

CHIFFON CAKE

- 5 large egg whites
- 1/2 tsp. cream of tartar
- 1 18.25-oz. pkg. plain chocolate fudge or devil's food cake mix
- 3/4 cup water
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 3 large egg yolks
- 2 tsp. pure vanilla extract
- Crushed peppermint buttercream frosting, recipe follows

- Place a rack in the center of the oven and preheat the oven to 325 degrees. Set aside an ungreased 10-inch tube pan.
- Place the egg whites and cream of tartar in a medium-size mixing bowl. Beat with an electric mixer on high speed until stiff peaks form, 2 to 3 minutes. Set the bowl aside.
- Place cake mix, water, oil, yolks and vanilla in large mixing bowl and with same beaters used to beat the whites, blend on low speed 1 minute. Stop machine; scrape down the side of bowl with spatula. Increase mixer speed to medium; beat 2 minutes more, scrapping the sides down again if needed. The batter will be very thick and should look well combined. Turn beaten whites out on top of batter; use rubber spatula to fold whites into batter until mixture is light but well combined. Pour the batter into the ungreased pan, smoothing the top with the rubber spatula. Place the pan in the oven.
- Bake cake until it springs back when lightly pressed with your finger, 60-65 minutes. Remove pan from oven; immediately turn upside down over neck of a glass bottle. Allow it to cool for an hour.
- Remove pan from bottle. Run long, sharp knife around cake's edge and invert it onto rack, then invert again onto serving platter.
- Prepare frosting (recipe follows) and spread it over the sides of the cake with smooth, clean strokes. Let the cake rest for 10 minutes. Slice and serve. This cake will store in a cake server at room temperature for three days; in the refrigerator up to a week. Or freeze it in a cake saver up to six months. **Makes 1 cake.**

CRUSHED PEPPERMINT BUTTERCREAM FROSTING

- 1 stick butter, room temperature
- 3-4 Tbsp. milk
- 1/2 tsp. pure peppermint extract
- 1/2 cup crushed peppermint candy
- 3/2 cups confectioners' sugar, sifted

- Place butter, extract and 1 cup confectioners' sugar in large mixing bowl. Blend with electric mixer on low speed to incorporate, 30 seconds. Add remaining confectioners' sugar alternately with 3 tablespoons milk, 1 tablespoon at a time, blending with mixer on low speed. Add another tablespoon milk if frosting seems too stiff. Increase mixer speed to medium; beat until light and fluffy, 1 minute more. Fold in the peppermint candy. Use to frost the top and sides of the chiffon cake or cupcakes of your choice.

CHOCOLATE GANACHE

- 3/4 cup heavy whipping cream
- coarsely chopped
- 8 oz. semisweet chocolate,
- 1 Tbsp. Chambord, optional

- Place cream in small heavy saucepan over medium heat; bring to boil, stirring. Meanwhile, place chocolate in large stainless-steel mixing bowl. Remove cream from heat, and pour it over chocolate. Stir with a wooden spoon until chocolate melts. Stir in liqueur. For a glaze, let ganache stand at room temperature 10 minutes before spooning it over a cooled cake. As a frosting, let ganache stand 30 minutes at room temperature or chill it for 10 minutes, until it has thickened enough to spread with a spatula

CHEESECAKE PIE

- 1/4 cups graham cracker crumbs
- Dash of salt
- 1/4 cup butter or margarine, melted
- 1 Tbsp. lemon juice
- 1 8-oz. pkg. cream cheese, softened
- 2 eggs
- 1/2 cup sugar
- Topping: 1 cup sour cream
- 1/2 tsp. vanilla
- 2 Tbsp. sugar

- Preheat oven to 325 degrees.
- Combine crumbs and butter or margarine and press into a buttered 8-inch pie plate, building up the sides.
- Beat cream cheese until fluffy. Gradually blend in sugar, lemon juice, vanilla and salt. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each.
- Pour into crumb crust. Bake for 25-30 minutes or until set.
- **Topping:** Combine sour cream, vanilla, sugar. Spoon over pie's top. Bake 10 minutes. Let stand to cool, then refrigerate several hours. Serve with fresh strawberries when available. — Helen K. Labbancoz