

Holiday Gifts and Healthy Ideas for you



Here is a rosemary plant that is shaped like a holiday tree – to add wonderful smells to your kitchen – and flavor to many dishes including potatoes and poultry. We used fresh chopped rosemary on a delicious casserole of low-fat scalloped potatoes for a video series for healthy potato dishes. This “tree” makes a lovely decoration and every cook loves fresh herbs. Rosemary tastes wonderful when it is minced finely and added to dishes near the end of the cooking process. It adds a flavor that is reminiscent of pine.



And a gingerbread house – for families on the go – decorating our pre-fabricated house became a fun family project that allowed us to bond without stress - everyone could help and there was not much mess. (Not to mention that we have something to admire instead of too many calories to tempt us.)

I bought the gingerbread house from Whole Foods as a sort of last minute purchase because it was peanut safe (my son has a peanut allergy) and I thought it would be a great way to have something fun for us to make together without the work and calories of cookies this year.

Here is how I made the royal icing (which does dry pretty hard and it makes a great non-fat icing to hold the candies on the house):

1 pound powdered sugar

1 tablespoon egg white powder (I like this because it is pasteurized and it is a great staple for baking for when you run out of eggs – look for it in the baking section of the store)

1 tablespoon water (more or less)

Mix and add the water slowly until the consistency is thick like paste. The amount of water is always a variable based on the sugar and the temperature of the ingredients.

We used peanut-safe candies and had a great time decorating – we did it side by side until we had all four sides complete.

An extra house was a hit as a gift to my sister and her family – she and her kids were decorating it today and they will probably take it to an elderly relative to enjoy. As for ours – we have begun to eat it – but just a few pieces of the roof. I guess that is the other thing about a house – you just don't gorge on it like you do a platter of cookies!



And here is a batch of calorie-free Holiday Tea that went together in minutes and made a lovely table centerpiece:

3 quarts water

6 red tea bags (we chose red fruit tea and red rooibos tea – there are many choices in the grocery store you just have to pick your favorite), caffeine free

1 orange, cut in quarters

1 lemon, cut in quarters

1/2 cup cranberries

We mixed everything and let it stand at room temperature until our guests arrived. Serve with ice and enjoy! It was great for kids or adults.

For our party goods – we served a wonderful array of healthy tapas – these small plates held various combinations of raw veggies with healthy dips, chips with home made salsa, and fruits that were a mix of dried and fresh.

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