

'TIS THE SEASON

# Easy Recipes For The Holidays

Family Features

If time and money are in short supply, use creativity to turn small splurges into celebrations. Here are holiday ideas and recipes that won't break the bank nor leave you exhausted afterwards.

Each recipe features an affordable import — butter and cheeses from Ireland, where cows are grass-fed and milk from small farms is used to make prized dairy products.

**THE FAMILY HOLIDAY DINNER**

Keep the main course simple with a no-fuss roast. Make a splash with a festive salad featuring creamy and elegant Cashel Blue Irish farmhouse cheese. Serve on your best china.



**POTATO CHOWDER WITH PANCETTA AND AGED CHEDDAR**

- 6 ounces pancetta or bacon, chopped
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 pound Yukon Gold potatoes, unpeeled, cut into 1/2-inch chunks
- 1 cup chopped celery
- 1 1/2 cups chicken broth
- 1 cup low-fat buttermilk
- Salt and pepper
- 1 cup (4 ounces) shredded Kerrygold Aged Cheddar

In large saucepan over medium-high heat, cook pancetta, stirring, until crisp, about 5 minutes. Remove pancetta and drain on paper towels. Discard all but 1/2 teaspoon fat from pan. Add onion and sauté over high heat until lightly browned, 4 to 5 minutes. Add potatoes, celery and broth. Cover, bring to a boil and simmer until potatoes are tender, about 12 minutes. Add buttermilk and pancetta and stir until hot, 1 to 2 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Remove from heat, stir in cheese and serve immediately. Makes 4 servings; multiply recipe for a crowd.

**GIFTS FROM THE KITCHEN**

Give a gift of love and save money, too, with home-baked goods wrapped in pretty packaging. Use premium Irish butter to give everything you bake true buttery flavor and natural golden color. Kids would love to help with the decorating.

**SLICE AND BAKE BUTTER COOKIES**

- 2 cups unbleached all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 package (8 ounces or 1 cup) Kerrygold Salted Irish Butter, at room temperature
- 2/3 cup granulated sugar
- 2 large egg yolks
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 large egg white
- 1/3 cup granulated sugar or coarse sugar crystals for rolling the cookie log



Sift flour, baking powder and salt into medium bowl and set aside. In large bowl beat butter and sugar with electric mixer on medium speed until light and fluffy, about 2 minutes. Mix in egg yolks and vanilla. Add flour mixture, mixing on low just until flour is incorporated and soft, smooth dough forms. Divide dough into 2 pieces; form each into a log about 7 1/2 inches long and 1 1/2 inches in diameter. Wrap in plastic wrap. Refrigerate about 1 hour until cold and firm, or overnight. Or freeze, wrapped securely, for up to 1 month. (Defrost in the refrigerator before slicing

and baking.) Preheat oven to 325°F. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper. In small bowl, beat egg white with fork until foamy, about 30 seconds. Brush each log with egg white. Sprinkle the 1/3 cup sugar on strip of wax paper then roll each log back and forth in sugar to coat lightly. Use sharp knife to cut each log into 1/4-inch-thick rounds. Place 1 inch apart on baking sheets. Bake one sheet at a time on middle rack of the oven until cookie edges and bottoms are light brown, about 18 minutes. Cool 5 minutes, then transfer to wire rack to cool completely. Store

tightly covered. Makes 60 cookies. **AND FOR EVERY HOLIDAY GET-TOGETHER, A CHEESE BOARD** A universal favorite of guests and the easiest choice for the host is a cheese board. An assortment of Irish cheeses like Dubliner, Cashel Blue and Kerrygold Aged Cheddar with fresh fruit and chutney make a spectacular presentation.

For more holiday recipes, visit [www.kerrygoldusa.com](http://www.kerrygoldusa.com).

**PEAR, ROAST ONION, HAZELNUT AND CASHEL BLUE CHEESE SALAD**

- 1 red onion, peeled
- Olive oil
- Salt and pepper
- 3 pears (not too ripe)
- 2 tbs. Kerrygold Unsalted Irish Butter
- 2 ounces hazelnuts, lightly toasted, halved
- 5 ounces baby greens (watercress, baby spinach and frisée)
- 10 ounces Cashel Blue cheese, crumbled
- Dressing:
  - 2 1/2 teaspoons white wine vinegar
  - 1/4 teaspoon Dijon mustard
  - Salt and pepper
  - 4 tablespoons hazelnut oil
  - 2 tablespoons light olive oil
  - 1 1/2 teaspoons superfine sugar (or to taste)

Preheat oven to 350°F. Halve onion and cut it into crescent slices. Put into a small ovenproof dish, drizzle with olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Roast about 20 minutes, or until soft with slightly caramelized tips. Keep warm.

Whisk dressing ingredients together. Halve and core pears, then cut lengthwise into slices slightly thicker than 1/4 inches. Melt butter in a frying pan and quickly sauté on each side until golden. Don't overcook — they should still hold their shape.

Toss salad greens with nuts, using most of the dressing; divide among 6 plates. Add pear and onion slices to each plate and scatter with cheese. Drizzle each plate with the rest of the dressing. Serves 6.

As featured on BBC Radio 4 Woman's Hour.

**A TREE DECORATING PARTY**

A holiday party doesn't have to be fancy; any simple excuse to gather informally, like trimming the tree or decorating the house, will do. It's a great way to include children in the festivities. Serve up mugs of chowder enriched with Irish Cheddar, plenty of bread and Irish butter, a salad and some Christmas cookies.

## Award

From Page 1A

libraries in Cedar County, Neb. — received county funding for the first time in about 15 years, Anderson said.

The Hartington library has also received a huge financial boost from other sources, she said.

"We just received a big technology grant this past year. We received more than \$13,000 worth of new equipment," she said. "We received 14 desktop computers and six laptops for public use. We ran out of desk space, so after school, when we have our peak time, we hand out laptops for those kids 14 and older."

Anderson said that's a far cry from when she arrived 10 years ago and found the library owned just two dial-up computers. The library has added more than \$50,000 in the past decade for technology and programming.

In fact, the Library Journal's rankings show Hartington's Internet usage dwarfs most other libraries in its category across the nation.

"During the daytime, we have the older clientele come in," she said. "Those who don't have a computer at home come to the library. Everything is online anymore, with banking and other forms. The other day, we had someone fill out a warranty registration."

The Hartington library received new carpeting this year, thanks to fundraising \$18,000 in four months. The carpeting covers not only the main library but also the art gallery on the second floor and the basement, which offers library programming and a community meeting space.

The Hartington library has seen a dramatic increase in use since the new addition was completed in the late 1990s, Anderson said. The circulation of 45,000 was up 35 percent in 10

years, and the library had issued nearly 6,000 patron cards.

Whereas Hartington operates as a city library, Centerville operates a joint city-school library that was built in the mid-1990s.

The joint facility has brought tremendous benefits that couldn't be achieved as separate entities, Holmberg said. The city and school maintain separate library budgets, but the facility operates as a joint effort, she said.

"Why duplicate yourself?" she asked. "If it wasn't combined, it would be a small school library and small city library. Instead, it's one of the nicest libraries in the area."

When it won its first 5-Star Award in 2009, the Centerville library had 900 registered users. Because of the demand for services, the library has remodeled and expanded to 4,600 square feet.

The library is attached to the east side of the school but has a separate entrance for the general public, Holmberg said. She believes the facility caters well to both the student population of about 250 and the larger community.

The library contains a separate area where adults can read and use computers, which further attracts people of all ages, Hansen said.

Besides its city and school funding, the Centerville library enjoys great private support, Hansen said. She pointed to this weekend's Centerville Country Christmas, one of the library's biggest annual fundraisers and joint effort of the library and FFA chapter.

The weekend kicks off today (Friday) with an open house from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Musician Larry Olson will perform at 7:30 p.m. A silent auction featuring donated items will be held throughout the day.

"We are just blessed. People are so nice about bringing us things," Hansen said. "We have a gorgeous tree that's decorated for the silent auction, and a woman donated a homemade

quilt that must have taken weeks to make. We also have ornaments for sale. Each year has a theme, and this year we have a lot of starfish."

On Saturday, the FFA holds its carnival, and the library plans to enter a float in the evening's parade of lights.

On Sunday, the library is sponsoring its tour of homes with registration at 2:30 p.m. and tours from 3-7 p.m. A tour bus will take participants to homes in the country for an additional fee.

"We have a lot of people backing us," Hansen said.

Thanks to the strong public and private funding, both the Hartington and Centerville libraries offer larger staff, extended hours and more services.

Besides Anderson, the Hartington library staff includes Carol Craig as children's librarian, and high school students Becky Burbach and Molly Becker as part-time staff.

Besides Holmberg and Hansen, the Centerville library staff includes part-time workers Mary Ferwerda, Julie Knutson and Gloria Adamson.

The libraries' directors said they don't plan to rest on their laurels even after winning the coveted 5-Star Award three consecutive years.

The Hartington library plans to expand its e-book services, Anderson said.

"We are part of a consortium called Nebraska Overdrive, which is a downloadable audio

and e-book service. Over 60 libraries in Nebraska use it," she said. "As far as books, we have a great collection and are trying to have what our readers want. It's out with the old to make room for the new. We also have DVDs and movies, and the Friends of the Library added \$300 worth of board games. Once a month, we have an afternoon of games."

The art gallery will continue to provide a major attraction, Anderson said. The gallery has six exhibits a year, currently featuring a quilt show.

At Centerville, the library offers an inter-library loan system as well as DVDs and use of the community room, Hansen said.

Both the Hartington and Centerville libraries want to remain affordable. Hartington's facility is free for Cedar County residents and a one-time fee for non-residents. Centerville doesn't charge for a library card.

Both libraries promote their usage to the next generation. Centerville benefits from its attachment to the school, while Hartington's library is located down the hill from the Hartington Public, Cedar Catholic and Holy Trinity schools.

The key to a successful library is keeping it enjoyable for all ages, Hansen said.

"Instead of being the nasty, 'Shhh!' librarians protecting the books, we want our library seen as more of a fun place to go," she said.

It's the first of the month...

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