

# The DISH



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I try to not do a lot of baking during the holidays — “TRY” is the key word. If I bake it, then I eat it. But I feel like I have to do some baking. Of course, I have to make my Grandma Vi’s Date on a Ritz — a family favorite and tradition each year. And I like to make a batch of caramels. Each year I like to try something new and one of these goodies below may just make the cut. Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas!

## Caramel Peanut Butter Cookie Cups

- 1 cup salted butter, softened
- 1 cup creamy peanut butter
- 1½ cups light brown sugar, packed
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- 2 eggs large
- 2 tsp. vanilla
- 2½ cups all-purpose flour
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. salt
- 24 Kraft caramels, approx. 9 oz.
- 8 oz. Reese’s Peanut Butter Cup, minis
- 8 oz. Reese’s Peanut Butter Cup White Chocolate, minis
- ½ cup roasted salted peanuts

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a large mixing bowl, cream together butter, peanut butter, brown sugar and granulated sugar with an electric mixer. Add in eggs and vanilla. Continue mixing. Gradually add in flour, baking powder and salt while mixing.

Press cookie dough into greased muffin tins and form into cups. Bake until edges of cookies are just starting to brown, 11-13 minutes. Remove from oven.

Place one caramel in the center of each cookie cup and press down gently. Place two of the chocolate peanut butter cups and two of the white chocolate peanut butter cups into each cookie cup on top of the caramel. Sprinkle the peanuts on top of the cookie cups. Return the cookies to the oven for 5 minutes to finish baking.

Remove from oven and allow to cool for about 15 minutes before removing the cookies from the pan. If you try to remove them too soon, they will just fall apart.

## S’mores Cookie Cups

- 1 cup graham cracker crumbs
- 1¼ cups flour
- ½ tsp. baking soda
- ¼ tsp. salt (use ½ tsp. if using unsalted butter)
- ½ cup butter, softened
- ½ cup brown sugar
- 1/3 cup sugar

- 1 large egg
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 12 large marshmallows, cut in half
- 2 Hershey’s chocolate bars (1.55 oz each)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Spray a mini muffin pan with cooking spray.

In a small mixing bowl, combine graham cracker crumbs, flour, baking soda and salt. Stir with a wire whisk. Set aside.

In larger bowl, with a handheld electric mixer, blend the butter, brown sugar and sugar until creamy and combined. Add in egg and vanilla extract. Mix well. Dump in the bowl of dry ingredients, mix on low speed just until combined. The dough will be crumbly.

Scoop dough into the mini muffin tins. Fill them full and press down slightly so the dough is even on top. You will have the perfect amount of dough to fill all 24 mini muffin tins. Bake for 8 minutes. They will look like they’re not done, but they’ll be perfect.

Immediately after baking, take a teaspoon size measuring spoon and press into the dough. You want to make an indent for the marshmallow to sit in. Place a half of marshmallow into each indent in the muffin cups. Sticky side of the marshmallow down. Let cool for 20 minutes. Place one square of chocolate on top of each marshmallow. Turn the oven broiler to high. Place muffin tin pan under the broiler for 1-2 minutes. Watch carefully. This toasts the marshmallows fast. Let cool for about 10 minutes and eat right away for a warm, gooey s’more or let cool completely.

## Salted Caramel Mousse ROLO Cookie Cups

- ¾ cup unsalted butter, room temperature
- 1 cup light or dark brown sugar
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- 1 large egg
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 2 cups all-purpose flour

- 1 tsp. baking soda
- ½ tsp. coarse salt
- 1 cup mini semi-sweet chocolate chips
- 24 ROLOs

## SALTED CARAMEL MOUSSE FILLING

- 1 cup heavy whipping cream, cold
- ½ box instant vanilla pudding, or approx 4 Tbsp.
- ½ cup confectioners sugar
- ½ cup salted caramel sauce

## TOPPINGS

Sprinkles, mini chocolate chips, drizzles of caramel sauce, sea salt, if desired.

**Chocolate Chip Cookie Cups:** Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease a mini muffin pan. With an electric mixer, beat the butter, brown sugar and granulated sugar until smooth and creamy, 2-3 minutes. Mix in the egg, then vanilla. Add the flour, baking soda and salt and mix until combined. Add the mini chocolate chips.

Fill mini muffin pan cups half-full. Bake until edges are golden but center is still soft, about 11-12 minutes. Let cool in the pan about 5 minutes, then push ROLOs in each of the cups upside down. Carefully transfer to a wire rack to cool completely. (Don’t overbake unless you want crispy.)

**Salted Caramel Mousse Filling:** Beat heavy cream, salted caramel sauce, confectioners’ sugar and pudding mix in medium high speed until light and fluffy, about 2-3 minutes. Pipe into cooled cookie cups and top with your favorite toppings.

## Fruit Cookie Cups

- 1 pkg. Pillsbury refrigerated sugar cookie dough
- 8 oz. pkg. cream cheese, softened
- ¼ cup sugar
- ½ tsp. vanilla
- Assorted fruits, chopped to equal size

Preheat oven to 350 degrees and grease a 24-count mini-muffin pan (or use liners).

Slice sugar cookie dough into 24 equal parts, roll into a ball and place in each muffin cup. Using your thumb, mold the sugar cookie dough into the shape of the muffin tin, ensuring they stay equal thickness. Bake at 350 degrees for 10-12 minutes.

Remove from oven when golden brown. They will be puffy, but will lose that upon cooling. Once cool, transfer to a serving platter, tray, etc.

Mix the cream cheese, sugar and vanilla extract together in a mixture. Pipe into the cooled cookies. Top with fruit.