

# Kid's TABLE

By Rhonda Schuldt

Funny how I used to think marshmallows were special when they were the multi-colored variety found on the grocer's shelf and that putting the mini little white ones in my hot chocolate made the warming winter treat extra special.

This childhood delight has now, believe it or not, gained gourmet status. Williams-Sonoma and a slew of upscale confectioners are selling their odd-shaped, small batch "gourmet" marshmallows...a true indulgence, at around 50 cents to 1 dollar apiece. They all tout the homemade process, which makes their product worthy of the price. So, if homemade is what makes marshmallows "gourmet," I figured why not make them at home?

Not only are they one of the simplest (and fun!) forms of confection to make, rediscovering the lost art of making marshmallows will reward you with an incredibly light, fluffy treat that the store-bought, air-puffed bagged variety can't touch. And while you're at it, get your kids involved...they'll never look at marshmallows the same!

## HOW TO:

Recipes for homemade marshmallows fall into two camps – ones that incorporate whipped egg whites and ones that don't. Since I'm not a fan of using raw eggs in recipes, especially those served to kids, I opted for a simpler, no-egg recipe.

### Homemade "Gourmet" Marshmallows

3 packages of unflavored gelatin

½ cup cold water

2 cups granulated sugar

2/3 cup light corn syrup

¼ cup water

¼ teaspoon salt

1 tablespoon vanilla extract

Confectioner's (powdered) sugar

Prepare a 9x9 pan by lining with plastic wrap, spray with non-stick vegetable spray and dust with confectioner's sugar.

Put ½ cup cold water in the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with a whisk attachment, sprinkle gelatin over water and allow to sit for approximately 10 minutes.

As gelatin sits, combine sugar, corn syrup, and ¼ cup water in a small saucepan. Bring to a boil and boil

hard for 1 minute. (Do not over cook or the syrup will get too hard.) Remove from heat.

Turn mixer onto high speed and carefully pour boiling syrup in the gelatin. Add salt and continue to beat at high speed for 10 minutes. Add the vanilla and beat for an additional 2 minutes or until the mixture is lukewarm, fluffy white, and the consistency of whipped marshmallows.

Scrape the warm mixture into the prepared pan and spread evenly with wet hands. Dust the top of marshmallow mixture with more confectioner's sugar. Allow to stand, uncovered, on the counter for at least 3 hours, preferably overnight, so the marshmallow mixture can set up and dry.

Remove the marshmallow slab from the pan by turning the pan upside down onto a board. Remove plastic liner if still attached, and cut the slab into squares (kitchen shears sprayed with non-stick spray make this job easier). Place in bowl and dust with additional confectioner's sugar.

Yields 20-40 marshmallows.

TIP: Experiment with new flavors and toppings. Rather than confectioner's sugar, line your pan with superfine sugar, finely crushed Oreos, mini chocolate chips, toasted coconut or other items to coat your marshmallows and give them your signature touch!

### Creamy Hot Cocoa

½ cup water

½ cup unsweetened cocoa powder (to make this extra special, look for Mexican cocoa powder)

¾ cup granulated sugar

1/8 teaspoon salt

3½ cups milk

¾ teaspoon vanilla extract

½ cup half-and-half

Extra cocoa powder

Ground cinnamon

In a small bowl, combine the cocoa, sugar and pinch of salt. Bring water to a boil and whisk in cocoa-sugar mixture. Return to a boil, stirring constantly. Reduce heat and simmer for approximately 2 minutes, stirring constantly and being careful not to scorch the mixture. Stir in 3 1/2 cups of milk and heat until very hot, but do not boil. Remove from heat, add vanilla.



## Indulge Your (inner) Child with Homemade Gourmet Marshmallows



Divide between 4 mugs. Divide the half-and-half among the mugs of cocoa and top with homemade marshmallows, sprinkle with cocoa and a dash of cinnamon. Enjoy!

For an extra chocolaty touch, rim the mugs with a dusting of cocoa powder before filling.

Recipes © 2006 The Synergos Group LLC/Passionate Food



