

# This Halloween, a cake worth dying for?

BY MICHELLE KAYAL  
 Associated Press



Hand Painted & Small Photo

"A Zombie Ate My Cupcake," by baker Lily Jones, gives new meaning to the idea of a cake good enough to die for.

If calories are the only thing standing between you and that cupcake, consider yourself lucky. Ancient Celts worried about way more than waistlines.

"The ancient Celts used cakes as way to select people for sacrifice," says London-based baker Lily Jones — who also goes by Lily Vanilli — author of "A Zombie Ate My Cupcake" (Cico Books, 2010). "There's actually a dead body in the British Museum. He was a sacrifice victim that was selected by a cake. He was preserved in tar."

In those days, the baker would blacken part of the cake, which would be divided at a special ceremony. The person who received the black piece would "volunteer" for sacrifice, Jones says. Which makes you wonder why you'd slide up to the table in the first place. "I guess the offer of a slice of delicious cake was enough," she says.

But Jones' book gives new meaning to the idea of a cake good enough to die for: Tired of the pretty but poor tasting cupcakes being hawked on seemingly every street corner, Jones decided to turn the idea on its head — to make delicious cupcakes that

looked grotesque.

In her world, marzipan fingers protrude from a cocoa powder graveyard, coconut jelly eyeballs jiggle atop white frosting, and cupcake tops blossom into bloody pink brains.

In her London shop, bleeding heart cupcakes are bestsellers, Jones says, and she gets lots of custom orders as well. The weird-est? A woman who asked for a cake that was an exact replica of her boyfriend's head.

"It was just a head on a plate," Jones says. "It looked a bit like the movie 'Seven' because I delivered it in a cake box. The receptionist recognized him in the box."

## Sports on TV means snacks in the house

Is there a sports fan at your house? Since we are right in the middle of lots of sports events (do I need to mention the Texas Rangers are in the American League playoffs?), there seems to be a serious amount of sports watching on television.

I do not claim to be an avid sports fan (except when Baylor University is involved), but I have watched more this fall than in most years. This calls for snacking (it seems this is a necessary part of the whole experience) while these battles of brains, brawns and will are being fought. I would like to tell you the snacks at our house are heart-healthy, low-sugar and not messy. However, you know me too well to believe we keep only those somewhere in this house all the time.

I do try to keep popcorn and peanuts and various versions of "Texas Trash" (Chex Mix) on hand.

The first recipe is one my friends from St. Michael's All Angels Episcopal Church, Rita and Matthew Burke, served at a church function. I really like it, but cannot keep it on hand for obvious reasons — it's too good and tempting.

### Sweet Party Mix

- 4 cups bite-size corn square cereal
- 4 cups bite-size rice square cereal
- 2 cups pretzel knots
- 1 cup sliced almonds
- 3/4 cup packed brown sugar
- 6 tablespoons butter
- 3 tablespoons light-colored corn syrup
- 1/4 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 cup dried cranberries, blueberries or cherries

Preheat oven to 300 degrees. In a large preheated pan, combine corn cereal, rice cereal, pretzels and almonds, set aside. In a medium sauce pan, combine brown sugar, butter and corn syrup. Cook and stir over medium heat until mixture boils. Continue boiling at a moderate, steady rate, without stirring, for 5 minutes more. Remove saucepan from heat, stir in baking soda. Pour over cereal mixture, stir gently to coat.

Bake for 15 minutes; stir cereal mixture and bake 5 minutes more. Remove from oven; stir in dried fruit. Spread on a large piece of buttered foil to cool. Break into pieces. Store in an airtight container.

Note: Rita prefers dried cranberries, and so do I. This makes about 12 cups of mix.

The next is an unusual recipe, but easy to make and relatively inexpensive. If you have any leftover, just throw in a few cooked noodles, and you have an instant casserole.

### Tuna Terrific Dip

- 8 ounces cream cheese, softened to room temperature
  - 1 (10 ounce) can cream of mushroom soup
  - 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
  - 3 dashes Tabasco sauce
  - 1 (6 ounce) can tuna, drained and flaked
  - 1 teaspoon dried parsley flakes, or 1 tablespoon fresh parsley, chopped
- Blend cream cheese with mushroom soup until smooth. Add remaining ingredients. Mix, and refrigerate several hours or overnight before serving with crackers or chips. Serve cold or hot.

### Deviled Ham Sandwiches

- 2 (2 1/4 ounce) cans deviled ham
  - 3 English muffins, split
  - 1/4 cup stuffed olives, chopped
  - 1 (3 ounces) package cream cheese, softened
  - 1/4 cup finely chopped onions
  - 6 thin tomato slices
  - Mayonnaise
- Toast the English muffins on cut side. Mix cream cheese, onions, and olives, and spread on muffin halves. Spread deviled ham over cream cheese mixture. Top each sandwich with a tomato slice and mayonnaise lightly over tomato. Place under broiler until heated through. May serve cold, but they're better heated.

Barbara Richardson McCellan is a longtime food columnist and has written three self-published cookbooks. Her column appears in the Longview News-Journal's Taste section each Wednesday. Write her at bayrmi@me.net or in the care of the Longview News-Journal, P.O. Box 1192, Longview, TX 75606.



Michael Cavazos/News Journal Photo

Danielle Heard prepares Miso Soup at Artemis in the City in Longview. Heard is a certified holistic health counselor and natural whole foods chef.

# Chef brings gospel of natural foods to East Texans' menus

BY GLENN EVANS  
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It was common for Michelle Cook to sleep 20 hours a day, but surely her daily soda wasn't a factor.

A stroke in 2008 was followed by a heart attack the next year.

"I couldn't walk the length of Target," she said last week, a few days before a trip to New Mexico where she was looking forward to long walks in the desert.

"That's really amazing, because she was homebound," Longview natural whole foods chef Danielle Heard said. "Her diet, when she came to me, was completely de-natured. She didn't have any living foods."

A certified holistic health counselor and founder of Artemis in the City, a holistic nutrition service at artemisinthe-city.com, Heard preaches a gospel of good food. Her ideas are not new — in fact, they're ancient — but they are new to East Texans more familiar with canned beans than fresh azuki beans.

### Food as fuel

"From my perspective, food is not just calories and proteins and fat," said Heard, who began Artemis in New York City in the wake of her own success story. "It's also about the energy that you are bringing into your body. It



Danielle Heard's finished Grapfruit & Avocado Salad with Candied Pumpkin Seeds & Cilantro.

Michael Cavazos News-Journal Photo

is really about the quality of the food, that essentially speaks to the genes that turn disease on and turn disease off, that regulate weight."

Heard's holistic approach to eating, with fresh fruits, grains and vegetables in starring roles, is catching credibility among the West-end medical community.

"We have a big problem with the food supply in this country," said Dr. Andrei Gasic, a gastroenterologist at Diagnostic Clinic of Longview.

The doctor said a national diet hallmark by high fracture corn syrup and meats

from confined animal feeding operations — "Chickens can't even walk by the time they go to the slaughterhouse," he said — are replacing the body's fuel with poisons that spawn diabetes and other chronic conditions that appear on the rise in America.

"The funny thing was," Cook recalled, "I thought I was eating pretty well. We sit out, maybe, once a week. I did eat an average amount of fast food, because I was a business woman."

And the normal, 32-ounce Diet Coke every

See NATURAL, Page 3B

# Florida company doesn't go green to jazz up its new celery

BY STEVE KARNOWSKI  
 Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — Is America ready for real celery? A Florida produce company thinks so and has bet consumers will bite on the colorful crunch of its new product.

Red celery will hit selected supermarkets Dec. 1 — in time to add some eye-catching

color to holiday tables, said Dan Duda, president of Duda Farm Fresh Foods, which unveiled the new celery at a produce industry trade show this past weekend in Orlando, Fla.

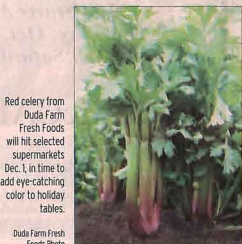
"It's bright, it's red, it's different, it's unique," said Duda, who added it has the same flavor and crunch of regular green celery.

It was nearly 20 years in

the making, he said. One of the family owned company's celery breeders, Larry Pierce, started developing it in 1991, working off a European heritage variety using natural breeding methods.

Jean Rommel, who oversees the award winning school meal programs of the St. Paul public schools, said the new celery could be a

See CELERY, Page 6B



Red celery from Duda Farm Fresh Foods will hit selected supermarkets Dec. 1 in time to add eye-catching color to holiday tables. Duda Farm Fresh Foods Photo