

# Holiday Recipe Contest

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**BY SHANNON OELRICH** Oh boy, are you in for a holiday treat! You can't go wrong with any of our winning recipes this year. We've got an appetizer, a main dish and three sweets from which to choose. The very best, though, is our grand-prizewinning recipe, Upside-Down Cranberry Puffs. Your guests will delight in them hot out of the oven with a sweet buttery sauce, the perfect end to a holiday meal. And you can't beat the smells coming out of the kitchen for holiday ambiance as you zest an orange and chop cranberries. I hope you enjoy sharing our selections with your family.

Our grand prize winner, Jo Ann Kugle, won \$3,000, and runners-up won \$500 each. I want to thank the folks at Pioneer for sponsoring the contest and being so involved in the process. All the photos on these pages were taken at The Guenther House, an elegant home built in 1859 by Carl H. Guenther, founder of Pioneer Flour Mills, for his family when they relocated from Fredericksburg to San Antonio. (If you'd like to learn more about this Texas-grown company, go to [www.chguenther.com](http://www.chguenther.com).) I also want to thank Chef Rob McDonald and his students at Travis High School's Institute for Hospitality and Culinary Arts in Austin, who once again helped us test the recipes. Finally, thanks to everyone who cooked and ate their way through our readers' many recipes.

Grand prizewinner Jo Ann Kugle shows off her Upside-Down Cranberry Puffs at The Guenther House.



WILL VAN OVERBEK

## GRAND PRIZEWINNER: JO ANN KUGLE

Jo Ann likes to play with recipes and ingredients. Her **UPSIDE-DOWN CRANBERRY PUFFS** are a tart and tasty result. She says she entered the contest last year, but feels like she didn't test her recipes enough. This year, she baked the puffs many times, tweaking the recipe a little each time until they were perfect. Jo Ann loves to cook, especially with kids. She is retired from the Texas Agricultural Extension Service (now Texas Cooperative Extension), where she worked to bring the 4-H program into the inner city. Jo Ann and her husband enjoy traveling in their RV and riding his motorcycle together. They live in Austin, have two grown children, and are Pedernales Electric Cooperative members.

## UPSIDE-DOWN CRANBERRY PUFFS

- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup roughly chopped cranberries
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup sugar
- 1 cup Pioneer Biscuit & Baking Mix
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup sugar
- 1 egg
- $\frac{1}{3}$  cup milk
- Zest from 1 small orange  
(about 1 tablespoon)

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Lightly toss cranberries with sugar. Divide into 8 buttered muffin cups using about 1 tablespoon in each cup.

Mix remaining ingredients except Butter Sauce; beat for 30 seconds. Fill muffin cups  $\frac{2}{3}$  full using about 2 tablespoons in each cup.

Bake about 15 minutes or until golden brown. Invert muffins onto cooling rack.

Serve warm with hot Butter Sauce drizzled over. Makes 8 servings.

## BUTTER SAUCE

- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup sugar
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup cream
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup butter
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon vanilla
- Juice from  $\frac{1}{2}$  small orange  
(about 2 tablespoons)

In medium sauce pan, heat sugar and cream, stirring constantly until just boiling.

Remove from heat; beat in butter, orange juice and vanilla.

## RUNNER-UP: EMILY HUFFMAN

Emily's **GINGER CHOCOLATE CHIP CRINKLES** came from a recipe that she liked and then lost, so she re-created them and then kept experimenting until she had these chocolaty spice cookies. When creating a new recipe—whether for a contest or a potluck—



**Emily Huffman** Emily's motto is "nothing ordinary will do." She lives with her husband and three children in Austin. They are members of Pedernales Electric Cooperative.

## GINGER CHOCOLATE CHIP CRINKLES

- 4 tablespoons butter, softened
- 1½ tablespoons vanilla extract
- 1¼ cups packed brown sugar
- ¼ cup molasses
- 1 egg
- 3 cups Pioneer Original Biscuit & Baking Mix
- 2 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 tablespoon ground ginger
- ¼ teaspoon nutmeg
- 1¼ cups chocolate chips
- Granulated sugar to coat

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In large mixing bowl, combine butter, vanilla, brown sugar, molasses and egg. Add baking mix, cocoa powder, ginger and nutmeg. Mix well. Stir in chocolate chips. Form into 1-inch balls and roll in granulated sugar. Place on ungreased cookie sheet 2 inches apart. Bake 11-12 minutes. Do not over-bake. Makes approximately 3½ dozen.

## RUNNER-UP: TITUS ROBISON

Titus grew up in Italy and remembers eating biscotti for breakfast. His **SANTA'S BISCOTTI** would make Old St. Nick himself say, "Delizioso!" His mother learned to



cook Italian food from local women. He remembers watching and learning in the kitchen with his mother. Friends and family often request his Italian specialties. He and his wife live in Stephenville, where he's the assistant vice president of development for Foster's Home for Children. They are United Cooperative Services members.



GINGER CHOCOLATE CHIP CRINKLES



## SANTA'S BISCOTTI

- 1 cup sugar
- ½ cup butter, softened
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 2 eggs
- 3 cups Pioneer Buttermilk Biscuit & Baking Mix
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- ½ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- Dash of salt
- 1 cup chocolate chips

Preheat oven to 350 degrees and grease

large cookie sheet. Mix sugar and butter till well combined. Add vanilla and eggs, beat until smooth. Add baking mix, spices and salt, and stir until well combined.

Make a 10-inch by 3-inch rectangle of dough on the cookie sheet. Bake for 25 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Remove from oven and let cool for 10 minutes.

Cut into ¾-inch slices and place cut side up on cookie sheet. Bake for 10 minutes. Turn each piece so the other side faces up. Bake for 10 minutes more.

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**HOLIDAY JAEGER SCHNITZEL WITH PORTOBELLO CREAM SAUCE**

## HOLIDAY JAEGER SCHNITZEL WITH PORTOBELLO CREAM SAUCE

- 3 tablespoons butter
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 3 tablespoons minced shallots
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
- $\frac{3}{4}$  pound sliced fresh baby portobello mushrooms
- 2 tablespoons dry white wine
- 1 packet Pioneer Brown Gravy Mix, prepared
- 4 tablespoons sour cream
- 6 boneless pork chops (4-6 ounces each)
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon pepper
- 1 cup Pioneer Buttermilk Biscuit & Baking Mix
- 2 eggs
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup milk
- 2 cups panko (Japanese) bread crumbs
- Vegetable oil for frying

Melt butter in large skillet on medium-high. Add next 4 ingredients and sauté 5-7 minutes or until mushrooms soften. Add wine and cook 1 minute. Add gravy and sour cream. Stir until combined. Keep warm.

Pound chops with mallet until  $\frac{1}{8}$ - to  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch thick. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Place baking mix in wide bowl. Combine eggs and milk in another wide bowl. Place crumbs in third wide bowl. Pour oil to a depth of 1 inch in large skillet. Heat oil on medium-high until 375 degrees. Dredge chops in biscuit mix, then egg mixture, then crumbs, and fry in batches, 2-4 minutes on each side or until brown and crispy. Drain and keep warm. Serve with sauce. Garnish with additional parsley, if desired. Makes 6 chops.

WILL VAN OVERBEEK



**CHIPOTLE BEAN BURRITO CHEESE TARTS**

Remove from sheet and cool on rack.

In small saucepan, carefully melt chocolate chips over low heat, stirring continually, until fully melted. Spread chocolate on one side of cooled biscotti. Makes approximately 20 biscotti.

### RUNNER-UP: SUSAN RILEY

Susan has the distinction of being a two-time runner-up in the *Texas Co-op Power* holiday contest. (You may remember her Decadent Chocolate Mint Truffle Torte from last year.) This year,

### her HOLIDAY JAEGER SCHNITZEL WITH PORTOBELLO CREAM SAUCE

has won our judges' accolades. Susan says she wanted to put a creamy gravy on that German favorite, jaeger schnitzel, and she loves stroganoff, so she added sour cream to the gravy to give it that kick. Susan and her husband live in Allen with their three kids. They are Grayson-Collin Electric Cooperative members.



**Susan Riley**



**Donna Deteau**

### RUNNER-UP: DONNA DETEAU

Donna is a Renaissance woman—besides being a fantastic cook, she's the finance director of the Children's Advocacy Center in Bastrop and a handywoman-for-hire. Cooking is her main hobby, though. This self-taught cook loves to experiment with recipes and shares her good experiments with her friends and co-workers. Part of experimentation, however, is failure. Donna says, "I've probably thrown

away as much food as I've eaten!" Her **CHIPOTLE BEAN BURRITO CHEESE TARTS** are a real success: a crowd-pleasing appetizer with zingy sour cream topping. Donna lives in a 100-year-old farmhouse in Paige and is a member of Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative.

## CHIPOTLE BEAN BURRITO CHEESE TARTS

- 1/4 cups Pioneer Buttermilk Biscuit & Baking Mix
- 12 ounces sour cream (divided)
- 1/2 cup melted butter
- 2 cups shredded Cheddar cheese (divided)
- 1 package Pioneer Texas Taco Seasoning Mix (divided)
- Flour for rolling
- 1 cup canned refried beans
- 2 chipotle peppers in adobo sauce, chopped (divided)
- 4 tablespoons chopped cilantro (divided)
- 1 teaspoon bottled or fresh lime juice
- Shredded lettuce, chopped tomatoes and salsa (for garnish)

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Spray 12 regular size muffin tins with nonstick cooking spray. In small bowl, mix together the baking mix, 4 ounces sour cream, melted butter, 1/2 cup cheese and 1 tablespoon taco seasoning.

Turn out onto generously floured wax paper and knead 3-4 times. Pat down and flour top of dough. Top with another piece of wax paper and roll out dough to 1/4-inch thickness. Cut rounds with 4-inch cookie cutter. Using a spatula, place rounds on muffin tins and gently push

dough with fingers into tins to make little tarts until all dough is used.

Mix together refried beans, 1 chipotle pepper, 2 tablespoons cilantro and 1 tablespoon taco seasoning. Spoon bean mixture into tarts. Top with remaining Cheddar cheese. Cook for 15 minutes. Let cool in pan 2 minutes before removing. Serve with remaining sour cream mixed together with remaining taco seasoning, chipotle pepper, cilantro and lime juice. Top with shredded lettuce, chopped tomatoes and salsa. Makes 6 servings.

## RECIPE CONTEST

April's recipe contest subject is **DUTCH OVEN COOKING**. Send your chuck-wagon favorites to Home Cooking, 2550 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78704. You may also fax them to (512) 486-6254 or e-mail them to [recipes@texas-ec.org](mailto:recipes@texas-ec.org). Please include your name, address and phone number, as well as the name of your electric co-op. The deadline is December 15. The top winner will receive a tin filled with Pioneer products. Runners-up will also receive a prize.

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