

Books, magazines present terrifying recipes

DETROIT (MCT) — Bread witches' fingers with pepperoni nails. Pretzel stick bones. A chocolate web spun on a pumpkin tart.

These are just a few cool ways to have some Halloween fun with your food.

Several new sources are out with fun and creative ideas for making treats for the children and transforming ordinary foods into fabulously scary fare.

"Ghoulish Goodies" by Sharon Bowers (Storey Publishing, \$14.95) features fun yet creatively frightening and creepy food.

Bowers is a former producer of Food Network's Web site, which still features some of her Halloween creations.

About Halloween, Bowers writes, "it's the first fun holiday that comes along after the kids go back to school, and they throw themselves into it wholeheartedly."

The book is extremely kid-friendly with easy-to-follow recipes so kids can lend a hand. It's also tame on the gross-out scale. There are ideas for adult party appetizers such as the Witches' Knuckles — a savory pastry — and Bandaged Fingers — cocktail weiners wrapped in tortillas — and recipes for a Halloween supper.

Cupcakes continue to be a hot treat for Halloween and Bowers offers a half-dozen creepy cupcake ideas. Each one has its own recipe for the cake because Bowers prefers not to use cake mixes.

Martha Stewart Halloween. This special-issue magazine (\$6.95) is a yearly favorite from the doyenne of food and entertaining. It features more than "125 ideas for parties, pumpkins, tricks, treats and ghoulish getups."

There are an array of ideas for decorating with pumpkins and gourds, making costumes for everyone (including pets), clip art and templates for decorating jack-o'-lanterns and a host of food ideas. Recipes run from frightening and ghoulishly fun to ones that simply mark the season, such as Jack-O'-Lantern Spice Cookies and

Chocolate Caramel Apples.

"Extreme Halloween: The Ultimate Guide to Making Halloween Scary Again" by Tom Nardone (Pedigree, \$14.95). From Birmingham, Nardone is the guy who carves ghoulish and gross designs on pumpkins, sets them on fire and connects them to make scorpions and serpents. Author of the best-selling "Extreme Pumpkins" and "Extreme Pumpkins II" (HP Trade, \$13.95), Nardone is on a mission to put the fright back into Halloween with horrifying decorations and creepy food like a banana pudding blob and a meat head.

WITCHES' KNUCKLES

Makes: 36

Preparation time: 30 minutes

Total time: 50 minutes

You can make these in advance and store them in the refrigerator for up to 3 days. Reheat for 6 to 8 minutes in a 350-degree oven before serving.

1 cup water
1/2 cup (1 stick) butter
1 cup all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1 teaspoon chili powder
4 eggs
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
4 ounces extra-sharp cheddar cheese, grated (about 1 cup)
1 egg yolk, lightly beaten with 1 tablespoon water

9 pieces of sliced pepperoni cut into quarters

Dried whole rosemary leaves

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment or wax paper. Place the water and butter in a medium saucepan and bring to a boil over medium heat. Take the pan off the heat and stir in the flour, salt, cumin and chili powder. Return the mixture to the heat and cook, beating constantly with a wooden spoon until the dough starts to pull away from the sides of the pan, 1 to 2 minutes.

Remove from heat and stir for 1 to 2 minutes, until slightly cooled. Beat in the eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Stir in the mustard and cheese.

Put the dough in a plastic resealable bag and cut a 1/2-inch hole in one corner. Squeeze 3-inch-long fingers onto the prepared baking sheets. Brush them with the egg yolk mixture and press a pepperoni fingernail onto each tip. Lay a few rosemary needles just beneath the nail and in the middle of the finger as knuckle lines.

Bake for 15 to 18 minutes, until the fingers are golden brown and crisp.

Serve hot or warm.

From "Ghoulish Goodies" by Sharon Bowers (Storey, \$14.95).

Analysis per 1 knuckle: 55 calories (65 percent from fat), 4 grams fat (2 grams sat. fat), 3 grams carbohydrates, 2 grams protein, 94 mg sodium, 32 mg cholesterol, 0 grams fiber.

FUNNY BONES

Makes: 36 bones

Preparation time: 45 minutes

Total time: 45 minutes

1 package white chocolate chips (2 cups)

36 pretzel thins

72 mini marshmallows (about 1 cup)

Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment or wax paper. Place the chips in a double boiler over just-simmering water and melt, stirring frequently.

As soon as the chips are just melted (there may even be a few solid ones left), remove the pan from the heat and remove the top section of the double boiler so the chocolate's temperature doesn't keep rising.

Stick marshmallows 'rounded sides onto both ends of the pretzels.

Dip each pretzel in the chocolate and lift out with a fork, letting the excess drip back in the bowl. Lay the bones on the baking sheet and refrigerate for 30 minutes to harden the chocolate. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator or at a cool room temperature.

From "Ghoulish Goodies" by Sharon Bowers (Storey, \$14.95).

35 calories (trace from fat), 2 grams fat (1 gram sat. fat), 4 grams carbohydrates, 0 grams protein, 20 mg sodium, 2 mg cholesterol, 0 grams fiber.

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