

## RECIPES

### Rocky Road Bites

This super easy recipe was originally developed as an ice cream flavour by William Dreyer in Oakland, California. The Irish have certainly taken it to their hearts and you'll find a version of it in most cafés. These would also make a lovely present wrapped in tissue paper in a nice box.

Makes about 24 squares

8 x 58g (2¼oz) Mars bars, chopped

- 8 tbsp pouring golden syrup
- 225g (8oz) butter
- 2 x 40g (1½oz) Crunchie bars, finely chopped
- 100g (4oz) Rice Krispies
- 100g (4oz) mini marshmallows
- 1 x 200g (7oz) bar of milk chocolate, broken into squares

# 1

Place the Mars bars in a pan with the golden syrup and 175g (6oz) of the butter. Cook over a low heat for 3–4 minutes, until melted, then beat until smooth. Cool.

# 2

Fold the Crunchies, Rice Krispies and mini marshmallows into the Mars bar mixture until well combined. Transfer to a 20cm (8in) square tin lined with non-stick baking paper. Spread out evenly with a spatula.

# 3

Melt the milk chocolate with the rest of the butter in a heatproof bowl set over a pan of simmering water, making sure the water doesn't touch the bottom of the bowl.

# 4

Spread or drizzle in an even layer over the chocolate mixture and set aside for at least 1 hour, until set firm. Cut into squares and arrange on a cake stand to serve. The squares will keep well for up to a week in the fridge.

## Snickers Shortbread

This recipe is from Emily Stafford, who developed it for a school cookery competition and has very kindly shared it with me. It makes plenty so it's perfect for a party or bake sale. Any leftovers keep well in an airtight container for up to three days.

Makes about 30 bars

- 175g (6oz) plain flour
- 75g (3oz) semolina
- 75g (3oz) caster sugar
- 275g (10oz) butter, cut into cubes, at room temperature
- 100g (4oz) light brown sugar
- 2 x 400g (14oz) tins of condensed milk
- ½ tsp sea salt flakes
- 150g (5oz) jumbo salted peanuts
- 300g (11oz) milk or dark chocolate, broken into squares

# 1

Preheat the oven to 180°C (350°F/gas mark 4). Mix the flour, semolina and caster sugar in a bowl. Rub in 175g (6oz) of the butter to resemble fine crumbs. Press into a 37.5cm x 25.5cm (15in x 10in) baking tin lined with non-stick baking paper.

# 2

Prick with a fork and bake for 16–18 minutes, until firm and golden. Put the rest of the butter in a heavy-based pan with the light brown sugar and condensed milk and heat gently until the sugar has dissolved. Bring to the boil, stirring.

# 3

Reduce the heat and simmer gently, stirring, for about 20 minutes, until the mixture has thickened and darkened. Stir in the salt until dissolved. Scatter the peanuts over the shortbread, then pour over the caramel. Cool for 15 minutes.

# 4

Melt the chocolate in a bowl set over a pan of simmering water. Cool, then pour it over the caramel and spread the top very gently. Cool, then remove from the tin, carefully peel off the baking paper and cut into bars.

## Savage Sausage Rolls

I've been using the same sausage roll recipe for years, so I had to spend a bit of the time in the kitchen playing around with different ideas. These are particularly good with a dollop of tomato and chilli relish inside.

Serves 4

- 500g (1lb 2oz) sausage meat
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 50g (2oz) mature Cheddar cheese, finely grated
- 3 tbsp chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
- 1 egg
- 500g (1lb 2oz) puff pastry, thawed if frozen
- a little plain flour, for dusting
- 4 tbsp tomato and chilli relish, plus extra to serve
- sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

# 1

Preheat the oven to 200°C (400°F/gas mark 6). To make the filling, mix the sausage meat in a bowl with the onion, Cheddar and parsley. Season to taste. Crack the egg into a small bowl and beat with a pinch of salt.

# 2

Cut the pastry in half and roll out each piece on a lightly floured surface to make a long oblong shape that is 33cm x 23cm (13in x 9in). Cut in half again and spread each piece with 1 tablespoon of the relish on top, leaving the edges clear.

# 3

Form one-quarter of the filling into a log shape and place on the relish-lined pastry approximately 5mm (¼in) from the edge. Brush the edges with the beaten egg, then fold over to enclose the filling and seal the edges with a fork. Repeat.

# 4

Trim and cut into bite-sized pieces. Brush with beaten egg and arrange on a baking sheet lined with non-stick baking paper. Bake for 18–20 minutes, until cooked through, swapping the baking sheets halfway through. Serve hot or cold with the relish.

## Chorizo Chili Nachos

Perfect for a movie night with a bowl of popcorn. These nachos might look like they have a lot of ingredients, but they are actually very easy to make. Have the chilli prepared earlier so that you've everything ready to go – better than any takeaway, I promise!

Serves 4–6

- 100g (4oz) raw chorizo, diced
- 400g (14oz) lean steak mince
- 1 green pepper, deseeded and diced
- 2 mild red chillies, deseeded and thinly sliced (optional)
- 1 tbsp Cajun seasoning
- 4 tbsp tomato purée
- 2 tbsp honey
- 1 tbsp apple cider vinegar
- 1 x 400g (14oz) tin of kidney beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 x 200g (7oz) packet of sea salt tortilla chips (preferably Blanco Niño)
- 100g (4oz) mature Cheddar cheese, grated
- good handful of fresh coriander leaves
- 200g (7oz) soured cream

# 1

Heat a large non-stick frying pan over a medium heat. Add the chorizo and cook until it starts to sizzle. Add the mince and sauté for 4–5 minutes, until well browned.

# 2

Add the green pepper, half the chillies (if using) and the Cajun seasoning and sauté for 5 minutes. Stir in the tomato purée, honey, vinegar and beans along with 4 tablespoons of water. Simmer for 15 minutes, stirring, until thickened.

# 3

Preheat the oven to 180°C (350°F/gas mark 4). Spread the tortilla chips in a foil-lined baking tin and bake for 5 minutes, then spoon over the chilli. Scatter the cheese on top and bake for 6–8 minutes, until bubbling and golden.

# 4

Scatter the coriander over the nachos with the rest of the chillies (if using). Serve with a bowl of soured cream on the side for dipping.

## Mac and Cheese with ham

This is slightly different than a traditional mac 'n' cheese, which needs a white sauce. It's so delicious and could be bulked up with a bag of baby spinach or some small blanched broccoli florets instead of the salad.

Serves 4

- 225g (8oz) macaroni
- 250g (9oz) mascarpone cheese
- 150ml (¼ pint) milk
- 2 egg yolks
- 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- 175g (6oz) cooked ham pieces
- 100g (4oz) mature Cheddar cheese, grated
- 1 fresh rosemary sprig
- sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
- green salad, to serve (optional)

# 1

Preheat the oven to 200°C (400°F/gas mark 6). Cook the macaroni in a large pan of boiling salted water for 6 minutes. Drain and set aside.

# 2

Put the mascarpone in a large bowl and beat in the milk, egg yolks and mustard. Season to taste with salt and pepper, then fold in the cooked macaroni and ham with two-thirds of the cheese.

# 3

Tip the pasta mixture into a baking dish and scatter over the needles from the sprig of rosemary. Sprinkle the rest of the cheese on top. Bake for 15 minutes, until crisp and golden brown.

# 4

Serve the mac 'n' cheese straight to the table with a separate bowl of salad, if liked, so that everyone can help themselves.