

# Kids in the Kitchen

I have many happy memories of helping my mom and grandma in the kitchen. When I was smaller, my “help” may have come in the form of licking the beaters, but as I grew, I was able to stir and fold, then later I finally was allowed to cut with real knives and use the stove. I now have my own daughter, Greta, to help me in the kitchen (see photo opposite page).

Getting kids into the kitchen is the mission of Barbara Beery, who founded an Austin-based cooking school for children called Batter Up Kids. At her “culinary playground,” kids learn to cook all kinds of things in a fun, adventurous environment. She has written her first book, with recipes she perfected in the “classroom.” It’s called *Batter Up Kids: Delicious Desserts* (Gibbs Smith, Publisher; order at [www.gibbs-smith.com](http://www.gibbs-smith.com) or call 1-800-748-5439, ext. 157). I asked Barbara a few questions about kids in the kitchen and included one of her fun recipes here.

**Q: At what age can kids start cooking?**

A: Wow. Hard to answer this one. Kids may begin to help “prep” foods as early as 2. They are able to pour, mix, stir, knead (more like pound!). They create! A 2-year-old might sit still and concentrate on one task for about five minutes, max. However, in their mind, they are cooking. Clearly, their perception is what counts here. As a rule of thumb, for every year of age past 2, you may add about five minutes per year for attention span. So by the age of 5, a child may sit and create for 15-20 minutes. But that means constant hands-on interaction and activity. A great deal depends on a child’s attention span and hand-to-eye coordination before the age of 6.

But by 6-7, they have the hand-to-eye thing mastered and can read numbers. This means really beginning to measure ingredients and read simple directions. At the very least, just reading one step of a recipe

For 7- to 9-year-olds, reading a recipe becomes a big part of the cooking action.

Nine- to 11-year olds are cooking, really. Stove top cooking begins at this age, knife skills are learned.

Twelve and up ... what can’t they do?!?!

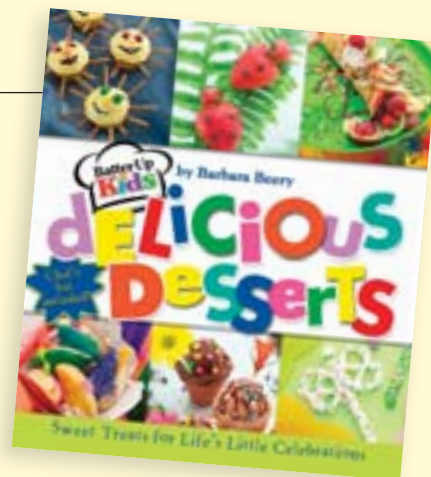
**Q: What makes a recipe suitable—and fun—for kids?**

A: The way it is presented. How many people would even consider making a Baked Alaska? Now, introduce a child to a recipe called Baked Snowballs. Excitement, wonder, imagination.

That is how a child looks at cooking. It is fun and it is an adventure. Make time and take time. Slack up on rules. Enjoy the journey. Don’t

worry about the destination.

That makes most recipes suitable and clearly a great deal of fun!



**Baked Snowballs**

- 4-6 slices of pound cake
- Ice cream, frozen yogurt or sorbet
- 3 egg whites, room temperature
- 1/4 teaspoon cream of tartar
- 4 tablespoons sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla
- Chocolate syrup (for garnish)
- Maraschino cherries (for garnish)

1. Preheat oven to 500 degrees.

2. Use 2-inch or 3-inch round baking dishes or ramekins. Square dishes will not work. Cut each slice of cake into a circle so that it fits into the bottom of the baking dish. Place a circle of cake on the bottom of each dish.

3. Now fill the dishes to the top with ice cream, frozen yogurt or sorbet. Then place filled dishes on a cookie sheet and put in freezer.

4. Place egg whites in a mixing bowl and whip until frothy (like soapsuds).

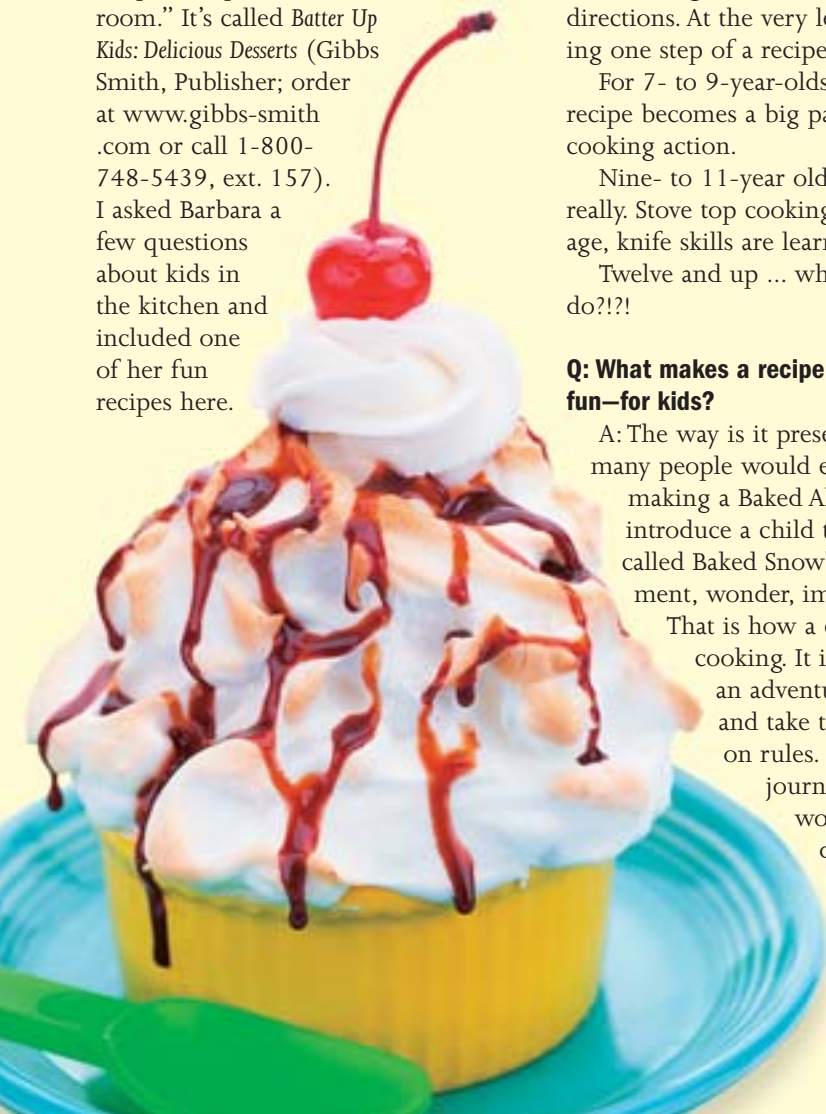
5. Add cream of tartar and beat until soft peaks form (like shaving cream).

6. Gradually add sugar and then vanilla. Continue to beat until smooth and shiny (another 2 to 3 minutes).

7. Remove ice cream-filled dishes from freezer and spread the snow meringue over the top of each of the ice cream cups. Make very sure the snow forms a “blanket” over the ice cream. There should be absolutely NO ice cream showing.

8. Put snowballs on cookie sheet and place in oven. Bake until golden brown, from 1 to 3 minutes. Watch very closely, as they brown quickly.

9. Take snowballs out of the oven and garnish each with chocolate syrup and a cherry. Serve immediately.



BAKED SNOWBALL PHOTO BY MABEY SNORTLIE

The recipe contest subject for June is **Summer Soups**. Soup in the summer? Sure, if it's cool and refreshing. Do you make a great gazpacho, a cool cucumber or other cold soup your family loves? Send the recipe to us before March 10. The top winner will receive a copy of the *Texas Co-op Power Cookbook* and a gift pack from Adams Extract. Others whose recipes are published will also receive a gift pack from Adams Extract. Be sure to include your name, address and phone number, as well as your co-op affiliation. Send recipes to Home Cooking, 2550 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78704. You can also fax recipes to (512) 486-6254 or e-mail them to [recipes@texas-ec.org](mailto:recipes@texas-ec.org).

Fun to make and fun to eat, that's what we were looking for this month. The winning recipe fits the bill! No-Cook Dandy Candy was sent in by **LORIE STRALEY**, a Wood County EC member. She writes, "This recipe is one my sister and I made many times when we were children. You can use different flavorings and colors to make it fun; I like to use maple syrup instead of corn syrup for a maple candy flavor. Our children, ages 12, 9 and 6, make this now, and my sister and I still like to munch on these candies!" Lorie will receive a copy of the *Texas Co-op Power Cookbook*. She will also receive a gift pack compliments of Adams Extract, as will the other winners whose recipes are published below.

### No-Cook Dandy Candy

2 tablespoons butter  
1 tablespoon light corn syrup  
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract  
4 little pinches of salt  
1 cup powdered sugar  
Sprinkles

Put butter in the bowl. Rub the butter on the sides of the bowl using the back of a spoon. Put syrup, vanilla and salt in the bowl and stir. Dump powdered sugar in the bowl—all at one time. Stir again. When you are tired, rest. Then stir

some more. Take a handful. Squeeze it. Do it again and again. Dump everything on the cutting board. Pound it! Squeeze it! Roll it! How does it feel? Smooth? Yes!

Take a small piece and roll it between your hands to make a ball as big as a walnut. Put it on a dish. Make another ball, and another until you have used all the mixture. Roll each ball in the sprinkles. Cover and refrigerate for 1 hour. Share and enjoy! Makes 10-12 balls.

Serving size: 2 balls. Per serving: 146 calories, trace protein, 4 grams fat, 28 grams carbohydrates, 158 milligrams sodium, 12 milligrams cholesterol

### Fish in a Sleeping Bag

1 can (8-count) refrigerated crescent rolls  
8 frozen fish sticks, slightly thawed  
8 slices of cheddar or American cheese

Heat oven to 375 degrees. Unroll dough into 2 long rectangles; press perforations to seal. Cut each rectangle lengthwise into 2 strips; cut each strip into 2 pieces, forming a total of eight 6x2-inch rectangles. Place 1 piece of cheese and 1 fish stick lengthwise on the end of each rectangle. Fish stick will cover about 2/3 of rectangle. Fold remaining dough over fish stick, stretching slightly so that dough covers about half of fish stick. Firmly press edges together to seal. Place on greased cookie sheet. Bake at 375 degrees for 15 to 17 minutes or until golden brown. Serves 8.

Serving size: 1 piece. Per serving: 400 calories, 20 grams protein, 19 grams fat, 24 grams carbohydrates, 1,100 milligrams sodium, 40 milligrams cholesterol

NANCY MCCLENDON, Greenbelt EC

### Mrs. King's Chocolate Oatmeal Cookies

2 cups sugar  
1/2 cup milk  
1/4 cup cocoa  
1/2 cup butter (1 stick)  
2 1/2 cups oatmeal  
1/2 cup peanut butter  
1 teaspoon vanilla

Combine sugar, milk, cocoa and butter in pan over medium heat until boiling, stirring constantly. Remove from heat, add all other ingredients (oatmeal first). Drop by spoonful onto waxed paper; let cool. Lick pan. Makes 24 cookies.

Serving size: 1 cookie. Per serving: 168 calories, 3 grams protein, 7 grams fat, 24 grams carbohydrates, 67 milligrams sodium, 11 milligrams cholesterol

TRINA DAVIS, Trinity Valley EC

### Banana Cream Crunch Sundae

2 cups vanilla yogurt (not frozen)  
2 bananas, cut into slices  
1 cup crushed peanut brittle  
4 maraschino cherries

Mix together yogurt, bananas and 3/4 cup of the crushed peanut brittle. Spoon mixture into 4 sundae dessert glasses. Sprinkle with remaining peanut brittle and place a cherry on top. Serves 4.

Serving size: 1 sundae. Per serving: 420 calories, 7 grams protein, 9 grams fat, 90 grams carbohydrates, 297 milligrams sodium, 13 milligrams cholesterol

BETTY HURLBUT, Medina EC

