

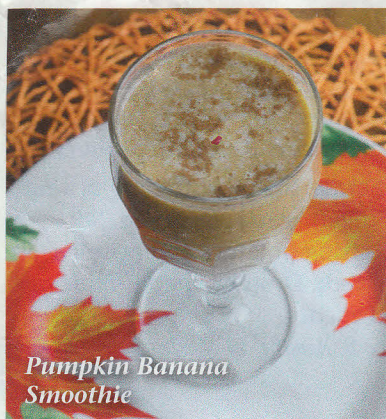
Heat oven to 375.

Leave cream cheese out for about two hours. In a large bowl, stir together cream cheese, taco seasoning, cumin and chilies. Stir in salsa, chicken, beans, corn and half of the cheese. Once mixture is well combined, spread it in a cast iron skillet or baking dish. Top with remaining cheese.

Bake for 22-26 minutes, until cheese has melted and mixture is bubbling.

Top with green onions and cilantro. Serve with tortilla chips.

*Note: If you are tailgating, assemble dip in advance in a cast iron skillet, cover with foil, and put it on the grill when you start to tailgate.*



**Pumpkin Banana Smoothie**

## *Pumpkin Banana Smoothie*

Makes 1 serving.

- 1/2 cup canned pumpkin
- 1/2 very ripe banana
- 1 cup vanilla-flavored almond milk (60- or 80-calorie version)
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon brown sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 ice cubes



**Peanut Butter Dessert Dip with Cookies & Apples**

Place all ingredients in a blender, and blend for about 45 seconds. Serve.

*Notes: Use the 60- or 80-calorie vanilla almond milk because the 30-calorie version is unsweetened, and pumpkin needs some sweetening!*

*You can use regular milk. Just add more sugar, and double the vanilla extract.*

## *Peanut Butter Dessert Dip with Cookies & Apples*

Makes 15 or more servings.

For dip:

- 2/3 cup smooth peanut butter
- 1 14-ounce can sweetened condensed milk
- Red or black icing gel
- 1 fake plastic spider

For cookies:

- 1 pound white almond bark
- 1 package Nutter Butter cookies
- Mini chocolate chips
- 1 package Oreo cookies
- White cookie icing
- Green apples, sliced
- Pretzels (optional)

In a medium bowl, whisk together peanut

butter and sweetened condensed milk. Refrigerate until time to serve.

Line a baking sheet with wax paper. Melt the almond bark according to package directions. Dip Nutter Butter cookies completely in the almond bark, working as quickly as possible. Allow cookies to dry on wax paper. When almond bark is beginning to harden, add mini chocolate chips to create eyes and mouths.

Make scary faces on Oreo cookies with white cookie icing.

Before serving dip, use red or black icing gel to create a spider web. (Draw a circle in the middle of the dip. Draw lines from center extending to the edge. Then connect those lines with horizontal lines.) Add a fake spider to the web, and serve dip with cookies, apple slices and pretzels.



Juliana Goodwin is a food columnist, cookbook author and avid traveler. If you have a question, email [julianalovesfood23@gmail.com](mailto:julianalovesfood23@gmail.com).





# From our readers

## Black Bean Salsa

- 1 15-ounce can seasoned black beans, drained
- 1 15-ounce can white shoepeg corn or sweet corn, drained
- 1 14.5-ounce can diced tomatoes, basil, garlic and oregano flavor
- 1/2 cup Italian dressing
- 1 small red or white onion, chopped

Mix all ingredients together and refrigerate for at least 1 1/2 hours.

Serve with tortilla chips.

Karen A. Barnes, Farmington

## Adult Mac 'n' Cheese

- 1 14.75-ounce can cream-style corn with liquid
- 1 15.25-ounce can whole kernel corn with liquid
- 1 stick butter, melted
- 1 cup uncooked macaroni
- 1 cup cheese, cubed or shredded
- Sliced Polish sausage (optional)

Heat oven to 350.

In a large casserole dish, mix all ingredients together. Cover and bake for 30 minutes. Remove lid and bake for an additional 30 minutes or until macaroni is tender.

Coetia Batarseh, Norfork

## Cheesy Chili Hashbrown Bake

Makes 8 servings.

- 1 1/2 pounds lean ground beef
- 1 cup carrots, shredded
- 1 15.5-ounce can Sloppy Joe sauce
- 1 15-ounce can chili beans (do not drain)
- 1 20-ounce package refrigerated hashbrown potatoes (I use Simply Potatoes)
- Cooking spray
- 2 cups cheddar cheese, shredded

Heat oven to 425.

In large skillet, cook beef and carrots until beef is no longer pink and carrots are tender. Stir in Sloppy Joe sauce and

beans. Spoon mixture into greased 9x13-inch dish. Spread potatoes evenly over beef mixture. Cover with foil; bake 30 minutes. Remove foil and coat potatoes with cooking spray. Bake 15 more minutes or until browned. Sprinkle with cheese, and bake 5 more minutes.

Mary Jane Vaughn, Fayetteville

## Mama's Custard Banana Pudding

Makes 12 servings.

- 1 1/2 cups sugar
- Dash of salt
- 2/3 cup plus 1 tablespoon flour
- 4 cups milk
- 6 egg yolks
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- 4-6 extra-ripe bananas, sliced
- 11 ounces vanilla wafers (I use Jackson's)

In a medium bowl, mix together sugar, salt and flour.

In a separate medium bowl, whisk together milk and egg yolks until combined. Pour milk-and-egg mixture into saucepan/double boiler and heat on medium-high.

Sift in dry ingredients (or mix in 1/2 cup at a time if not using sifter), stirring mixture with a wooden spoon continuously until desired pudding consistency is met (usually 35-45 minutes; the longer you stir, the thicker it will become. It will

also thicken a smidge when cooled.) Remove from heat, and add vanilla extract.

Fill serving bowl by alternating layers of bananas, custard and wafers, reserving 1/4 of wafers for garnish. Finish with a smooth custard layer on top. Crush remaining wafers to garnish.

Serve hot or chilled.

*\*Notes: My Grandma Scudder always made us the best homemade banana pudding. She passed away and never wrote down her recipe. It took nearly five years of many taste tests and complete fails, but I finally figured her recipe out and hit the nail on the head! Family approved.*

*I have noticed this custard absorbs flavor, which is why I suggest stirring it with a wooden spoon. I do not recommend putting this in a metal serving dish due to a metallic taste. Glass or ceramic works best.*

Kristin M. King, Forrest City

## Haystacks

- 11 ounces butterscotch baking chips
- 1 1/4 cup of peanut butter
- 1 4-ounce can fried shoestring potatoes
- 1 12-ounce can cocktail peanuts

Melt butterscotch chips and peanut butter together in a saucepan. Stir in shoestring potatoes and peanuts, mixing well. Drop by spoonful on wax paper. Let cool.

Janice E. Austin, Lockesburg

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