring to a boil, then lower the heat, cover and simmer 15 to 20 min, until a knife slides through easily.
- 2 Melt the butter and stir the cream into it.
- 3 Drain the potatoes, keeping some of the water, and tip them into a bowl while still hot.
- 4 Add the butter and cream and 15 ml (1 Tbsp) of the cooking water and mash until smooth, adding a little more liquid if needed. The mixture has to be soft enough to pipe but stiff enough to hold a peak.
- 5 Season with salt and white pepper. White pepper keeps the ghosts white; black pepper leaves flecks.
- 6 Stir in the Parmesan and the beaten egg.
- 7 Heat the oven to 190 C (375 F) and line a baking sheet.
- 8 Spoon the potato into a piping bag with a large plain or star tip, or a freezer bag with a corner cut off, and pipe 12 tall swirls onto the sheet, lifting at the end to pull a point.
- 9 Press in peppercorns or sesame seeds for eyes.
- 10 Bake 15 to 20 min, until set and golden at the edges.

NOTES / VARIATIONS

- Potatoes, butter, cream and Parmesan need no substitution at all, which is rare for a dish this central to the plate. The egg is what holds the shape in the oven.
- Do not use a food processor. Potato turns to glue in a blade; a masher or ricer keeps it pipeable.

MAKE-AHEAD / STORAGE

- Pipe ahead and refrigerate the unbaked ghosts up to 1 day, then bake from cold, adding 5 min. Baked ghosts do not reheat well.



One-Pot Pumpkin Macaroni and Cheese

Yield: 8 servings / Prep: 10 min / Cook: 20 min / Total: 30 min

INGREDIENTS

- 30 ml (2 Tbsp) unsalted butter
- 7.5 ml (1 1/2 tsp) gluten-free pumpkin spice blend
- 7.5 ml (1 1/2 tsp) garlic powder
- 7.5 ml (1 1/2 tsp) onion powder
- 425 g (15 oz) canned pumpkin puree (not pie filling)
- 454 g (1 lb) short gluten-free pasta
- 1.2 liters (5 cups) water
- 5 ml (1 tsp) fine salt, plus more to taste
- 113 g (4 oz) cream cheese, cubed
- 227 g (8 oz) shredded sharp cheddar cheese
- 57 g (1/2 cup) finely grated Parmesan cheese, plus more to serve

METHOD

- 1 Melt the butter in a large pot over medium heat. Add the pumpkin spice, garlic powder and onion powder and cook 2 to 4 min, stirring often, until fragrant and flecked brown.
- 2 Stir in the pumpkin puree and cook 1 min.
- 3 Add the pasta, water and salt. Cover, bring to a boil over high heat, then uncover and set a timer for 8 min.
- 4 Cook, stirring often, lowering the heat enough to keep a steady simmer without catching. Do not drain.
- 5 Stir in the cream cheese and simmer 4 to 5 min more, until it melts and the pasta is al dente.
- 6 Lower the heat, add the cheddar and Parmesan and stir until smooth.
- 7 Taste, add salt, and serve with more Parmesan.

NOTES / VARIATIONS

- Gluten-free pasta releases more starch than wheat pasta, so this one-pot method actually suits it: the starch is what thickens the sauce. Start tasting at 6 min, because corn and rice pastas go from firm to soft quickly.
- Pumpkin spice blends are mixed products. Check the jar, or use 5 ml (1 tsp) cinnamon with a pinch each of nutmeg, ginger and cloves.

MAKE-AHEAD / STORAGE

- Refrigerate up to 5 days or freeze up to 3 months. Reheat with a splash of milk; gluten-free pasta stiffens when cold.



Sausage and Rice Stuffed Pumpkins

Yield: 12 servings / Prep: 30 min / Cook: 1 h 5 min / Total: 1 h 35 min

INGREDIENTS

- 3 small pie pumpkins, about 900 g (2 lb) each
- 227 g (1/2 lb) bulk certified gluten-free sweet Italian sausage
- 454 g (1 lb) fresh mushrooms, chopped
- 2 medium onions, chopped
- 1 medium green pepper, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 960 ml (4 cups) cooked long grain rice
- 240 ml (1 cup) grated Parmesan cheese, divided
- 2 large eggs, lightly beaten
- 60 ml (1/4 cup) minced fresh parsley
- 5 ml (1 tsp) salt
- 2.5 ml (1/2 tsp) dried thyme

METHOD

- 1 Heat the oven to 230 C (450 F). Cut a 7.5 cm (3 inch) circle around each pumpkin stem, lift off the tops and keep them. Scrape out the strings and seeds; save the seeds for roasting.
- 2 Cook the sausage, mushrooms, onions, green pepper and garlic in a large skillet over medium heat 6 to 8 min, breaking the meat up, until no pink remains. Drain.
- 3 Off the heat, stir in the rice, 180 ml (3/4 cup) of the Parmesan, the eggs, parsley, salt and thyme.
- 4 Stand the pumpkins in a roasting pan, fill them with the rice mixture and set the tops back on. Bake 30 min.
- 5 Lower the oven to 175 C (350 F) and bake 25 to 35 min more, until the pumpkin flesh is tender when pierced and the filling reaches 71 C (160 F).
- 6 Scatter the remaining Parmesan over the filling and cut each pumpkin into wedges to serve, flesh and all.

NOTES / VARIATIONS

- Sausage is the check here, and it is not a small one: fillers in bulk sausage are frequently wheat rusk, especially outside the United States.
- The pumpkins are the serving dishes and the vegetable at once. Choose ones that sit flat, or cut a thin slice off the base.

MAKE-AHEAD / STORAGE

- Refrigerate the scooped-out filling up to 3 days. The shells soften overnight and are best eaten the day they are baked.



Monster Bones (Baked Barbecue Drumsticks)

Yield: 4 servings / Prep: 5 min / Cook: 45 min / Total: 50 min

INGREDIENTS

- 8 fresh chicken drumsticks
- 30 ml (2 Tbsp) extra-virgin olive oil
- 10 ml (2 tsp) garlic powder
- 10 ml (2 tsp) onion powder
- 10 ml (2 tsp) smoked paprika
- 5 ml (1 tsp) gluten-free chili powder
- 5 ml (1 tsp) kosher salt
- 2.5 ml (1/2 tsp) black pepper
- 240 ml (1 cup) gluten-free barbecue sauce

METHOD

- 1 Heat the oven to 200 C (400 F) and line a baking sheet with foil.
- 2 Pat the drumsticks dry with paper towels; wet skin steams instead of crisping.
- 3 Stir the olive oil, garlic powder, onion powder, smoked paprika, chili powder, salt and pepper together.
- 4 Rub the mixture all over the drumsticks and lay them on the sheet.
- 5 Bake 25 to 30 min, until nearly cooked through.
- 6 Brush each drumstick generously with barbecue sauce.
- 7 Return to the oven 10 to 15 min, until the sauce has caramelized and the thickest part reads 74 C (165 F).
- 8 Rest a few minutes before serving.

NOTES / VARIATIONS

- Barbecue sauce is the single most-missed bottle in a gluten-free kitchen. Barley malt, malt extract and malt vinegar all turn up in it, and none of them has to be flagged in United States labeling.
- Wrap a strip of parchment around the bone end of each drumstick and tie it with string if you want them to look like club bones on the plate.

MAKE-AHEAD / STORAGE

- Refrigerate up to 3 days. Reheat uncovered at 190 C (375 F) for 12 min to bring the glaze back.



Spiderweb and Mummy Pizzas

Yield: one 38 cm (15 inch) pizza, or 4 small ones / Prep: 10 min / Rise: 30 min / Cook: 30 min / Total: 1 h 10 min

INGREDIENTS

Dough

- 310 g (2 1/2 cups) gluten-free all-purpose flour blend containing xanthan gum, plus 16 g (2 Tbsp) for dusting
- 12 g (1 Tbsp) gluten-free baking powder
- 7 g (2 1/4 tsp) instant yeast
- 6 g (1 tsp) salt
- 360 ml (1 1/2 cups) warm water, 43 C to 46 C (110 F to 115 F)
- 12 g (1 Tbsp) granulated sugar
- 120 ml (1/2 cup) olive oil
- 5 ml (1 tsp) apple cider vinegar

Topping

- Gluten-free pizza sauce
- Mozzarella or provolone, cut into thin strips
- Black olives, sliced

METHOD

- 1 Set the oven to its proving setting, or heat it to 90 C (200 F) and turn it off once it is warm.
- 2 Combine the flour, yeast, baking powder and salt in a mixer with the paddle attachment.
- 3 Warm the water to 43 C to 46 C (110 F to 115 F) and stir the sugar into it until dissolved.
- 4 Pour the sugar water into the dry mixture on low speed, then add the olive oil and cider vinegar and mix 1 to 2 min. The dough is thick and sticky, closer to a batter than a wheat dough; that is correct.
- 5 Scrape it into a greased bowl, cover it and leave it in the warm oven 30 min.
- 6 Take the dough out and heat the oven to 220 C (425 F).
- 7 Dust a sheet of parchment with 15 ml (1 Tbsp) of the reserved flour, turn the dough out onto it and dust the top with the rest. Press it outward from the center into a 38 cm (15 inch) circle with a raised edge, or into four small rounds.
- 8 Slide the parchment onto a pizza pan and bake 15 min.
- 9 Spread the crust with sauce. For a web, lay the cheese strips from the center outward like spokes and curve short pieces between them; for mummies, lay the strips across at angles and leave two gaps for olive-slice eyes.
- 10 Bake 10 to 15 min, until the cheese is bubbling and the crust is golden.

NOTES / VARIATIONS

- Blind-baking the base before the sauce goes on is the step that stops a gluten-free crust turning to paste in the middle. Do not skip it.
- If your flour blend has no xanthan gum, add 5 ml (1 tsp) for this quantity of flour.

MAKE-AHEAD / STORAGE

- The baked plain crust keeps wrapped at room temperature for 1 day, or frozen for 1 month. Finished pizza reheats best in a hot oven, not a microwave.



Witches' Cauldron Black Bean Soup

Yield: 4 servings / Prep: 10 min / Cook: 20 min / Total: 30 min

INGREDIENTS

- 30 ml (2 Tbsp) extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 large red onion, chopped
- 1 large carrot, peeled and diced
- 2 celery ribs, diced
- 1 jalapeño pepper, deseeded and diced
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 10 ml (2 tsp) ground cumin
- 5 ml (1 tsp) dried oregano
- 5 ml (1 tsp) ground coriander
- 5 ml (1 tsp) kosher salt
- 0.6 ml (1/8 tsp) cayenne pepper
- 3 cans of 425 g (15 oz) low-sodium black beans, drained and rinsed
- 720 ml (3 cups) certified gluten-free low-sodium vegetable or chicken broth
- 15-30 ml (1-2 Tbsp) fresh lime juice
- To serve: cilantro, red onion, avocado, sour cream, lime wedges

METHOD

- 1 Heat the oil in a large pot over medium-high heat. Add the onion, carrot, celery and jalapeño and cook 4 to 5 min, until softened.
- 2 Add the garlic, cumin, oregano, coriander, cayenne and salt and stir 1 min more, until fragrant.
- 3 Add the beans and broth, stir, and bring to a boil. Lower the heat, cover and simmer 15 min.
- 4 Blend a few short bursts with a stick blender, leaving it half creamy and half chunky, or blend 240 ml to 480 ml (1 to 2 cups) in a countertop blender and stir it back in.
- 5 Stir in the lime juice.
- 6 Ladle into bowls and add the toppings. A swirl of sour cream dragged with a skewer makes a passable cobweb.

NOTES / VARIATIONS

- Black and thick in a big pot, this is the most convincing cauldron on the table, and it costs almost nothing to make for a crowd.
- Canned beans and broth are both processed products. Beans are usually safe; broth is the one that catches people out.

MAKE-AHEAD / STORAGE

- Refrigerate up to 5 days or freeze up to 3 months.



Cornbread Muffins

Yield: 12 muffins / Prep: 10 min / Cook: 20 min / Total: 30 min

INGREDIENTS

- 126 g (1 1/3 cups) certified gluten-free oat flour
- 152 g (1 cup) gluten-free medium-grind cornmeal
- 10 ml (2 tsp) gluten-free baking powder
- 1.25 ml (1/4 tsp) salt
- 240 g (1 cup) unsweetened almond milk
- 5 ml (1 tsp) apple cider vinegar
- 2 large eggs, at room temperature
- 84 g (1/4 cup) honey
- 57 g (1/4 cup) butter, melted and cooled

METHOD

- 1 Heat the oven to 190 C (375 F) and grease or line a 12-cup muffin tin.
- 2 Whisk the oat flour, cornmeal, baking powder and salt together in a large bowl.
- 3 In another bowl, mix the almond milk, cider vinegar, eggs and honey.
- 4 Add the dry mixture to the wet and stir until just combined, then stir in the melted butter.
- 5 Divide between the cups.
- 6 Bake 18 to 22 min, until a toothpick comes out clean or with a few crumbs.
- 7 Serve warm with butter.

NOTES / VARIATIONS

- Cornmeal is not automatically gluten-free. It is milled in the same plants as wheat often enough that the certified bags exist for a reason, and the same goes for oat flour.
- These are what goes beside the chili and the black bean soup, which is the other half of a Halloween dinner that is not made of sugar.

MAKE-AHEAD / STORAGE

- Airtight at room temperature up to 2 days, refrigerated up to 5 days, or frozen up to 3 months.



Maple Roasted Acorn Squash Rings

Yield: 4 servings / Prep: 5 min / Cook: 25 min / Total: 30 min

INGREDIENTS

- 2 small acorn squash, cut into 12 mm (1/2 inch) slices
- 30 ml (2 Tbsp) olive oil
- 45 ml (3 Tbsp) maple syrup
- 15 ml (1 Tbsp) brown sugar
- 2.5 ml (1/2 tsp) kosher salt
- 2.5 ml (1/2 tsp) ground black pepper

METHOD

- 1 Heat the oven to 200 C (400 F).
- 2 Cut the pulpy center out of each slice and discard the seeds, leaving a scalloped ring.
- 3 Arrange the rings on a rimmed sheet pan in one layer.
- 4 Drizzle the olive oil and maple syrup over them and sprinkle with the brown sugar, salt and pepper.
- 5 Roast about 25 min, until fork-tender and browning at the edges. Serve warm.

NOTES / VARIATIONS

- Acorn squash rings come out of the oven looking like small orange crowns, which is enough decoration for a plate that also has to feed people.
- Five ingredients, none of them processed. On a night when everything else needs checking, this one does not.

MAKE-AHEAD / STORAGE

- Refrigerate up to 4 days. Reheat on a sheet pan at 200 C (400 F) for 8 min.



Pumpkin Risotto

Yield: 4 servings / Prep: 10 min / Cook: 20 min / Total: 30 min

INGREDIENTS

- 960 ml (4 cups) certified gluten-free low-sodium vegetable broth
- 45 ml (3 Tbsp) unsalted butter
- 1 small yellow onion, finely diced
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 5 sage leaves, minced
- 240 ml (1 cup) Arborio rice
- 5 ml (1 tsp) salt
- 0.6 ml (1/8 tsp) ground nutmeg
- 240 ml (1 cup) pumpkin puree
- 120 ml (1/2 cup) freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- 15 ml (1 Tbsp) red wine vinegar

METHOD

- 1 Bring the broth to a boil in a medium saucepan, then turn it down and keep it at a bare simmer.
- 2 Melt the butter in a second saucepan over medium heat. Add the onion and cook about 5 min, until soft, then add the garlic and sage and cook 1 min more.
- 3 Add the rice, salt and nutmeg and stir constantly about 3 min, until the grains are coated and lightly toasted.
- 4 Add 120 ml (1/2 cup) of the hot broth, stir, and let it absorb, 2 to 3 min. Carry on adding broth 120 ml (1/2 cup) at a time, stirring, until it is all in, about 20 min.
- 5 Take the pan off the heat and stir in the pumpkin puree, Parmesan and red wine vinegar.
- 6 Serve at once, while it still moves on the plate.

NOTES / VARIATIONS

- Rice, butter, pumpkin and Parmesan are naturally gluten-free. The broth is the only line to check, and it is the line that ruins more gluten-free savory cooking than any other single ingredient.
- Red wine vinegar at the end is what stops the pumpkin tasting flat. It is not optional, and it is not a gluten risk; only malt vinegar is.

MAKE-AHEAD / STORAGE

- Refrigerate up to 3 days. Reheat with a splash of broth, stirring, until it loosens.

The Baking Tray

Breakfast, loaves and the things that come out of a tin.



Pumpkin Cupcakes with Cream Cheese Frosting

Yield: 24 cupcakes / Prep: 20 min / Cook: 21 min / Total: 41 min

INGREDIENTS

Cupcakes

- 300 g (2 cups) gluten-free measure-for-measure flour blend
- 10 ml (2 tsp) gluten-free baking powder
- 5 ml (1 tsp) baking soda
- 5 ml (1 tsp) kosher salt
- 10 ml (2 tsp) ground cinnamon
- 5 ml (1 tsp) ground nutmeg
- 5 ml (1 tsp) ground cloves
- 2.5 ml (1/2 tsp) ground allspice
- 1.25 ml (1/4 tsp) ground ginger
- 4 large eggs
- 200 g (1 cup) granulated sugar
- 106 g (1/2 cup) brown sugar
- 240 ml (1 cup) neutral oil
- 10 ml (2 tsp) vanilla extract
- 425 g (15 oz) canned pumpkin puree

Frosting

- 454 g (16 oz) cream cheese, at room temperature
- 226 g (1 cup) butter, at room temperature
- 30 ml (2 Tbsp) sour cream
- 600-720 g (5-6 cups) powdered sugar
- 5 ml (1 tsp) vanilla extract

METHOD

- 1 Heat the oven to 175 C (350 F) and line two standard muffin pans with paper cases.
- 2 Whisk the flour blend, baking powder, baking soda, salt, cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves, allspice and ginger together in a medium bowl.
- 3 In a large bowl, whisk the eggs, both sugars, oil, vanilla and pumpkin puree until smooth.
- 4 Add the dry mixture to the wet and whisk just until smooth.
- 5 Fill each case three-quarters full.
- 6 Bake 20 to 22 min, until a toothpick comes out with a few moist crumbs.
- 7 Cool 5 min in the pans, then finish cooling on a rack. Frosting a warm cupcake melts the frosting.

- 8 For the frosting, beat the cream cheese, butter and sour cream on medium-high for about 2 min, until creamy.
- 9 Add the powdered sugar and vanilla, mix on low for 30 seconds, then whip on medium-high for 2 min. Add more powdered sugar if you want it stiffer.
- 10 Frost the cooled cupcakes.

NOTES / VARIATIONS

- Measure-for-measure blends already contain xanthan gum. If yours does not, add 2.5 ml (1/2 tsp) for this quantity of flour.
- For a spiderweb top, pipe a spiral of melted chocolate on the flat frosting and drag a toothpick from the center outward, six or eight times.

MAKE-AHEAD / STORAGE

- Refrigerate frosted cupcakes up to 4 days in a covered container; bring to room temperature before serving. Unfrosted cupcakes freeze up to 2 months.



Almond Flour Pumpkin Loaf

Yield: 10 slices / Prep: 10 min / Cook: 50 min / Total: 1 h

INGREDIENTS

- 2 large eggs
- 122.5 g (1/2 cup) canned pumpkin puree (pure pumpkin, not pie filling)
- 5 ml (1 tsp) pure vanilla extract
- 100 g (1/2 cup) granulated sugar
- 600 ml (2 1/2 cups) superfine blanched almond flour
- 5 ml (1 tsp) baking soda
- 2.5 ml (1/2 tsp) gluten-free baking powder
- 10 ml (2 tsp) gluten-free pumpkin pie spice
- 5 ml (1 tsp) ground cinnamon
- 1.25 ml (1/4 tsp) salt

Glaze

- 60 g (1/2 cup) powdered sugar
- 5 ml (1 tsp) pure vanilla extract
- 15 ml (3 tsp) water

METHOD

- 1 Heat the oven to 175 C (350 F). Line a 23 x 13 cm (9 x 5 inch) loaf pan with parchment and grease it.
- 2 Whisk the eggs, pumpkin puree, vanilla and sugar in a large bowl until fully combined.
- 3 Add the almond flour, baking soda, baking powder, pumpkin pie spice, cinnamon and salt and mix until no dry patches remain.
- 4 Scrape the batter into the pan and smooth the top.
- 5 Bake on the center rack 50 min. Almond flour browns faster than wheat flour; tent the loaf with foil if the top is dark before the center is set.
- 6 Lift the loaf out by the parchment and cool completely.
- 7 Stir the powdered sugar, vanilla and water together and drizzle over the cooled loaf.

NOTES / VARIATIONS

- Pumpkin pie spice is a blend, so it needs a label check; cinnamon on its own does not.
- Almond flour loaves stay damp in the middle if cut warm. Wait until it is completely cool, or it will look underbaked when it is not.

MAKE-AHEAD / STORAGE

- Airtight at room temperature up to 5 days, or frozen up to 3 months. Glaze after thawing.



Pumpkin Pancakes

Yield: nine 11 cm (4 1/2 inch) pancakes / Prep: 10 min / Cook: 20 min / Total: 30 min

INGREDIENTS

- 150 g (1 1/4 cups) gluten-free measure-for-measure flour blend
- 25 g (2 Tbsp) granulated sugar
- 10 ml (2 tsp) gluten-free baking powder
- 5 ml (1 tsp) ground cinnamon
- 2.5 ml (1/2 tsp) table salt
- 1.25 ml (1/4 tsp) ground cloves
- 1.25 ml (1/4 tsp) ground ginger
- 227 g (1 cup) milk
- 74 g (1/3 cup) pumpkin puree
- 28 g (2 Tbsp) unsalted butter, melted, or 25 g (2 Tbsp) vegetable oil
- 1 large egg

METHOD

- 1 Whisk the flour blend, sugar, baking powder, cinnamon, salt, cloves and ginger together in a bowl.
- 2 In a second bowl, whisk the milk, pumpkin puree, melted butter and egg.
- 3 Pour the wet into the dry and stir just until combined. If the batter will not pour, add 15 to 30 ml (1 to 2 Tbsp) more milk.
- 4 Heat a large pan over medium heat, or a griddle to 175 C (350 F); a droplet of water should skitter across it. Grease lightly.
- 5 Spoon 60 ml (1/4 cup) batter per pancake onto the pan.
- 6 Cook 2 to 3 min, until the edges look dry, then flip and cook about 2 min more.
- 7 Serve warm, or hold them in a low oven.

NOTES / VARIATIONS

- Halloween morning is the meal everyone forgets to plan. These take one bowl and use the same can of pumpkin as the rest of the week.
- Let the batter stand 5 min before cooking. Gluten-free flour blends absorb liquid more slowly than wheat, and the pancakes come out less gritty for the wait.

MAKE-AHEAD / STORAGE

- Refrigerate up to 4 days, or freeze in a stack with parchment between them. Reheat in a toaster.



Pumpkin Chocolate Chip Muffins

Yield: 12 muffins / Prep: 15 min / Cook: 30 min / Total: 45 min

INGREDIENTS

- 600 ml (2 1/2 cups) finely ground almond flour
- 10 ml (2 tsp) gluten-free pumpkin spice blend
- 5 ml (1 tsp) baking soda
- 2.5 ml (1/2 tsp) cream of tartar
- 1.25 ml (1/4 tsp) kosher salt
- 240 ml (1 cup) canned pumpkin puree
- 120 ml (1/2 cup) honey
- 4 large eggs
- 5 ml (1 tsp) vanilla extract
- 240 ml (1 cup) certified gluten-free dark chocolate chips

METHOD

- 1 Heat the oven to 175 C (350 F) with a rack in the middle. Line a muffin tin with parchment cases or grease it well.
- 2 Whisk the almond flour, pumpkin spice, baking soda, cream of tartar and salt together until uniform.
- 3 In a large bowl, beat the pumpkin puree, honey, eggs and vanilla until smooth.
- 4 Add the dry mixture to the wet and mix until just combined. Work quickly from here; the baking soda has already started.
- 5 Fold in the chocolate chips by hand.
- 6 Divide the batter between the cases and dot a few extra chips on top.
- 7 Bake 25 to 30 min, turning the tin halfway, until the tops are golden and a toothpick comes out clean.
- 8 Cool on a wire rack.

NOTES / VARIATIONS

- Grain-free muffins are worth knowing for the school run: no blend to buy, no gum, and nothing that can be cross-contaminated in a shared flour bin.
- Almond flour batters set as they cool. If the middles look damp at 25 min, give them the full 30 and then leave them alone.

MAKE-AHEAD / STORAGE

- Airtight in the refrigerator up to 5 days, or frozen up to 3 months.



Pumpkin Spice Energy Balls

Yield: 12 balls / Prep: 10 min / Chill: 30 min / Total: 40 min

INGREDIENTS

- 240 ml (1 cup) pitted Medjool dates, about 10-12 large dates
- 240 ml (1 cup) certified gluten-free rolled or quick oats
- 60 ml (1/4 cup) toasted pecan halves
- 60 ml (1/4 cup) pumpkin puree
- 15 ml (1 Tbsp) pure maple syrup, plus 5-15 ml (1-3 tsp) more to taste
- 15 ml (1 Tbsp) chia seeds or ground flaxseed
- 11 ml (2 1/4 tsp) gluten-free pumpkin pie spice
- 5 ml (1 tsp) pure vanilla extract
- 1.25 ml (1/4 tsp) maple extract (optional)
- 0.6 ml (1/8 tsp) kosher salt

METHOD

- 1 If the dates are dry, soak them in hot water 10 min, then drain and pat them dry. Pulse them in a food processor until they break down and gather into a sticky ball.
- 2 Add the oats, pecans, pumpkin puree, 15 ml (1 Tbsp) maple syrup, chia seeds, pumpkin pie spice, vanilla, maple extract and salt.
- 3 Pulse until the oats and nuts are in small, even pieces. Stop before it turns into paste; the texture is the point.
- 4 Taste and pulse in more maple syrup if you want it sweeter.
- 5 Scrape into a bowl, cover and refrigerate at least 30 min so the oats hydrate and the mixture firms up.
- 6 Scoop and roll into 12 balls.

NOTES / VARIATIONS

- Oats need to be certified gluten-free. Standard oats are grown in rotation with wheat and milled on the same equipment, so the contamination happens long before the box.
- These are the one item here with no sugar added beyond the dates and a spoonful of syrup, which makes them useful on a night built entirely out of candy.

MAKE-AHEAD / STORAGE

- Airtight in the refrigerator up to 2 weeks, or frozen up to 2 months. They can be eaten straight from the freezer.



Baked Pumpkin Donuts

Yield: 12 donuts / Prep: 15 min / Cook: 22 min / Total: 37 min

INGREDIENTS

Donuts

- 230 g (1 1/2 cups) gluten-free 1:1 baking flour
- 10 ml (2 tsp) gluten-free baking powder
- 7.5 ml (1 1/2 tsp) gluten-free pumpkin pie spice
- 6.25 ml (1 1/4 tsp) salt
- 340 g (1 1/2 cups) pumpkin puree
- 3 large eggs
- 100 g (1/2 cup) vegetable oil
- 100 g (1/2 cup) brown sugar
- 100 g (1/2 cup) white sugar
- 5 ml (1 tsp) vanilla extract

Brown sugar glaze

- 150 g (3/4 cup) brown sugar
- 60 ml (1/4 cup) milk or almond milk
- 15 ml (1 Tbsp) butter
- 1.25 ml (1/4 tsp) salt
- 5 ml (1 tsp) vanilla extract
- 175 g (1 1/2 cups) powdered sugar, sifted

Or cinnamon sugar

- 50 g (1/4 cup) white sugar
- 15 ml (1 Tbsp) ground cinnamon

METHOD

- 1 Heat the oven to 190 C (375 F) and grease two 6-cavity donut pans.
- 2 Whisk the flour, baking powder, pumpkin pie spice and salt together in a medium bowl.
- 3 In a large bowl, whisk the pumpkin puree, eggs, oil, both sugars and the vanilla until smooth.
- 4 Add the dry mixture to the wet and whisk to combine.
- 5 Spoon the batter into a large freezer bag, snip off a corner and pipe it into the pans; a spoon leaves ridges that bake in.
- 6 Bake 20 to 25 min, until a toothpick comes out clean. Turn the donuts out onto a rack.
- 7 For the glaze, heat the brown sugar, milk, butter and salt in a saucepan over medium heat until the butter melts and the mixture is smooth. Bring to a simmer, hold it there 1 min, then take it off the heat and whisk in the vanilla and sifted powdered sugar.

- 8 Cool the glaze 5 min, then dip the tops of the donuts and add nuts or sprinkles before it sets. For cinnamon sugar instead, brush the warm donuts with melted butter and roll them in the sugar and cinnamon.

NOTES / VARIATIONS

- Baked donuts are the honest answer to the cider-mill donut, which is fried in oil that has almost certainly fried wheat doughnuts first.
- Fill the pans two-thirds full. Overfilled donut pans bake into muffins with a dimple.

MAKE-AHEAD / STORAGE

- Airtight at room temperature up to 2 days, or frozen unglazed up to 2 months.

Sweets and Spooks

The part of the night everyone came for.



Stovetop Caramel Apples

Yield: 12 apples / Prep: 45 min / Cook: 15 min / Total: 1 h

INGREDIENTS

- 453 g (1 lb) light or dark brown sugar
- 226 g (1 cup) butter, at room temperature
- 396 g (14 oz, 1 can) sweetened condensed milk
- 160 ml (2/3 cup) light or dark corn syrup
- 80 ml (1/3 cup) pure maple syrup
- 7.5 ml (1 1/2 tsp) vanilla extract or vanilla bean paste
- 2.5 ml (1/2 tsp) kosher salt
- 12 medium Granny Smith apples
- 12 wooden craft sticks
- Melted certified gluten-free dark, milk or white chocolate, for dipping (optional)
- Toppings: chopped toasted nuts, toasted coconut, dried fruit, certified gluten-free sprinkles or crushed gluten-free chocolate sandwich cookies (optional)

METHOD

- 1 Bring a large pot of water to a boil, turn off the heat, and dip each apple for a few seconds, turning it, to strip the wax. Drain and dry the apples completely; caramel slides off a damp apple.
- 2 Push a craft stick into the stem end of each apple without pushing it through the base. Chill the apples on a parchment-lined sheet while you make the caramel.
- 3 Put the brown sugar, butter, condensed milk, corn syrup, maple syrup and salt in a 2.5 liter (2 1/2 quart) saucepan. Stir over medium-low heat until the sugar has dissolved, about 15 min. Wash any crystals off the pan sides with a wet pastry brush.
- 4 Clip on a candy thermometer, raise the heat to medium-high and stir constantly at a rolling boil until the caramel reaches 113 C (236 F), about 12 to 15 min.
- 5 Pour the caramel into a heatproof bowl without scraping the pan base. Stir in the vanilla, standing back as it bubbles. Let it cool about 20 min, to 93 C to 99 C (200 F to 210 F).

- 6 Hold an apple by the stick and dip it, turning, until all but the top is coated. Lift, let the excess run off, turn it caramel-side up for a moment to set the drip, then stand it on the lined sheet.
- 7 Dip or drizzle the set apples in melted chocolate if you like, and roll the wet coating in toppings. Leave until firm.

NOTES / VARIATIONS

- Store-bought caramel apples are a standing risk at this time of year: the wrapped caramels, the coatings and the toppings are three separate label checks. Making them is the short cut.
- Crushed cookie and cereal toppings are where gluten walks back in. Only use ones labeled gluten-free.

MAKE-AHEAD / STORAGE

- Refrigerate in a covered container up to 2 weeks. Let them stand 15 min before eating so the caramel softens.



Meringue Ghosts

Yield: 20 ghosts / Prep: 15 min / Cook: 1 h 15 min / Total: 2 h 30 min

INGREDIENTS

- 3 large egg whites, at room temperature
- 180 ml (3/4 cup) granulated sugar
- 1.25 ml (1/4 tsp) cream of tartar
- 1.25 ml (1/4 tsp) vanilla extract
- Certified gluten-free mini chocolate chips, or melted chocolate, for the faces

METHOD

- 1 Heat the oven to 110 C (225 F). Line two baking sheets with parchment paper or silicone mats.
- 2 Whisk the egg whites in a spotlessly clean, dry bowl on medium speed until frothy, then add the cream of tartar. Any trace of fat or yolk will stop the whites from whipping.
- 3 Raise the speed to high and add the sugar 15 ml (1 Tbsp) at a time, beating until the meringue holds stiff, glossy peaks. Beat in the vanilla at the end.
- 4 Spoon the meringue into a piping bag fitted with a large plain tip. Pipe a coil about 5 cm (2 inches) tall for each ghost, spaced 2.5 cm (1 inch) apart, and flick the bag up at the end to pull a point.
- 5 Bake 1 h 15 min, until the ghosts are dry to the touch and lift cleanly off the paper.
- 6 Turn the oven off and leave them inside with the door ajar for 1 h.
- 7 Press two mini chocolate chips into each cooled ghost for eyes, or paint faces on with melted chocolate and a toothpick.

NOTES / VARIATIONS

- This is the most useful sweet on a mixed Halloween table: it is naturally gluten-free, it contains no flour to cross-contaminate, and it costs almost nothing to make in quantity.
- Humid days are the enemy. Meringue pulls moisture from the air and turns tacky; bake these on a dry day if you can.

MAKE-AHEAD / STORAGE

- Airtight at room temperature up to 2 weeks. Never refrigerate; they go soft.



Halloween Candy Bark

Yield: 10 pieces / Prep: 10 min / Chill: 30 min / Total: 40 min

INGREDIENTS

- 510 g (18 oz) certified gluten-free white chocolate, roughly chopped
- 720 ml (3 cups) assorted certified gluten-free candy, sprinkles and roughly chopped gluten-free chocolate sandwich cookies

METHOD

- 1 Line a square baking pan with parchment paper.
- 2 Melt the white chocolate in a heatproof bowl set over barely simmering water, or in the microwave in 20-second bursts, stirring between each, until completely smooth.
- 3 Pour it into the pan and spread it into one even layer with a spatula.
- 4 Scatter the candy, sprinkles and chopped cookies over the top while the chocolate is still wet, pressing the larger pieces in lightly.
- 5 Chill at least 30 min, until set, then lift out the parchment and break or cut the bark into pieces.

NOTES / VARIATIONS

- This is the recipe that turns a bag of trick-or-treat sweets into something a celiac child can actually eat, so the sweets themselves are the whole safety question: sort them on the label, not the wrapper color.
- Licorice, malted milk balls, wafer bars and most cookie-centered candy are out. Plain chocolate, hard candy, gummies and candy corn are usually in, brand by brand.

MAKE-AHEAD / STORAGE

- Airtight in the refrigerator up to 2 weeks, or at cool room temperature up to 1 week.



Molasses Popcorn Balls

Yield: 9 balls / Prep: 15 min / Cook: 30 min / Total: 45 min

INGREDIENTS

- 120 ml (1/2 cup) popcorn kernels
- 45-60 ml (3-4 Tbsp) neutral oil, such as grapeseed
- 480 ml (2 cups) granulated sugar
- 120 ml (1/2 cup) water
- 120 ml (1/2 cup) molasses or corn syrup
- 5 ml (1 tsp) white or cider vinegar
- 5 ml (1 tsp) vanilla extract
- 1.5 ml (1/3 tsp) salt

METHOD

- 1 Heat the oil in a large pot over medium heat. Drop in a few kernels and cover; when they pop, the oil is ready.
- 2 Add the rest of the kernels in an even layer, pull the pot off the heat for 20 seconds, then return it, cover, and slide it back and forth over the burner while the corn pops.
- 3 When the pops slow to long pauses, tip the popcorn into a large bowl and pick out any unpopped kernels.
- 4 In a heavy saucepan, bring the sugar, water and molasses to a boil over medium heat, stirring occasionally.
- 5 Cook the syrup, without stirring, to 127 C (260 F) on a candy thermometer. This takes 10 to 30 min depending on your pan. The syrup is dangerously hot; wear an oven mitt.
- 6 Take it off the heat and stir in the vinegar, vanilla and salt.
- 7 Pour the syrup over the popcorn at once and turn it with a silicone spatula until every piece is coated.
- 8 Let it cool a few minutes. Oil or wet your hands and press the popcorn into apple-sized balls.
- 9 Set the balls on parchment and leave until hard.

NOTES / VARIATIONS

- Plain popcorn, sugar and molasses are all naturally gluten-free, which is why this hundred-year-old recipe still earns its place: it needs no substitutions at all.
- Malt vinegar is the one vinegar to avoid. White, cider, wine and rice vinegars are fine.

MAKE-AHEAD / STORAGE

- Wrap each ball in plastic or waxed paper and keep at room temperature up to 5 days.



Witches' Finger Cookies

Yield: 20 cookies / Prep: 15 min / Cook: 11 min / Total: 26 min

INGREDIENTS

- 480 ml (2 cups) blanched almond flour
- 10 ml (2 tsp) matcha powder
- 5 ml (1 tsp) gluten-free baking powder
- 0.6 ml (1/8 tsp) fine sea salt
- 75 ml (5 Tbsp) maple syrup
- 45 ml (3 Tbsp) coconut oil, melted
- 1.25 ml (1/4 tsp) peppermint extract
- 20 certified gluten-free chocolate chips
- 20 sliced almonds

METHOD

- 1 Heat the oven to 175 C (350 F) and line a large baking sheet with parchment.
- 2 Whisk the almond flour, matcha, baking powder and salt in a large bowl, breaking up any lumps. Pour in the maple syrup, melted coconut oil and peppermint extract and stir until the dough is uniform.
- 3 Scoop 15 ml (1 Tbsp) of dough at a time and roll it between your palms into a log the length of your index finger. Set the logs on the sheet.
- 4 Press a dent into each log where a knuckle would be, and score two or three wrinkles across it with the back of a knife.
- 5 Push a chocolate chip into one end of each finger, point first, to make the nail bed.
- 6 Bake 10 to 12 min, until lightly golden at the edges.
- 7 Straight out of the oven, press a sliced almond onto each warm chocolate chip; the melting chocolate glues the nail on. Cool completely on the pan.

NOTES / VARIATIONS

- Almond flour cookies need no blend, no gum and no substitution, which makes them the easiest safe cookie to bake in a kitchen that also bakes with wheat. Baking powder is the only line that needs a label check.
- Matcha makes them green. Leave it out for a paler, more corpse-like finger and the cookie tastes the same.

MAKE-AHEAD / STORAGE

- Airtight in the refrigerator up to 2 weeks, or frozen up to 3 months.



Apple Monster Mouths

Yield: 16 monsters / Prep: 20 min / Total: 20 min

INGREDIENTS

- 4 large Granny Smith apples
- 15 ml (1 Tbsp) fresh lemon juice
- 240 ml (1 cup) cold water
- 4 large strawberries
- 120 ml (1/2 cup) creamy peanut butter
- 60 ml (1/4 cup) certified gluten-free marshmallow bits
- Certified gluten-free candy eyes

METHOD

- 1 Quarter the apples and core them. Cut a shallow wedge out of the skin side of each quarter to open a mouth.
- 2 Stir the lemon juice into the cold water. Dip the cut faces of the apple for a few seconds to slow browning, then pat them dry so the peanut butter will stick.
- 3 Slice the strawberries thinly into at least 16 tongue-shaped pieces.
- 4 Spread about 7.5 ml (1 1/2 tsp) peanut butter inside each mouth, keeping it in the opening.
- 5 Lay a strawberry slice on the lower lip as the tongue.
- 6 Press marshmallow bits into the top edge of the mouth as teeth.
- 7 Dab a little peanut butter on the back of each candy eye and press two above every mouth. Serve right away.

NOTES / VARIATIONS

- Marshmallows are usually gluten-free but the small colored “bits” sold for cereal and hot chocolate are not always; they are a separate product with a separate label.
- For a nut-free version, sunflower seed butter behaves the same way and holds the teeth just as well.

MAKE-AHEAD / STORAGE

- Assemble and serve. Cut apple browns within the hour, so this is one to make while the guests are arriving.



Frozen Banana Ghosts

Yield: 4 pops / Prep: 15 min / Freeze: 1 h 20 min / Total: 1 h 35 min

INGREDIENTS

- 1 medium banana
- 240 ml (1 cup) good-quality certified gluten-free white chocolate or candy melts
- 8 certified gluten-free mini chocolate chips
- 4 wooden popsicle sticks

METHOD

- 1 Cut the banana in half crossways, then split each half lengthways to give four pieces.
- 2 Push a stick into the cut end of each piece, set them on a waxed-paper-lined tray and freeze until solid.
- 3 Melt the white chocolate in a deep mug in the microwave, 30 seconds at a time, stirring between each burst until smooth. A deep, narrow container matters more than the quantity; it lets you dip rather than spoon.
- 4 Dip one frozen banana at a time, scrape the excess off the back against the rim, and lay it on the waxed paper.
- 5 Press two mini chocolate chips in for eyes at once, before the coating sets; it hardens fast on a frozen banana.
- 6 Return to the freezer and serve frozen.

NOTES / VARIATIONS

- White chocolate is the one chocolate that regularly hides gluten, because cheap coatings use malted or wheat-derived additions. Read the label rather than assuming.
- The recipe scales exactly: one banana makes four ghosts, so six bananas make a tray of 24 for a class party.

MAKE-AHEAD / STORAGE

- In a sealed container in the freezer up to 1 month.



Gravedigger Dirt Cups

Yield: 6 cups / Prep: 15 min / Total: 15 min

INGREDIENTS

- 12 gluten-free chocolate sandwich cookies, filling included
- 57 g (2 oz) cream cheese, softened
- 110 g (3.9 oz) gluten-free instant chocolate pudding mix
- 360 ml (1 1/2 cups) whole milk
- 113 g (4 oz) whipped topping, thawed
- 12 gluten-free gummy worms

METHOD

- 1 Grind the cookies, filling and all, in a food processor until they look like soil, or seal them in a bag and crush them with a rolling pin.
- 2 Beat the cream cheese with a hand mixer for about 1 min, until smooth.
- 3 Add the pudding mix and milk and beat on low for several minutes, until thick and smooth.
- 4 Fold in the whipped topping with a spatula.
- 5 Put a 6 mm (1/4 inch) layer of crumbs in the bottom of each clear cup, then a 4 cm (1 1/2 inch) layer of pudding. Repeat, finishing with pudding.
- 6 Scatter more crumbs on top and push two or three gummy worms into each cup so they crawl out of the dirt.

NOTES / VARIATIONS

- Three separate label checks here, and all three are easy to get wrong: the sandwich cookies, the instant pudding mix and the gummy worms. Some gummy sweets are dusted with wheat starch to stop them sticking.
- Pushing a small rectangle of gluten-free cookie into the top as a headstone turns each cup into a grave; write on it with melted white chocolate.

MAKE-AHEAD / STORAGE

- Cover and refrigerate up to 2 days. Add the worms just before serving; they dissolve in the damp pudding.



Cinnamon Candy Apples

Yield: 4 apples / Prep: 40 min / Cook: 15 min / Chill: 30 min / Total: 1 h 25 min

INGREDIENTS

- 4 green apples
- 4 wooden craft sticks
- 480 ml (2 cups) granulated sugar
- 240 ml (1 cup) water
- 160 ml (2/3 cup) light corn syrup
- 2.5 ml (1/2 tsp) ground cinnamon
- Red food coloring
- 60 ml (1/4 cup) chopped peanuts (optional)

METHOD

- 1 Twist the stems off the apples and push a craft stick three-quarters of the way into each one.
- 2 Freeze the apples 20 to 30 min. A cold apple sets the coating on contact.
- 3 Put the sugar, water and corn syrup in a medium saucepan over medium heat and stir until the sugar dissolves. Stop stirring the moment it has.
- 4 Cook without stirring until a candy thermometer reads 143 C (290 F), 9 to 15 min.
- 5 Turn off the heat and beat in the cinnamon and enough red coloring to give a bright red. Leave the pan on the burner while you do this so the syrup carries on to the hard-crack stage, 149 C to 152 C (300 F to 305 F).
- 6 Dip and turn each cold apple to coat it, lift it out without letting it soak, let the excess drip off, then roll the base in chopped peanuts if you want them and stand it on waxed paper.
- 7 Harden in the refrigerator at least 30 min before eating.

NOTES / VARIATIONS

- A candy apple is one of the few Halloween sweets that is gluten-free by nature: sugar, water, corn syrup and coloring, with nothing to check but the toppings.
- Sugar at 149 C burns far worse than boiling water. Keep children out of the kitchen for the dipping and have a bowl of cold water by the stove.

MAKE-AHEAD / STORAGE

- Wrap in cellophane and keep at cool room temperature up to 3 days. Refrigeration past the first hour makes the shell sticky.



Monster Cookies

Yield: 24 cookies / Prep: 15 min / Cook: 11 min / Total: 26 min

INGREDIENTS

- 250 g (1 cup) creamy peanut butter
- 56 g (1/4 cup) butter, at room temperature
- 106 g (1/2 cup) brown sugar
- 100 g (1/2 cup) granulated sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 5 ml (1 tsp) vanilla extract
- 85 g (1 cup) certified gluten-free oats, ground to flour in a blender
- 5 ml (1 tsp) baking soda
- 2.5 ml (1/2 tsp) kosher salt
- 85 g (1 cup) certified gluten-free quick oats
- 120 ml (1/2 cup) certified gluten-free candy-coated chocolate pieces
- 120 ml (1/2 cup) certified gluten-free chocolate chips

METHOD

- 1 Heat the oven to 175 C (350 F) and line large baking sheets with parchment or silicone mats.
- 2 Beat the peanut butter, butter and both sugars 1 to 2 min, until light.
- 3 Add the eggs and vanilla and beat 1 min more, until creamy.
- 4 Add the oat flour, baking soda and salt and mix until combined.
- 5 Stir in the whole oats, candy pieces and chocolate chips.
- 6 Scoop balls of about 22 ml (1 1/2 Tbsp) and space them 7.5 cm (3 inches) apart on the sheets.
- 7 Bake 10 to 12 min, until the edges are golden but the middles still look soft.
- 8 Cool 5 min on the sheet before moving them to a rack; they finish setting there.

NOTES / VARIATIONS

- These contain no flour at all, which is why they work: the structure comes from oats and peanut butter. Oats must be certified gluten-free, and not for the reason most people assume. Oats contain no gluten; the problem is the wheat and barley they are grown and milled alongside.
- Candy-coated chocolates vary by country. The same brand can be safe in one market and not in another, so check the bag you are holding.

MAKE-AHEAD / STORAGE

- Airtight at room temperature up to 5 days, or frozen up to 3 months.



Crispy Rice Pumpkins

Yield: 14 pumpkins / Prep: 15 min / Cook: 10 min / Total: 25 min

INGREDIENTS

- 45 ml (3 Tbsp) butter or dairy-free alternative
- 340 g (12 oz) fresh large marshmallows, or 1.4 liters (6 cups) mini marshmallows, checked gluten-free
- 960 ml (4 cups) certified gluten-free crispy rice cereal, plus more as needed
- Orange sanding sugar (optional)
- Gluten-free spearmint leaf candy, for stems and leaves

METHOD

- 1 Melt the butter in a large deep pot over low heat.
- 2 Add the marshmallows and stir constantly until melted. Keep the heat low; overcooked marshmallow sets hard and will not shape.
- 3 Take the pot off the heat and stir in the cereal a little at a time. The mixture should stay softer than a tray bake so you can mold it, so add extra cereal slowly and stop while it is still pliable.
- 4 Work fast, because it stiffens as it cools. Scoop equal portions, roll them into balls, then roll each ball in orange sanding sugar while pressing it into a slightly flattened pumpkin shape. An ice cream scoop keeps them even.
- 5 Cut the spearmint candy into short stems and thin leaf slices with a sharp knife. Dampen the cut ends and press them onto the tops.
- 6 Add faces with gluten-free candy or piped frosting if you want jack-o'-lanterns.

NOTES / VARIATIONS

- Ordinary crisped rice cereal is made with malt, which comes from barley. It is the single most common mistake in gluten-free Halloween baking, because the treat looks like it should be safe. Buy a cereal labeled gluten-free.
- Marshmallows are usually safe but not always; the coating dust is the variable.

MAKE-AHEAD / STORAGE

- Airtight at room temperature up to 3 days. They harden after that.



Ghost-Dipped Strawberries

Yield: 30 ghosts / Prep: 30 min / Total: 30 min

INGREDIENTS

- 30 fresh strawberries
- 227 g (8 oz) certified gluten-free white baking chocolate, chopped
- 5 ml (1 tsp) shortening
- 0.6 ml (1/8 tsp) almond extract
- 60 ml (1/4 cup) certified gluten-free miniature semisweet chocolate chips

METHOD

- 1 Wash the strawberries and dry them completely on paper towels. Any water left on the fruit will seize the chocolate.
- 2 Melt the white chocolate with the shortening in a microwave-safe bowl at 50 percent power, stirring until smooth, then stir in the almond extract.
- 3 Dip one strawberry at a time, holding it by the hull, and set it on waxed paper so the chocolate pools slightly at the base into a ghost's tail.
- 4 Press two chocolate chips into the wet coating for eyes straight away.
- 5 Freeze about 5 min, until the coating is hard.
- 6 Melt the remaining chocolate chips, dip a toothpick in and draw a mouth on each ghost.
- 7 Refrigerate until serving.

NOTES / VARIATIONS

- Strawberries and chocolate are both naturally gluten-free, but white chocolate and compound coatings are the exception worth checking; some use malt-derived ingredients.
- Leave the hulls on and dip from the point downward if you want taller ghosts.

MAKE-AHEAD / STORAGE

- In a single layer in the refrigerator, up to 1 day. Dipped fruit weeps after that.



Pumpkin Pie with Almond Flour Crust

Yield: 10 slices / Prep: 40 min / Cook: 1 h / Chill: 1 h / Total: 2 h 40 min

INGREDIENTS

Crust

- 225 g (2 cups) almond flour
- 30 ml (2 Tbsp) granulated sugar or granulated sweetener
- 1.25 ml (1/4 tsp) baking soda
- 1.25 ml (1/4 tsp) salt
- 30 ml (2 Tbsp) cold coconut oil or butter
- 1 egg
- 5 ml (1 tsp) vanilla extract (optional)

Filling

- 450 g (2 cups) pumpkin puree, canned or fresh
- 115 ml (1/2 cup) coconut cream
- 2 eggs
- 142 g (2/3 cup) granulated or coconut sugar
- 30 ml (2 Tbsp) maple syrup or honey
- 10 ml (2 tsp) gluten-free pumpkin pie spice
- 10 ml (2 tsp) vanilla extract
- 1.25 ml (1/4 tsp) salt

METHOD

- 1 Heat the oven to 180 C (350 F) and grease a 23 cm (9 inch) pie pan.
- 2 Pulse the almond flour, sugar, salt and baking soda in a food processor.
- 3 Add the cold coconut oil, egg and vanilla and pulse until the dough gathers into a ball.
- 4 Press the dough evenly over the base and up the sides of the pan and crimp the edge.
- 5 Bake 8 to 10 min, until dry to the touch. Cool completely; a warm crust goes soggy under the custard.
- 6 Lower the oven to 160 C (325 F).
- 7 Whisk the pumpkin puree, coconut cream, sugar, eggs, pumpkin pie spice, maple syrup, vanilla and salt until even.
- 8 Pour the filling into the cooled crust and bake 50 to 55 min, until set with only a slight wobble in the middle.
- 9 Cool to room temperature, then refrigerate at least 1 h before slicing.

NOTES / VARIATIONS

- An almond flour crust is pressed, not rolled, which removes the step that defeats most people in gluten-free pastry.
- Cover the crust edge with foil if it darkens before the custard sets. Nut crusts color faster than wheat ones.

MAKE-AHEAD / STORAGE

- Covered in the refrigerator up to 4 days. The custard weeps if frozen.



Peanut Butter Eyeball Truffles

Yield: 25 eyeballs / Prep: 20 min / Chill: 30 min / Total: 50 min

INGREDIENTS

- 120 ml (1/2 cup) creamy peanut butter
- 60 ml (1/4 cup) melted butter
- 360 ml (1 1/2 cups) powdered sugar
- 227 g (8 oz) certified gluten-free chocolate, melted
- 25 certified gluten-free candy eyes

METHOD

- 1 Mix the melted butter, peanut butter and powdered sugar in a bowl, working it with your hands at the end. It should feel like stiff modelling clay.
- 2 Line a baking sheet with parchment.
- 3 Scoop scant 15 ml (1 Tbsp) portions, roll them into balls and set them on the sheet.
- 4 Chill about 15 min, until firm.
- 5 Melt the chocolate in 30-second bursts, stirring after each.
- 6 Pour the chocolate into a small deep cup. Spear a ball on a toothpick, dip it and leave a bare circle on top; that circle is the eye.
- 7 Set each dipped ball back on the parchment.
- 8 Dab chocolate on the back of a candy eye and press it into the bare circle.
- 9 Leave to set at room temperature or in the refrigerator.

NOTES / VARIATIONS

- Peanut butter, butter and sugar make a dough with no flour in it at all, so the only checks are the chocolate and the candy eyes.
- If the dough sticks, chill it for 10 min rather than adding more sugar, which makes the truffles grainy.

MAKE-AHEAD / STORAGE

- Airtight in the refrigerator up to 2 weeks, or frozen up to 3 months.



Flourless Brownies

Yield: 9 brownies / Prep: 5 min / Cook: 23 min / Total: 28 min

INGREDIENTS

- 76 g (1/3 cup) unsalted butter
- 227 g (8 oz) certified gluten-free semi-sweet baking chocolate
- 100 g (1/2 cup) granulated sugar
- 50 g (1/4 cup) light brown sugar
- 3 large eggs, at room temperature
- 22 g (3 Tbsp) unsweetened cocoa powder, sifted
- 5 ml (1 tsp) vanilla extract
- 1.5 ml (1/4 tsp) salt

METHOD

- 1 Heat the oven to 175 C (350 F).
- 2 Line a 20 x 20 cm (8 x 8 inch) pan with parchment, leaving an overhang, and grease it lightly.
- 3 Melt the butter and chocolate together in a large microwave-safe bowl: 1 min on high, stir, then 30-second bursts until smooth.
- 4 Stir in both sugars until glossy.
- 5 Beat in the eggs one at a time, fully combining each before the next.
- 6 Stir in the sifted cocoa, vanilla and salt until smooth.
- 7 Pour into the pan and bake 21 to 23 min. Shake the pan gently: the center should not wobble. Do not overbake.
- 8 Cool completely in the pan before lifting out and cutting.

NOTES / VARIATIONS

- There is no flour and no flour substitute in this recipe, which makes it the safest bake in a shared kitchen: nothing to sift, nothing airborne, nothing to swap.
- For a spiderweb top, pipe four rings of melted white chocolate on the cooled surface and drag a toothpick from the center out.

MAKE-AHEAD / STORAGE

- Airtight at room temperature up to 4 days, refrigerated up to 1 week, or frozen up to 3 months.



No-Bake Pumpkin Cheesecake

Yield: 12 slices / Prep: 15 min / Chill: 6 h / Total: 6 h 15 min

INGREDIENTS

Crust

- 105 g (1 1/4 cups) gluten-free graham cracker crumbs
- 50 g (1/4 cup) granulated sugar
- 90 ml (6 Tbsp) unsalted butter, melted

Filling

- 30 ml (2 Tbsp) water
- 15 ml (1 Tbsp) unflavored gelatin
- 3 bricks of 226 g (8 oz) cream cheese, softened
- 425 g (15 oz) canned pure pumpkin puree
- 5 ml (1 tsp) pure vanilla extract
- 5 ml (1 tsp) ground cinnamon
- 15 ml (1 Tbsp) gluten-free pumpkin pie spice
- 476 g (2 cups) heavy whipping cream, chilled
- 240 g (2 cups) powdered sugar

METHOD

- 1 Blitz the gluten-free graham crackers to fine crumbs, then mix them with the granulated sugar and melted butter until the crumbs clump when pressed.
- 2 Line a 23 cm (9 inch) springform pan with parchment and press the crumbs firmly over the base and a little way up the sides.
- 3 Beat the cream cheese until completely smooth.
- 4 Stir the water and gelatin together in a small bowl, microwave 15 seconds, stir, and microwave 15 seconds more, until fully dissolved and clear.
- 5 Beat the gelatin into the cream cheese at once, before it can set.
- 6 Add the pumpkin puree, vanilla, cinnamon and pumpkin pie spice and beat smooth, scraping the bowl.
- 7 In another bowl, whip the chilled cream with the powdered sugar to stiff peaks.
- 8 Fold the whipped cream into the pumpkin mixture in three additions.
- 9 Spread the filling over the crust, cover and refrigerate at least 6 h, preferably overnight.

NOTES / VARIATIONS

- Gelatin is normally gluten-free but some flavored and blended setting powders are not; unflavored gelatin is the safer buy.
- Crushed gluten-free graham crackers, ginger cookies or chocolate sandwich cookies all work for the base. Whichever you use, weigh the crumbs rather than counting whole cookies.

MAKE-AHEAD / STORAGE

- Covered in the refrigerator up to 4 days. It freezes whole for 1 month; thaw overnight in the refrigerator.



Mummy Pretzel Rods

Yield: 12 rods / Prep: 20 min / Set: 30 min / Total: 50 min

INGREDIENTS

- 12 gluten-free pretzel rods
- 340 g (12 oz) certified gluten-free white candy coating or almond bark
- 24 certified gluten-free candy eyes

METHOD

- 1 Line a large baking sheet with parchment or waxed paper.
- 2 Melt the candy coating in a microwave-safe bowl: 1 min, stir, then 30-second bursts until smooth. Let it cool a few minutes so it thickens slightly.
- 3 Stand a piping bag in a tall glass and pour about a third of the coating into it.
- 4 Dip each pretzel rod three-quarters of the way up, let the excess drip off, and lay it on the sheet.
- 5 Press two candy eyes onto each rod while the coating is wet.
- 6 Snip a small hole in the piping bag and drizzle the remaining coating back and forth across each rod in a zig-zag, so the bandages cross over the eyes at odd angles.
- 7 Leave at least 30 min to set, then trim any stray drips with a small knife.

NOTES / VARIATIONS

- Gluten-free pretzel rods are the whole recipe. Ordinary pretzel rods are wheat, and this is one of the most common treats handed to children at Halloween parties without anyone thinking about it.
- Candy coating sets harder and faster than real white chocolate, which is why it is used here; real white chocolate works but needs tempering to stay glossy.

MAKE-AHEAD / STORAGE

- Airtight at cool room temperature up to 2 weeks. Do not refrigerate; the coating sweats.



Oven Caramel Corn

Yield: 2.4 to 2.6 liters (10–11 cups) / Prep: 20 min / Cook: 1 h / Total: 1 h 20 min

INGREDIENTS

- 2.4-2.6 liters (10-11 cups) air-popped popcorn
- 200 g (1 cup) packed light brown sugar
- 80 g (1/4 cup) light corn syrup
- 113 g (1/2 cup) unsalted butter
- 2.5 ml (1/2 tsp) salt
- 0.6 ml (1/8 tsp) cream of tartar
- 2.5 ml (1/2 tsp) baking soda

METHOD

- 1 Heat the oven to 93 C (200 F) and line one or two baking sheets with parchment or silicone mats.
- 2 Put the popcorn in your largest bowl, picking out unpopped kernels.
- 3 Combine the brown sugar, corn syrup, butter, salt and cream of tartar in a medium saucepan over medium heat, stirring as the butter melts.
- 4 Once it simmers at the edges, let it bubble without stirring for 4 min; with a thermometer, take it to 112 C to 113 C (234 F to 235 F).
- 5 Off the heat, stir in the baking soda. It will froth up pale and double in volume, which is what makes the coating light rather than hard.
- 6 Pour the caramel over the popcorn and turn it gently with a large spoon until coated, then spread it on the sheets.
- 7 Bake 1 h, stirring gently every 20 min.
- 8 Cool on the pan at least 30 min, then break up the clusters.

NOTES / VARIATIONS

- Plain popcorn, sugar, butter and corn syrup are all naturally gluten-free. Ready-made caramel corn often is too, but the factory that makes it usually makes coated pretzel snacks as well.
- The low oven is not optional; it is what dries the coating so the caramel corn is crisp instead of chewy.

MAKE-AHEAD / STORAGE

- Airtight at room temperature up to 2 weeks.



Caramel Apple Nachos

Yield: 4 servings / Prep: 10 min / Cook: 5 min / Total: 15 min

INGREDIENTS

- 1 large Granny Smith apple, cored
- 1 large Honeycrisp or Pink Lady apple, cored
- 30 ml (2 Tbsp) lemon juice
- 120 ml (1/2 cup) certified gluten-free soft caramels, unwrapped
- 15 ml (1 Tbsp) heavy cream
- 45 ml (3 Tbsp) gluten-free hot fudge sauce, not chocolate syrup
- 60 ml (1/4 cup) certified gluten-free mini chocolate chips
- 60 ml (1/4 cup) crushed peanuts, almonds or cashews

METHOD

- 1 Cut each apple into 8 wedges. Toss them in a bowl of cold water with the lemon juice, then pat them completely dry; wet apple will not hold a drizzle.
- 2 Fan the wedges over a round platter, alternating the two colors.
- 3 Put the caramels and cream in a microwave-safe bowl and heat in 20-second bursts, stirring, until just melted.
- 4 Drizzle the warm caramel over the apples, then the hot fudge.
- 5 Scatter the chocolate chips and nuts over while the drizzles are still warm.
- 6 Serve at once.

NOTES / VARIATIONS

- This is the caramel apple without the dentistry: the same flavors, cut for a crowd, and ready in a quarter of an hour.
- Caramels and fudge sauce are both worth checking. Barley malt syrup turns up in soft caramels more often than people expect.

MAKE-AHEAD / STORAGE

- Assemble and eat. Dressed apple slices weep within the hour.



Vanilla Panna Cotta with Blood Sauce

Yield: 6 servings / Prep: 10 min / Cook: 10 min / Chill: 4 h / Total: 4 h 20 min

INGREDIENTS

Panna cotta

- 355 ml (12 oz) heavy whipping cream
- 60 ml (2 oz) milk
- 45 ml (3 Tbsp) sugar
- 1 whole vanilla bean, split
- 5 ml (1 tsp) powdered gelatin
- 10 ml (2 tsp) water

Raspberry sauce

- 240 ml (1 cup) raspberries, fresh or frozen
- 30 ml (2 Tbsp) sugar

METHOD

- 1 Sprinkle the gelatin over the water in a small bowl and leave it to soften.
- 2 Put the cream, milk, sugar and split vanilla bean in a medium pot over low heat, then stir in the softened gelatin.
- 3 Heat, stirring, until the gelatin has completely dissolved. Do not let it boil. Lift out the vanilla bean.
- 4 Rinse six ramekins with cold water, leaving them damp, and pour the cream in. The water film is what lets them turn out cleanly.
- 5 Refrigerate at least 4 h, preferably overnight.
- 6 For the sauce, cook the raspberries and sugar in a small pot over medium-high heat about 8 min, then press through a sieve to remove the seeds. Taste and add more sugar if needed.
- 7 Turn each panna cotta onto a plate and pour the sauce over so it runs down the sides.

NOTES / VARIATIONS

- Three ingredients, none of them processed, and the result looks more alarming than anything that came out of a packet.
- Powdered gelatin varies in strength between countries. If yours is weak, the panna cotta will not unmold; serve it in glasses instead of fighting it.

MAKE-AHEAD / STORAGE

- Covered in the refrigerator up to 3 days. The sauce keeps 1 week and freezes well.



Pumpkin Fudge

Yield: 20 pieces / Prep: 20 min / Set: 6 h / Total: 6 h 20 min

INGREDIENTS

- 510 g (3 cups) good-quality certified gluten-free white chocolate chips
- 120 ml (1/2 cup) sweetened condensed milk
- 45 ml (3 Tbsp) unsalted butter
- 55 g (1/4 cup) pumpkin puree
- 7.5 ml (1 1/2 tsp) gluten-free pumpkin pie spice
- 1 drop orange gel food coloring (optional)
- 15 ml (1 Tbsp) cornstarch, sifted
- 5 ml (1 tsp) vanilla extract
- 85 g (1/2 cup) certified gluten-free white chocolate melting wafers, to drizzle (optional)

METHOD

- 1 Line a 20 x 20 cm (8 x 8 inch) dish with parchment.
- 2 Put the white chocolate chips, condensed milk and butter in a medium saucepan over medium-low heat and stir often until almost melted.
- 3 Stir in the pumpkin puree and pumpkin pie spice until completely smooth, then lower the heat.
- 4 Stir in the coloring, if using, and the vanilla.
- 5 Stir in the sifted cornstarch. This is what keeps the fudge firm despite the moisture in the pumpkin.
- 6 Take the pan off the heat and spread the fudge in the dish.
- 7 Refrigerate until firm, preferably overnight.
- 8 Drizzle with melted wafers if you like, then cut into squares.

NOTES / VARIATIONS

- No thermometer and no boiling sugar, which makes this one of the few fudges a child can help with.
- White chocolate is the line to check, as always, and cornstarch is sold as cornflour in Britain; both are usually gluten-free but both are processed.

MAKE-AHEAD / STORAGE

- Airtight in the refrigerator up to 2 weeks, or frozen up to 3 months.



Apple Crisp

Yield: 12 servings / Prep: 20 min / Cook: 50 min / Total: 1 h 10 min

INGREDIENTS

Filling

- 1.6 kg (3 1/2 lb, about 8-9) Granny Smith or Honeycrisp apples, peeled and sliced 6 mm (1/4 inch) thick
- 60 ml (1/4 cup) granulated sugar
- 30 ml (2 Tbsp) gluten-free measure-for-measure flour, plus 15-30 ml (1-2 Tbsp) more for Honeycrisp apples
- 30 ml (2 Tbsp) lemon juice
- 2.5 ml (1/2 tsp) vanilla extract
- 2.5 ml (1/2 tsp) kosher salt
- 2.5 ml (1/2 tsp) ground cinnamon
- 1.25 ml (1/4 tsp) ground nutmeg

Topping

- 120 g (1 1/2 cups) certified gluten-free quick oats
- 113 g (3/4 cup) gluten-free measure-for-measure flour
- 320 g (1 1/2 cups) brown sugar
- 2.5 ml (1/2 tsp) kosher salt
- 2.5 ml (1/2 tsp) ground cinnamon
- 1.25 ml (1/4 tsp) ground nutmeg
- 170 g (3/4 cup) butter, cold and cubed

METHOD

- 1 Heat the oven to 175 C (350 F) and grease a 23 x 33 cm (9 x 13 inch) baking dish.
- 2 Toss all the filling ingredients together in a large bowl until the apples are evenly coated.
- 3 In another bowl, mix the oats, flour, brown sugar, salt, cinnamon and nutmeg. Add the cold butter and cut it in with a pastry blender, a fork or your fingertips until the mixture looks like coarse crumbs.
- 4 Tip the apples into the dish and cover them with the crumble.
- 5 Bake 45 to 50 min, until the top is golden and the filling bubbles at the edges.
- 6 Cool 10 min before serving.

NOTES / VARIATIONS

- Apple crisp is what a gluten-free household makes instead of pie when there is no time: no pastry, no rolling, no cracking.
- Juicier apples need the extra flour in the filling. Without it the crumble sits in a puddle.

MAKE-AHEAD / STORAGE

- Cover and refrigerate up to 4 days. Reheat uncovered at 175 C (350 F) for 15 min to crisp the top again.



No-Bake Chocolate Spiders

Yield: 12 spiders / Prep: 20 min / Set: 10 min / Total: 30 min

INGREDIENTS

- 255-283 g (9-10 oz) certified gluten-free semi-sweet chocolate chips
- 12 gluten-free peanut butter sandwich cookies
- 25-30 small gluten-free salted twist pretzels
- Certified gluten-free candy eyes

METHOD

- 1 Line a baking sheet with parchment. Set out the cookies and candy eyes.
- 2 Snap the pretzels apart: the outer curved pieces become legs, the straight inner bars become antennae. You need 8 curved pieces per spider.
- 3 Melt the chocolate chips slowly in a bowl set over barely simmering water, stirring until smooth, then take it off the heat.
- 4 Drop one cookie into the chocolate, turn it with a fork and press it down so every side and edge is coated.
- 5 Lift it onto the parchment. Dip one end of each curved pretzel piece in chocolate and press it against the side of the cookie, four legs per side, starting 6 mm (1/4 inch) from one end.
- 6 Drop two candy eyes onto the leg-free end, and add two chocolate-dipped straight pieces above them as antennae.
- 7 Repeat with the rest, then leave about 10 min to set hard.

NOTES / VARIATIONS

- The usual version of this treat is built on wheat sandwich cookies and wheat pretzels, which is two problems in one spider. Gluten-free versions of both are widely sold and behave exactly the same.
- Work in small batches. Melted chocolate sets faster than you can attach eight legs, and reheating it makes it dull.

MAKE-AHEAD / STORAGE

- In a single layer in an airtight container in a cool, dry place up to 3 days.

Something to Drink

Hot, cold and one that foams out of a bowl.



Mulled Apple Cider

Yield: 8 mugs / Prep: 5 min / Cook: 40 min / Total: 45 min

INGREDIENTS

- 1.9 liters (8 cups) non-alcoholic apple cider
- 30 ml (2 Tbsp) pure maple syrup
- 1 small orange, sliced 6 mm (1/4 inch) thick
- 2 cinnamon sticks, plus more to serve
- 8 whole cloves
- 8 whole allspice berries
- 2 whole star anise
- Orange and apple slices, to garnish (optional)

METHOD

- 1 Put the cider, maple syrup, orange slices, cinnamon sticks, cloves, allspice and star anise in a 3 liter (3 quart) or larger pot and stir gently.
- 2 Bring to a simmer over medium-high heat, then lower the heat and simmer gently 30 min, skimming off any foam.
- 3 Strain through a fine sieve.
- 4 Pour into mugs and garnish with a cinnamon stick and fresh fruit slices.
- 5 For a slow cooker, put everything in, cover and cook on low for 3 h, then strain.

NOTES / VARIATIONS

- Whole spices are naturally gluten-free and, unlike ground blends, carry no anti-caking agents or fillers to check. This is the drink to make when the kitchen is already busy with other people's food.
- Cider and apple juice both work. Cloudy cider gives more body.

MAKE-AHEAD / STORAGE

- Refrigerate strained cider up to 5 days and reheat gently. It also freezes for 3 months.



Green Monster Smoothie

Yield: 2 glasses / Prep: 5 min / Total: 5 min

INGREDIENTS

- 240 ml (1 cup) milk
- 240 ml (1 cup) packed baby spinach leaves
- 120 ml (1/2 cup) orange juice
- 2 medium bananas, sliced and frozen
- 120 ml (1/2 cup) ice (optional, for a thicker drink)
- Certified gluten-free candy eyes, to garnish (optional)

METHOD

- 1 Put the milk, spinach, orange juice, frozen banana and ice in a high-speed blender.
- 2 Blend until completely smooth, with no flecks of leaf left.
- 3 Pour into glasses and stick two candy eyes on the outside of each glass with a dab of the smoothie.

NOTES / VARIATIONS

- Spinach disappears behind the banana and orange; children taste fruit and see a monster. Freezing the banana first is what makes it thick enough to hold the eyes.
- Swap the milk for any dairy-free milk and the drink stays the same.

MAKE-AHEAD / STORAGE

- Drink it fresh. It separates within an hour and the green dulls.



Witches' Brew Punch

Yield: 14 glasses of 240 ml (8 oz) / Prep: 5 min / Total: 5 min

INGREDIENTS

- 2 liters (2 quarts) ginger ale, well chilled
- 240 ml (1 cup) pineapple juice
- 2 limes, juiced
- 950 ml (1 quart) lime sherbet
- 227 g (8 oz) gluten-free gummy worms, to garnish

METHOD

- 1 Pour the ginger ale, pineapple juice and lime juice into a punch bowl and whisk to combine.
- 2 Spoon in the sherbet and stir slowly; it foams up into a swamp-green head.
- 3 Ladle into glasses, hang a gummy worm over the rim of each and serve at once, before the foam falls.

NOTES / VARIATIONS

- Everything here is naturally gluten-free except the gummy worms, which are sometimes dusted with wheat starch. That is the only label on the table.
- Freeze a plastic glove full of water the night before and float the ice hand in the bowl.

MAKE-AHEAD / STORAGE

- Mix it in the bowl at serving time; the foam collapses within 20 min and the sherbet melts into the juice.



Pumpkin Spice Hot Chocolate

Yield: 4 mugs / Prep: 5 min / Cook: 5 min / Total: 10 min

INGREDIENTS

- 720 ml (3 cups) milk, preferably whole
- 180 ml (3/4 cup) pumpkin puree
- 10 ml (2 tsp) vanilla extract
- 5 ml (1 tsp) gluten-free pumpkin pie spice
- 0.6 ml (1/8 tsp) salt
- 113 g (4 oz) good-quality certified gluten-free white chocolate, coarsely chopped

METHOD

- 1 Whisk the milk, pumpkin puree, vanilla, pumpkin pie spice and salt together in a large saucepan.
- 2 Heat over medium, stirring often, until it simmers. Do not let it boil over; pumpkin makes it catch and climb faster than plain milk.
- 3 Add the white chocolate and stir until it has melted completely.
- 4 Ladle into mugs and top with whipped cream and a cinnamon stick.
- 5 In a slow cooker, put everything in at once, cover and cook on low 2 h, stirring occasionally.

NOTES / VARIATIONS

- White chocolate and pumpkin pie spice are the two lines to check. Both are blends, and both have gluten-free versions on the same shelf.
- This is thick enough to hold a marshmallow ghost on top; pipe one from the meringue recipe in this book.

MAKE-AHEAD / STORAGE

- Refrigerate up to 5 days or freeze up to 3 months. Reheat gently and whisk to bring it back together.



Pumpkin Spice Latte

Yield: 1 large mug / Prep: 5 min / Cook: 5 min / Total: 10 min

INGREDIENTS

- 2 shots espresso, or 120 ml (1/2 cup) cold brew or strongly brewed coffee
- 240 ml (1 cup) milk of choice
- 45 ml (3 Tbsp) maple syrup
- 45 ml (3 Tbsp) canned pumpkin puree
- 2.5 ml (1/2 tsp) vanilla extract
- 1.25 ml (1/4 tsp) gluten-free pumpkin pie spice, heaped, plus more to dust
- 1 pinch sea salt
- Whipped cream and a cinnamon stick, to serve (optional)

METHOD

- 1 Put the espresso, milk, maple syrup, pumpkin puree, vanilla, pumpkin pie spice and salt in a small pot.
- 2 Whisk over low heat about 5 min, until smooth and steaming. Do not let it boil; pumpkin catches on the base.
- 3 Pour into a large mug, top with whipped cream, dust with more spice and add a cinnamon stick.

NOTES / VARIATIONS

- The coffee shop version is not a safe assumption. Commercial pumpkin spice syrups are made in facilities that also make cookie and wafer syrups, and the whipped cream and sprinkles come off shared equipment.
- Made at home with real pumpkin, the only line worth checking is the spice blend.

MAKE-AHEAD / STORAGE

- Make it to order. The pumpkin settles within minutes if it stands.



Blood Orange Punch

Yield: 4 servings / Prep: 5 min / Total: 5 min

INGREDIENTS

- 240 ml (1 cup) pomegranate juice
- 15 ml (1 Tbsp) sugar, to taste
- 2 oranges, thinly sliced
- 1 lemon, thinly sliced
- 120 ml (1/2 cup) pomegranate seeds
- 750 ml (3 cups) sparkling wine, chilled, or sparkling white grape juice for a version everyone can drink
- Ice, to serve
- Mint leaves, to garnish (optional)

METHOD

- 1 Stir the pomegranate juice and sugar together in a glass pitcher until the sugar dissolves.
- 2 Add the lemon and orange slices and the pomegranate seeds and stir again. The pitcher can go in the refrigerator at this point.
- 3 When you are ready to serve, pour in the chilled sparkling wine or grape juice and stir once, gently.
- 4 Put ice and mint in the glasses and pour the punch over.

NOTES / VARIATIONS

- Pomegranate seeds suspended in dark red are the whole effect; they look like something you would rather not identify.
- Juice, fruit and wine are naturally gluten-free. The bottles to leave out of a punch are anything malted, and any flavored spirit or ready-made mixer you cannot check.

MAKE-AHEAD / STORAGE

- Mix the base up to 1 day ahead and refrigerate it. Add the sparkling element at the table.

Where These Came From

Every recipe here was checked the same way, and it is worth saying exactly how, because “gluten-free” on a recipe title is not a claim anyone verifies for you.

Each recipe was taken from a published source and then read line by line against a fixed list of ingredients that carry gluten without announcing it: broth and stock, soy sauce, oats, pasta, tortillas, cured and processed meat, chocolate and chocolate chips, baking powder, spice blends, sauces, cereals, crackers, cookies, sprinkles and candy. Where one of those appears, the recipe says so on the ingredient line itself rather than trusting the title. Where the original used a wheat product with no safe version — a wheat cracker crumb, a wheat sandwich cookie, a soup thickened with flour — the substitution is named in the notes, not quietly swapped.

Nothing here was invented. Quantities, temperatures and timings are the published ones. Naturally gluten-free recipes were left alone, because the safest recipe is the one that never needed changing.

The book this came from

Safe to Eat is the full version of this method: **1,000 gluten-free recipes**, every ingredient checked to celiac standard, with six chapters on the things that actually cause problems — how much gluten it takes to do damage, what cross-contamination has been measured to do in a real kitchen, how to read a label in a country where barley does not have to be declared, how gluten-free flours and binders behave, and how to eat in a restaurant without guessing.

It is one file, yours forever, at **thecheckedkitchen.com**.

And the free kit

If this collection is the first thing of ours you have opened, there is a 42-page starter kit that costs nothing: an aisle-by-aisle shopping checklist, a restaurant card, and a seven-day menu for somebody newly diagnosed.

thecheckedkitchen.com/free

How to Use This Collection Safely

Every recipe here was written for a kitchen where gluten is not optional to avoid. Every processed ingredient — every broth, every sauce, every chocolate chip, every strip of bacon — is named as gluten-free on the ingredient line itself, not just implied by the words on the cover.

But there is a limit to what any recipe can do for you, and you should know exactly where it is. **A recipe can tell you what kind of product to buy. It cannot tell you which product is safe.** Formulations change. A brand that was safe last year may not be safe today. A product safe in one country may be made in a different facility, to a different standard, in another.

Read the label on every package, every time. If a product is not clearly labeled gluten-free, or you cannot verify it, do not use it.

In the United States a product labeled gluten-free must contain less than 20 parts per million of gluten. Two things about that rule are worth knowing: the label is voluntary, and the FDA does not test products before they are sold. That is why the final check sits with you — not because anyone wants it that way, but because that is how the system works.

Even a safe ingredient can be made unsafe between the package and the plate. Shared toasters, wooden spoons, flour dust in the air, a colander that has drained wheat pasta, a jar of jam that has met a crumb-covered knife. On a night when other people are in your kitchen, that matters more than usual.

Disclaimer

Not medical advice. This is a collection of recipes and general information about gluten-free cooking. It is not medical, dietary, or nutritional advice, and it is not a substitute for consultation with a qualified healthcare professional. Nothing here is intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease or condition, including celiac disease, non-celiac gluten sensitivity, and wheat allergy. If you have or suspect you have a medical condition, consult a physician or a registered dietitian

before changing your diet.

You are responsible for verifying every ingredient. These recipes specify gluten-free versions of processed ingredients. They do not, and cannot, identify specific safe brands or products. Product formulations, manufacturing facilities, sourcing, and labeling change without notice and vary between countries and regions. It is your responsibility to read the packaging of every product you use, on every occasion, and to satisfy yourself that it is gluten-free and appropriate for your individual medical needs. Where a recipe calls for a certified gluten-free ingredient, use a product that carries such certification.

No testing or certification is claimed. These recipes have not been laboratory tested for gluten content. Neither the recipes nor any dish prepared from them is certified gluten-free by any certifying body.

Cross-contamination. Preventing cross-contamination in your own kitchen, including the condition of your equipment, surfaces, and storage, is outside the control of this collection and is your responsibility.

Allergens other than gluten. These recipes are not free of other allergens. They may contain dairy, eggs, nuts, peanuts, soy, fish, shellfish, sesame, and other allergens. If you have additional allergies or intolerances, check every ingredient against your own requirements.

Regional differences. Labeling law, permitted thresholds, certification schemes, and ingredient availability differ between countries. Information here that references any particular regulatory standard is provided for general orientation only and may not apply where you live.

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