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Christmas in the Kitchen

The [Glen's Place Holiday Recipes](#) page has been redesigned to make it easier to find a favorite, or new and different, recipe for the holiday season. You will find recipes for appetizers and snacks, side dishes, cakes, cookies, and candy. There is also a collection of holiday drinks.

Use the search box on the left of the page to search the entire site.

Amazing Useless Information

William of Orange was 4 inches shorter than his wife, Queen Mary.

The difference between a nook and a cranny is that a nook is a corner and a cranny is a crack.

Brain Teaser

Rearrange the following letters to give two different 11-letter words.

A C D E E I N O R S T

See page 3 for the answer.

Gift Cards: The Rules Have Changed

It's that time of year again; time for you to throw your gift card money in the pot with the other 87

billion dollars spent on gift cards each year. On August 22, 2010, new gift card rules were implemented. These rules are meant to protect

consumers from many unexpected fees. Here are the major rule changes:

Of the estimated 87 billion dollars spent on gift cards, over 6 billion goes unused.

- The rules require disclosure of expiration dates and of all fees, such as initial issuance fees and cash-out fees. These disclosures must be provided on or with the gift card. Additionally, the card must provide a toll-free number or a web site that a consumer may use to obtain fee information or to order a replacement.
- Fees for dormancy, inactivity, and other service fees on gift cards are prohibited unless: (1) the consumer has not used the card for at least one year; (2) no more than one such fee is charged per month; and (3) the consumer is given clear and conspicuous disclosures about the fees.
- Expiration dates for funds underlying gift cards must be at least five years after the date of issuance. If the card is reloadable, it cannot expire until five years after the date when funds were last loaded. If the card still has money on it at expiration, a free replacement must be issued with remaining funds or the money must be refunded.
- Fees for replacing an expired card, or for refunding the remaining balance are prohibited.

Online Safety

I know it's tempting to use the same password in multiple places. I also know you have heard this advice before, but probably ignored it. If you have many accounts to manage you should consider using a password manager. A quick Google search will reveal many free choices. I use Password Safe, one of the free ones, and find it safe and easy to use. You only need to remember one master password. You click the name of the site for which you have stored the password and the password is automatically copied to the clipboard. You go to the site and paste the copied password in the correct box. You don't even see the password yourself!

Here's another tip. If it seems too good to be true...well you know the rest. No, someone in a far away land is not offering you millions of dollars. No, those are not magic pills that will cure everything. Resist clicking on those links.

The Wine Corner



Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts. Let him drink, and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more.

- Proverbs 31:6-7

Consuming wine in moderation daily will help people to die young as late as possible. - Dr Philip Norrie

Brain Boosters and Mood Foods

I recently read an article in the Health Section of the Los Angeles Times regarding ways to boost your mood and brain power. I thought it was worth sharing so here is a synopsis of the article.

- ◆ **Eat Breakfast:** Sound familiar? There was a complete article in this newsletter devoted to the subject last month. Research shows that a healthy breakfast leads to better cognitive performance during the remainder of the day.
- ◆ **Enough Calories:** Calorie deprivation (you call it hunger) causes grumpiness. Eat something. Anything with calories will help.
- ◆ **Regular Meals:** Eating regularly, about every four hours, will help to keep your blood sugar even. It will also help to keep your mood level all day.
- ◆ **A Balanced Diet:** When the brain is deficient in nutrients, mood and concentration are the first to go. Fixing that imbalance will make a difference.
- ◆ **Exercise and Rest:** People feel more alert, focused, and energetic when they eat a healthy diet, exercise, and get sufficient sleep.
- ◆ **Believe:** There's nothing wrong with the placebo effect. If you think eating more fruits and vegetables will make you feel better about yourself, go ahead and do it.

A Few Words About Coffee: Numerous studies have supported the fact that coffee improves energy and mental performance. Research has consistently shown that caffeine improves focus, attention, mood, and energy. According to experts, caffeine creates a more perfect association of ideas. Some people have an irrational fear of caffeine addiction which may turn them against coffee, but it's harmless because the amount people use is self limiting.

Spice It Up !



Anise

Anise is native to the eastern Mediterranean region. It is one of the oldest known spice plants used both for culinary and medicinal purposes.

The anise plant is an erect, tender annual with thin roots. It grows up to 2 feet tall. The lower leaves are broad, toothed and triangular while the upper leaves are smaller, divided and narrow. It produces numerous small whitish flowers and is propagated by seed in early spring in a sunny, sheltered area in light, dry loam.

Anise is harvested as the seeds change color to grey-green. Flower stems are cut and hung upside down in a dry place and seeds are collected as they fall onto paper below.

Anise is related to fennel, coriander, cumin, and caraway which are members of the carrot family. Many of these relatives have been described as having a licorice flavor, to some extent, but anise is the true taste of licorice. The oils from anise are distilled into the flavoring for licorice candy.

Anise is primarily associated with cakes, biscuits and confectionery, as well as rye breads. It is used in much the same way as fennel to flavor fish, poultry, soups and root vegetable dishes. Numerous alcoholic drinks and cordials are flavored with aniseed.

Featured Recipe:

This may be the easiest peanut brittle recipe ever. You don't even need a candy thermometer! The hardest part may be finding the raw peanuts.

Doug's Peanut Brittle

2 cups unsalted (raw) peanuts
1 cup Karo syrup
1 cup white sugar
1 tablespoon butter
1 teaspoon baking soda

Add all ingredients (except baking soda) into a 2 quart sauce pan. Boil over medium heat, stirring frequently. Cook until golden brown. Remove from heat, add baking soda and stir well. Pour on to cookie sheet lined with foil and spread with spoon. Once hard and cool, break into pieces. Store in an air tight container.

A Final Word

Thanks again for reading the last edition of the newsletter for 2010. Enjoy the holidays with family and friends. Pass the newsletter along if you know someone who might enjoy it. Send ideas, comments, and questions to Glen@Glen's Place. I'm looking forward to a new series of newsletters in 2011

Until next time remember: We are not here to live up to each other's expectations.

Answer to brain teaser: CONSIDERATE, DESECRATION

Merry Christmas Everybody!

If for some reason you no longer wish to receive the Glen's Place Newsletter, you can [unsubscribe here](#) If you know someone who would like to be on the mailing list, they can [subscribe here](#). Send your comments or questions to Glen @ Glen's Place.