

The perfect pastry pairing for a morning coffee pick-me-up



Dark Chocolate & Sea Salt Rugelach

Photo Susie Iventosch

By Susie Iventosch

I love it when cafes offer rugelach among their pastry selection, because they are the perfect sweet bite to pair with coffee. They've always reminded me of the cinnamon roll-ups my mom used to make with leftover pie dough, but rugelach dough is made with cream cheese in addition to butter. They usually come with cinnamon or chocolate fillings, and both are so delicious. It's hard to pick, so sometimes you just need both

— one for the first cup of coffee, and one for the second. This recipe from Jake Cohen, (published in the December 2019 issue of Fine Cooking Magazine), is especially good because it's topped with sea salt. You can add any nut or fruit fillings you want to these tasty treats, such as finely chopped walnuts or pecans, currants, or your favorite jam. I used an iridescent edible glitter on top of the chocolate drizzle for some holiday pizzazz. Santa will love these too, so be sure to save a few for his cookie plate!

Dark Chocolate & Sea Salt Rugelach

Makes 4 Dozen

Cream Cheese Dough

INGREDIENTS :

8 oz. cream cheese, softened
4 oz. (8 Tbs.) unsalted butter, softened
1/4 cup powdered sugar
11 oz. (2 1/3 cups) all-purpose flour; more as needed
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
Nonstick cooking spray
1 large egg, at room temp
1 teaspoon whole milk

DIRECTIONS :

In a large bowl using a hand-held electric mixer or in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, cream the cream cheese, butter and sugar on medium speed until light and fluffy, 2 minutes. Add the flour and salt, and then mix just until a smooth dough forms. Divide dough into four equal parts and shape them into a cube or square. Wrap in plastic and chill for 1 hour or up to overnight.

Position a rack in the center of the oven, and heat the oven to 375 F. Line two large rimmed baking sheets with silicone baking mats or parchment paper lightly coated with cooking spray.

Remove one dough square from the refrigerator, and place on a lightly floured work surface. (If you've refrigerated the dough overnight, let it sit out at room temperature for several minutes so it is more malleable and easier to roll out). Roll dough into an 8-inch square. Spread one-fourth of the filling on the dough, leaving a 1/2-inch edge at the top and bottom. Slice the square in half. Starting at a long end, roll each half into a cylinder from the outside in, and then cut each rolled half into six evenly sized pieces.

In a small bowl, whisk the egg and milk. Arrange 12 rugelach on one of the prepared baking sheets. Brush with the egg wash, and bake until golden-brown, 16 to 21 minutes. Repeat with the remaining dough and filing.

If desired, once out of the oven and cooled, drizzle melted chocolate over top of rugelach, or alternatively, sprinkle with sea salt or powdered sugar.

Dark Chocolate Sea Salt Filling

INGREDIENTS

8 oz. (about 1 3/4 cups) coarsely chopped dark chocolate
2 oz. (4 Tbs.) unsalted butter
2 tablespoons powdered sugar (plus some extra for garnish)
1 teaspoon kosher salt

DIRECTIONS

Combine the chocolate, butter, sugar, and salt in a heat-proof bowl over a small saucepan of simmering water. Whisk until melted and smooth. Cool completely, and chill until the consistency of peanut butter.



Susie can be reached at suziventosch@gmail.com. This recipe can be found on our website: www.lamorindaweekly.com If you would like to share your favorite recipe with Susie please contact her by email or call our office at (925) 377-0977. Or visit <https://treksandbites.com>

Holiday toxicities

By Mona Miller, DVM

'Tis the season to decorate with tinsel, to light aromatic candles and scent the air with cinnamon and pine diffusers, to strategically hang the mistletoe sprigs and to bake holiday treats. We make sure that our pet friends have new toys, sweaters and beds wrapped up to open on a cold holiday morning. However, there are some holiday traditions to avoid exposing your furry friend to — many are food products, but some are not.

We should all be aware of toxicities to dogs and cats if they eat chocolate, or grapes, raisins or currants, or any candy or gum sweetened with xylitol. I have included website links for each of these below, for more detail. But for this article, I'd like to focus more on non-edible items,

such as liquid potpourri oils, decorative plants and tinsel.

Air room diffusers have become very popular, in which you can drop some fragrance essential oils and lightly scent the room with moisture or heat. When used properly, the oils are diluted down and pose minimal to no risk. Some of these oils have detergents in the carrier solution. These oils and detergents both can be very caustic to tissue on contact. Cats especially are prone to negative effects if they lick up a spill, or enough oils get on their fur and get absorbed into the mouth when cats groom. These oils can be corrosive to the mouth tissue, as well as stomach and intestines — causing drooling, mouth ulceration, decreased appetite or vomiting. Additionally, absorption of these oils into the bloodstream (through ingestion) can cause significant

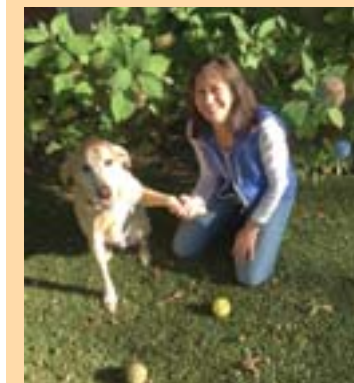
nervous system depression and low blood pressure. Any cat or dog who is prone to respiratory illness (feline asthma, canine inflammatory bronchitis) may also have a reaction when breathing in these diffused oils, even if properly prepared through the diffuser. These pets should be seen on urgent/emergency care if any of these signs are exhibited and you suspect essential oil toxicity.

Ingestion of certain decorative plants can also cause significant problems. Lily toxicity in cats causes a potentially fatal kidney failure. When caught early, this can be a reversible and curable problem, but often requires several days in the hospital on intravenous fluids and kidney support medications. Mistletoe can cause stomach upset, heart problems and erratic behavior. It contains a cellu-

lar toxin called lectin, which is more prevalent in the berries than the leaves. Holly is often very irritating to intestinal tissues, both mechanically (those little points on the leaf edges are sharp!) and through a chemical called saponin, found in the berries and leaves. Holly toxicity is usually mild to moderate and can cause drooling, vomiting, decreased appetite and lethargy. Poinsettia plant sap can be an irritant to the mouth and stomach, and can cause vomiting as well.

If a cat or dog ingests any long thin wire or string, there is significant concern that this can cause an intestinal foreign body obstruction that requires surgery. Decorations such as tinsel or electrical wires (think of the little tiny sparkly LED lights that have become popular) can be especially problematic for kittens and cats, who are attracted by the shine

and movement, and don't know to NOT eat the wires. Make sure that these wires and strings are not enticing your cat to play!



Dr. Mona Miller lives in Lafayette with her son, two cats and yellow Labrador. She attended UC Berkeley as an undergraduate, and received her DVM from UC Davis. She has been happy to call Lafayette home since 2001. She can be reached via email at MonaSDVM@aol.com. She welcomes questions from readers that may get incorporated into a column.

Here are some informative weblinks: <https://veterinarypartner.vin.com> — to read about toxicities from chocolate, grapes and xylitol
ASPCA Poison Control: www.aspcapetcare.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control
FDA Holiday Hazards: www.fda.gov/animal-veterinary/animal-health-literacy/take-oh-no-out-your-and-your-pets-holiday-ho-ho-ho#Plants

Musical serendipity brings local band to big stage



Photos provided

District band members, from left: Marco Stassi, Miles Elze and Connor O'Toole

By Jennifer Wake

Sometimes big things can happen from the smallest of actions. When 18-year-old Lafayette drummer Miles Elze, who is interning at recording studio East Bay Recorders in Oakland, saw Metallica bassist Rob Trujillo walk by, he said he "just had to call out his name and ask for a picture."

The two musicians ended up talking about music

and Elze's band, District, as well as Trujillo's son's band, Otto. Tye Trujillo, 18, is known for playing with world famous metal band Korn when he was just 12 years old, and recently went on tour as the bassist for punk band Suicidal Tendencies.

"When he left I thought that was one of the coolest things ever to happen to me," Elze said, "even though he's probably never going to remember me."

About a month later Elze got a call from the producer at the studio where he works, and the producer said, "Hey Miles, I hope you're sitting down because Rob Trujillo just called and wants your band to open for his son's band." On Dec. 16 District performed at the Starline Social Club in Oakland as part of the Metallica 40th Anniversary week.

District was formed in 2017 when guitarist and vocalist Marco Stassi (who is currently a senior at De La Salle High School) and Elze met for the first time at Ryan Lent Studios in downtown Lafayette. "It only took a couple of days for Marco and I to become best friends and it's remained that way ever since," Elze said. "We later asked our friend Connor O'Toole (who attends Acalanes High School), who had similar music taste as us to learn the bass and play with us at the 2019 Lafayette Teen Rock Band Showcase where we came in second place."



Elze's band, District, has played at The Phoenix Theater in Petaluma in 2021, UCSF Benioff Childrens Hospital Virtual Prom Performance in 2021, the Lafayette Art And Wine Festival in 2017, the Battle of the Bands Oakland in 2019 (first place), and has done a few high school performances at Acalanes, De La Salle, and Clayton Valley high schools. Elze said the Dec. 16 show was to be their biggest yet.

"The most exciting aspect about this opportunity for us is to make an impression on an audience that we've never played in front of before," Elze said, "and to know that some of our musical heroes in Metallica will be watching is absolutely beyond us, so we are very lucky."

District has two music releases: the 2019 LP "What I May Find" and the 2021 "Outdated - EP" which was recorded with Grammy-winning producer Michael Rosen. For more information about District, visit: <https://www.districtrocks.com/>; For information about Otto see: <https://www.otttoband.com/>

Author pens exciting adventure based on true-life experience

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One of the most worthwhile and humbling experiences Clifford has enjoyed recently is doing veteran outreach

through Grammy-award winning country singer Zac Brown's Camp Southern Ground. Clifford works with post 9-11 veterans during the camp's Warrior Week wellness

program, helping them adjust to the many challenges they face as they return to civilian life. As Clifford claims, "We are here to take care of each other, be our brother's keep-

ers. We are as good as the people with whom we connect. When you've been able to achieve success in life, help the next person achieve theirs."

Clifford has done this his entire life. Perhaps this is why Moraga resident and first responder Douglas Young called Clifford "a local American hero."