Pledge to celebrate National Girl Scout Cookie Day

It’s that time of year again. That wonderful, glorious, delicious time of year—Girl Scout Cookies. The Enterprise office bought our fair share of Girl Scout Cookies last week, and to be honest, it felt a little bit like Christmas.

Sisters Emali and Alicia Torres, a fourth-grader and kindergartner, brought us a little slice of heaven in the form of Do-si-Dos, Samoas, Savannah Smiles, Tagalongs, Thin Mints and Trefoils.

Now, despite how delicious these cookies are, we strictly purchased box after box just for the sake of these adorable little girls. Really, we did. OK, that might be stretching the truth a bit, but we are, in fact, helping them learn goal-setting, decision-making, money management, business

ethics and people skills.

According to girlscouts.org , Girl Scouts first began baking and selling cookies as a way to finance troop activities as early as 1917, five years after the organization began in Oklahoma. In 1922, a Girl Scout magazine published a simple recipe for cookies that could be made at home and sold for 25 or 30 cents per dozen. The first commercial cookies were sold in the 1930s, starting out in the shape of the iconic trefoil. Fast-forward to 2013, and the cookie program is now the world's largest girl-led business, selling 200 million boxes each year!

In honor of National Girl Scout Cookie Day on Friday, Feb. 8, two of those boxes went to my latest culinary creations. A recipe from picky-palate.com uses the ever popular Thin Mint cookies as the inspiration for Thin Mint Cookie Cheesecake Cups. And the decadent Mini Peanut Butter Trifles feature the Tagalong cookie in a recipe from mybakingaddiction.com
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So if you have some leftover Girl Scout Cookies—that is, if you haven't inhaled them a sleeve at a time—then you should see how you can incorporate your favorite cookies into to-die-for desserts. If there's a badge for eating Girl Scout Cookies, we'll certainly earn it!

Thin Mint Cookie Cheesecake Cup

13 Thin Mint cookies, ground in food processor or blender
2 tablespoons melted butter
8-ounce softened cream cheese
1/2 cup sugar
1 egg
2 1/2 tablespoons buttermilk
5 Thin Mint cookies, coarsely crumbled

1/4 cup chocolate chips
2-3 tablespoons heavy cream
3-5 Thin Mint cookies, crumbled (for top of cups)

Preheat oven to 300 degrees. Combine ground cookies and butter in a medium bowl. Drop about 1 tablespoon of cookie mixture into 24 mini cupcake tins that have been sprayed with cooking spray. (If you have mini cupcake paper wrappers, use them. It's difficult to remove cheesecake cups from the tin itself). Press crust into cups with back of a spoon.

In an electric or stand mixer, cream the cream cheese and sugar until well combined. Add egg and buttermilk until well combined as well. Stir in crumbled cookies. Pour cheesecake mixture into cupcake tins filled almost to the very top. Bake for 25-28 minutes or until cooked through. Remove and cool for 15 minutes. Melt chocolate chips in microwave until melted and smooth. Stir in heavy cream until smooth and shiny. Spoon about 1 tablespoon over each cheesecake cup and sprinkle with additional crumbled cookies.

Mini Peanut Butter Trifles

For the peanut butter mousse:
4 ounces cream cheese, softened
1/2 cup creamy peanut butter
1/2 cup plus one tablespoon confectioners' sugar
1/4 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
2 tablespoons heavy cream

For the trifle layers:
10 Tagalong cookies, chopped
Fudge sauce (store bought or homemade)
1/2 cup heavy cream plus
1 tablespoon confectioners' sugar, whipped

For the peanut butter mousse: In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment or in a large bowl using an electric mixer, beat cream cheese, peanut butter, confectioners' sugar, vanilla and heavy cream until thoroughly combined and fluffy, about 3 minutes.

To assemble the peanut butter trifles: Place about 1 chopped Tagalong into the bottom of each mini parfait glass. Pipe or spoon in a layer of peanut butter mousse. Add a layer of chocolate fudge sauce and repeat layers. Top with whipped cream and finish with chopped Tagalong cookies. (Makes four mini trifles. These trifles are best served the day they are made.)

Holyoke Enterprise February 7, 2013