

Fireworks don't have to be the only party element that makes guests ooh and ah during July 4th festivities. With colorful sweets that sparkle and a themed tablescape exploding with red, white and blue, your party is sure to be the best on the block.

"Adding patriotic flair to your Independence Day celebration is easy with the right recipes and decorating accents," said Nancy Siler, vice president of consumer affairs at Wilton. "Put your personal John Hancock on the party by turning traditional summertime foods into amazing sweet treats."

Try these dessert ideas from the Wilton test kitchen for a celebration that ends with a bang:

- **Burgers with a Sweet Bite:** Traditional burgers are a staple for summer parties; switch things up with Sweet Sliders and build your burgers with unexpected ingredients. Start with whoopie pies for the buns, add a brownie "patty," roll yellow fruit candies into thin layers for cheese, and top it off with red and yellow Sparkle Gel for ketchup and mustard.
- **Playful Twist on Summer Fruit:** Make mouths water by serving up slices of delicious watermelon ... cheesecake! Strawberry cheesecake dotted with mini chocolate chips imitates the center of the fruit, and a pistachio and coconut crumble crust mimics the watermelon rind.
- **Patriotic Treat Pops:** For the grand finale, nestle Red, White and Blue Treat Pops in a bowl of red Cinnamon Drops. Layer on the festive colors with vanilla cake, colored icing and star-shaped sprinkles. Finish with stars and stripes Rocket Treat Pops Toppers or red, white and blue pinwheels.

For more celebration ideas, visit [www.wilton.com](http://www.wilton.com).



## Cool Watermelon Cheesecake

Makes about 12 servings

### Crust:

- 1-1/4 cps. (16 oz.) roasted salted pistachios
- 2 cps. sweetened flaked coconut
- 1/4 cp. granulated sugar
- 4 Tbs. (1/2 stick) butter, melted
- Leaf green icing color

### Filling:

- 3 pkgs. (8 oz. each) cream cheese, softened
- 2/3 cp. granulated sugar
- 1 tsp. imitation clear vanilla
- 1 cp. heavy whipping cream
- 1 pkg. (16 ounces) frozen whole strawberries, thawed, pureed & strained (about 1-1/2 cps.)
- 1 envelope (1/4 ounce) unflavored gelatin
- No-taste red icing color

1/2 cup mini chocolate chips, divided

In food processor, pulse pistachios until coarsely ground. Add coconut, sugar, butter and icing color; pulse until well combined. Press into bottom and 3/4 up side of 9-inch springform pan. Refrigerate while making filling.

In large bowl, beat cream cheese, sugar and vanilla until light and creamy. Add heavy cream and beat until combined.

In small saucepan, bring strawberry juice just to boiling, stirring constantly. Remove from heat. Sprinkle gelatin evenly over top and whisk vigorously to dissolve completely, about 3 minutes. Pour into cream cheese mixture. Add icing color and beat until well combined. Beat in 1/3 cup mini chocolate chips. Pour into chilled crust. Sprinkle top with remaining chocolate chips. Refrigerate until set, about 3 hours.

## Sweet Sliders

Makes about 24 Sweet Sliders

### Cake Buns:

- 1 pkg. (16 oz.) yellow cake mix
- Eggs, water and vegetable oil to prepare mix

### Brownie Patties:

- 1/2 cp. all-purpose flour
- 1/8 tsp. salt
- 3 Tbs. unsalted butter
- 1/3 cp. granulated sugar
- 1 Tbs. water
- 1/2 cp. semi-sweet choc. chips
- 1/2 tsp. pure vanilla extract
- 1 egg

### Toppings:

- Shredded coconut
- Leaf green icing color
- Asst. fruit flavored candies
- Red sparkle gel
- Yellow sparkle gel

Preheat oven to 350°F. Prepare whoopie pie pan with vegetable pan spray.

For buns, combine cake mix, eggs, water and oil in large bowl; mix according to package instructions.

Fill prepared pan cavities 2/3 full with cake batter.

Bake 9 to 11 minutes, or until tops of cake spring back when touched. Cool in pan 10 minutes; remove to cooling grid and cool completely. Repeat with remaining cake batter.

For patties, combine flour and salt in small bowl. In small saucepan, melt butter and sugar with water; stir until sugar is dissolved. Add chocolate chips; stir until melted. Remove from heat. Stir in vanilla extract.

In large bowl, beat egg with electric mixer. Add chocolate mixture; mix well.

## OUTSHINE THE FIREWORKS THIS JULY 4TH WITH

# Sparkling Sweets



## Red, White and Blue Treat Pops

Makes about 12 Treat Pops

### Whoopie Pie Cakes:

- 1-1/2 cps. all-purpose flour
- 1-1/2 tsp. baking powder
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 6 Tbs. butter, softened
- 2/3 cp. granulated sugar
- 2 egg whites
- 1-1/2 tsp. imitation clear vanilla extract
- 2/3 cp. milk

### Filling:

- 3 cps. buttercream icing
- Christmas red icing color
- Royal blue icing color
- Patriotic mix sprinkles
- Rocket Treat Pops Toppers

Preheat oven to 350°F. Prepare mini whoopie pie pan with vegetable pan spray.

In large bowl, stir together flour, baking powder and salt.

In large bowl, beat butter and sugar with electric mixer until light and fluffy. Add egg whites and vanilla

extract and beat until well combined.

Alternately add flour mixture and milk in three additions, beating until just combined. Spoon one tablespoon batter into each cavity.

Bake 9 to 11 minutes or until tops of cakes spring back when touched. Cool in pan 3 minutes. Cool completely on cooling grid.

In separate small bowls, tint 1 cup buttercream red, 1 cup blue and reserve 1 cup white.

To assemble: Place one cake in bottom of treat pop. Pipe a swirl of blue icing from back edge following the curve of the container to the front, then filling in the center; add sprinkles. Add second cake. Pipe a swirl of white icing; add sprinkles. Top with another cake. Pipe a swirl of red icing. Top with Patriotic Sprinkles or Rocket Treat Pops Toppers.

**Convenience tip:** Substitute vanilla wafer cookies for whoopie pie cakes.

Add flour mixture; stir until just combined. Divide batter evenly between whoopie pie pan cavities, filling about 1/3 full.

Bake 9 to 11 minutes or until toothpick inserted in center comes out nearly clean. Cool 10 minutes; loosen edges of brownies and remove from pan. Cool completely.

For toppings, mix shredded coconut with leaf green icing color for lettuce. Roll yellow fruit candies into thin layers for cheese. Use red and yellow sparkle gels for ketchup and mustard. To assemble, top cake bun with a brownie patty. Add toppings and finish with second cake bun.