

Who's Who In The Kitchen

Fixing Holiday Treats Is Part Of The Fun For Children At Christmas

By Audrey C. Lodato
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The holiday season is a time of extra cooking and baking in many households, and children often like to get in on the excitement and fun of preparing special foods. Natasha and Cassandra Watts and their friend, Ayishia Jones, are three such children. On a recent evening, they gathered at Ayishia's house to make some holiday treats - under the supervision of Ayishia's mom, Gloria Jones.

Seven year old Natasha and her sister, Cassandra, 10 live on Green Needles Court and attend Pinewood Elementary School. Natasha is in second grade; Cassandra, in fourth. Both girls have birthdays coming up later this month.

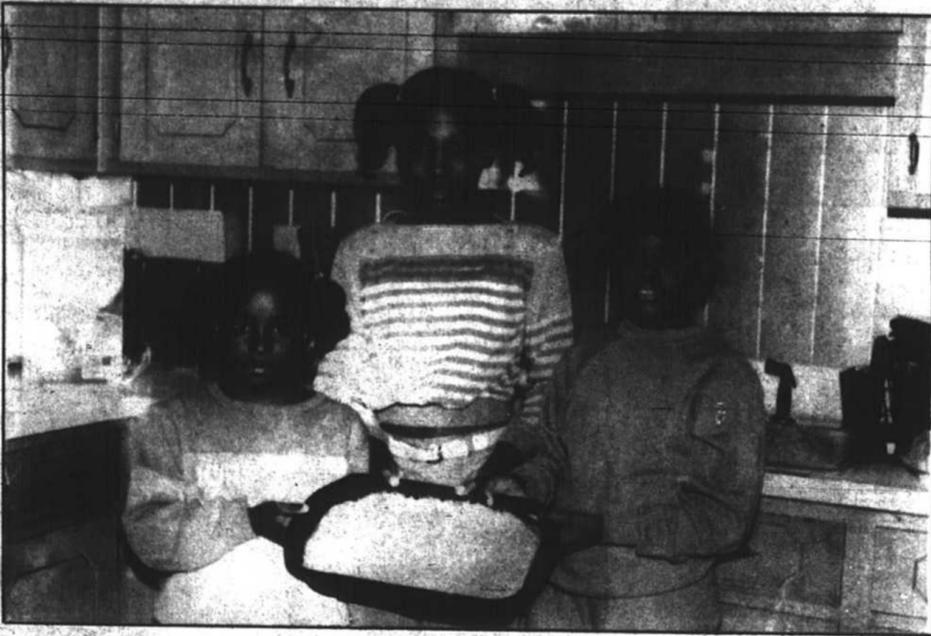
Natasha enjoys gym class and going to the media center, while her older sister's favorite class is music. "I like playing tambourines," she related.

Ayishia just celebrated her eighth birthday a month ago. Isiah is in second grade at Collinswood Elementary School, and is an "experienced" cook, with french toast and eggs to her credit. She likes to cook - sort of. "She's going to be doing a lot of cooking in a couple of years," her mother laughingly interjected, adding, "Mommy's going to retire."

The other girls have also done some cooking before. Natasha disclosed that she has "cooked grits," while Cassandra has made some desserts. Although she's not quite ready to assume chef status, the oldest of the three girls is, in a way, serving an apprenticeship in the kitchen. "I wash dishes," she explained.

Both Cassandra and Natasha want to be teachers when they grow up. Isiah has another goal: "I want to be a psychologist," she declared.

Of course, at this time of year, all three youngsters have Christmas on their minds, and their lists for Santa are ready - and, in Ayishia's



Natasha, Cassandra and Ayishia admire their culinary masterpiece - easy-to-make "Krispie Treats."

The girls mixed Rice Krispies, marshmallows and butter - with a little help from Ayishia's mom.

case, long. Cassandra revealed that she would like a watch, a "Frogger" video game, and some new shoes for Christmas. Natasha wants a watch and a bike.

Ayishia would like a Cabbage Patch doll, a tape record, purple pants and leather pants (Santa wonders if she would settle for pants of purple leather), boots, and books.

The girls are not just thinking of themselves this holiday season. If they could give their mothers anything in the world for Christmas, what would they give? Natasha would give her mom, Corinne Watts, a golden necklace - "if I had the money."

Cassandra would choose a new car

as her gift to her mother.

Ayishia decided to shoot for the stars. "Everything in the world," was her reply. Then, coming down to earth a bit, she thought it best to add, "and money."

On this particular occasion, the girls had fun making "Snowmen," a scrumptious cookie decoration that you eat, and simple-to-prepare Krispie Treats. This recipe, as well as some others that follow, requires melting ingredients on the stove, so for younger children, supervision is needed.

Here are the recipes for both treats, as well as several others that children can make with a minimum of adult help and supervision.

CAROB CANDY SQUARES

- 1/2 cup honey
- 1/2 cup peanut butter
- 1/2 cup carob powder
- 1 cup roasted soybeans or peanuts
- 1 cup raisins
- 1 cup flaked coconut

In a medium saucepan stir together honey and peanut butter over low heat just until melted. Remove from heat and stir in carob til well-blended. Stir in soybeans or peanuts, raisins, and 3/4 cup of the coconut til well coated. Press mixture into a wax paper-lined 9x5x3 inch loaf pan. Sprinkle surface with rest of coconut. Press lightly into candy. Cover and chill until firm. Cut into squares. Store in refrigerator. Makes 24.

KRISPIE TREATS

- 5 cups Rice Krispies
- 40 marshmallows
- 1 stick butter or margarine

Melt over low heat in large pot. Add marshmallows and stir constantly until melted. Remove pot from heat. Add Rice Krispies and mix together. Spread in a buttered 9x13-inch pan and refrigerate until firm. Cut into bars.

PEANUT BUTTER KISSES

- 1-3 cup honey
- 1-3 cup peanut butter
- 1 cup instant nonfat dry milk powder
- 1/2 cup crushed cereal flakes

Stir honey and peanut butter until blended. Add dry milk powder gradually, mixing well. You may have to use your hands to mix it in. (Be sure they're clean first!) Shape into small balls and roll in crushed cereal.

MACAROONS

- 1 8-ounce package shredded coconut
- 1 cup sweetened condensed milk
- 1 tsp. vanilla

Mix ingredients. Drop by teaspoon onto well-greased cookie sheet. Bake in oven at 350 about 10 minutes. Cool slightly before removing from pan. Makes 2 dozen.

PEANUT CLUSTERS

- 1/2 cup peanut butter
- 1 cup chocolate chips
- 1 cup peanuts

Combine peanut butter and chocolate chips in top of double boiler and place over hot (not boiling) water until chocolate melts. Stir until blended. Add peanuts and stir until well coated. Drop by teaspoonfuls onto waxed paper-lined baking sheet. Chill until set. Makes 2 dozen.

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CRUNCHERS

- 1/2 cup butterscotch pieces
- 1/2 cup chocolate chips
- 1 cup chow mein noodles
- 1/2 cup salted nuts
- 1/2 cup tiny marshmallows

Melt butterscotch and chocolate in a medium pan over low heat. Stir so it won't stick. When it's all melted, remove pan from heat and stir in rest of ingredients. Drop with teaspoon onto waxed paper. Refrigerate until firm. Makes about 2 dozen.

PEANUT BUTTER BALLS

- 1 cup sugar
- 1 stick butter
- 1 cup peanut butter
- 2 cups Rice Krispies
- 1 cup chopped peanuts
- coconut

Cook sugar, butter and peanut butter over low heat for 10 minutes. Cool. Add remaining ingredients. Drop by teaspoonfuls into coconut. Roll to coat. Makes at least 60.

FUN ORNAMENTS TO MAKE...AND EAT!

SNOWMAN

For each "ornament," you'll need:

- 1 large round cookie
- 1 small cookie
- 2 Tablespoons thawed Cool Whip
- licorice bits
- cinnamon candy

Arrange cookies in shape of head and body. Frost with Cool Whip. Use bits of licorice for hat, eyes, nose, buttons. Use cinnamon candy for mouth. Serve immediately or freeze until ready to eat.

CHRISTMAS TREE

For each tree, you'll need:

- 1 rolled sugar cone
- 3 tablespoons Cool Whip
- green food coloring
- sugar sprinkles
- yellow gumdrop

Fluff Cool Whip with a drop of food coloring. Frost cone. Decorate with sprinkles. Top with star made from gumdrop.

CHRISTMAS WREATHS

- Minature donuts
- Cool Whip tinted with green food coloring
- gumdrops
- sugar sprinkles

Frost donuts with Cool Whip. Decorate with sprinkles and bits of gumdrops.

CANDY CANES

- ladyfingers
 - Cool Whip, tinted deep pink
 - red sugar sprinkles
- Cut ladyfingers into candy cane shapes. Frost with Cool Whip. Decorate with sprinkles.



These homemade tree decorations are made with Bisquick and water.

Baked Handmade Ornaments

Add Holiday Cheer

Deck the halls with handmade ornaments. It starts in the kitchen, in the oven with dough ornaments made with Bisquick baking mix.

The ornaments can be an exercise in creativity with whimsical creatures fashioned from pliable dough. Children will enjoy contributing to the holiday scene with imaginative ideas. Use cookie cutters or draw original designs by combining pieces of dough.

Lovely on the tree or mantel, Dough Ornaments also make attractive gifts of package decorations.

HANDMADE DOUGH ORNAMENTS

Heat oven to 350 degrees. Mix 2 cups Bisquick baking mix and 1/2 cup boiling water until soft dough forms; beat vigorously 30 seconds. Turn onto cloth-covered board well dusted with baking mix.

Gently roll in baking mix to coat; shape into ball. Knead 10 times. Roll 1/4 inch thick. Let stand uncovered 5 minutes. Cut into desired shapes, using cutters of 2 sizes to obtain cutouts, or design your own patterns. (Cutout decorations can be attached by brushing with beaten egg yolk and pressing gently into surface of larger shape.)

If ornaments are to be hung, make a hole in each 1/4 inch from top with

end of plastic straw. Bake on ungreased cookie sheet until golden brown, 8 to 10 minutes. About ten 4-inch ornaments.

High Altitude Directions (3500 to 6500 feet): Decrease baking mix to 1 1/2 cups and add 1/2 cup all-purpose flour.

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