

*Good Tidings*

AND

*Great Joy*

## Recipes



Should we go?” I asked Todd one day over the phone. My husband was preparing to meet me in Colorado after a speech, but an invitation to a birthday party caused us to reevaluate our plans. The man having the birthday is a millionaire, or maybe he’s a billionaire. I don’t know, hundreds of millions here, hundreds of millions there . . . pretty soon we’re talking real money. Though he’s wealthy, you’d never know it if you just met him because he’s grounded, unassuming, hardworking.

“It’s a once-in-a-lifetime thing,” Todd said. Attending the party meant we’d have to take a slight northern detour, so we’d have to adjust our plans. Since I’m always inspired to meet a fun group of successful entrepreneurs, we decided to go for it.

*Sarah Palin*

“Live life vibrantly,” I said. Todd and I, over the course of our marriage, have really lived this mantra from the beginning of our relationship. Twenty-five years ago, we lived it out by not telling anyone that we were getting married, not overthinking the ceremony, and not incurring any debt. (Todd says that’s why my dad loves him so much, because he had his first daughter married off for only thirty-five bucks!) We just independently knew it was right so we forged full-speed ahead. Later, we lived out this mantra when I decided to run against good ol’ boy GOP incumbents for mayor, then governor, because I knew the public deserved new energy to get the job done. Then, we lived out this mantra by saying yes to the many adventures we’ve had commercial fishing together in Bristol Bay; traveling across the country on some crazy fun road trips to taste America’s history; encouraging the kids to make sacrifices today and work hard and ignore the critics. I even have a handwritten sign on the kitchen cabinet that reads, “Do today what others won’t, so you can do tomorrow what others want.”

These are all examples of living that mantra, and it comes in handy when we have to decide whether to take the more convenient plan or the more adventurous route. We *always* take the more adventurous route.

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“But wait,” I said, realizing that we needed a gift if we were going to a birthday party. “What do you get someone who has everything?”

“I’m sure he doesn’t need a gas card,” Todd said.

“Or an ice auger,” I said.

“There’s got to be something truly unique,” I thought.

“Since I’m still here,” Todd offered, “I could grab something that’s from Alaska.”

Suddenly, I was inspired.

“Can you thief an oosik from my dad’s garage?” Dad was notorious for his collection of antlers, fossils, petrified wood, and so many other things.

“Well, it’s definitely . . .” he struggled for the right word, “. . . *authentic*.”

“Make sure you pack it carefully!” I said. I was worried the small, straight bone might be damaged in transport.

I went ahead and delivered my speech in Colorado and was excited to see Todd when he landed.

“Where’s the oosik?”

“I was afraid TSA would confiscate it,” Todd confessed.

“So I didn’t pack the bone.”

Dang it! Now what would we bring?

“You’re probably right,” I muttered. We’ve never even

*Sarah Palin*

gotten on a flight without TSA opening and testing and poking and sometimes even confiscating Trig's jars of pureed baby food.

"But now we won't have a unique gift."

I had a few hours before the party, so I went to a friend's house and asked her if I could use her oven. Then I texted my girlfriend Juanita and had her text me back for the umpteenth time her secret recipe for—I swear to you—the best oatmeal-raisin-white-chocolate-chip cookies in the world.

"Why do you keep losing it?" she texted back, before relenting and sending it to me again. After every time she sends it, she always adds, "Don't give it to anyone!"

I only had a few hours, but I used every one of them to bake these cookies. I also bought very festive, professional-looking bakery bags with silver ties. I can never bake them quite as well as Juanita—and it's always more fun with her in the kitchen *with* me—but these cookies turned out soft and gooey. I knew I had the perfect gift. Not only are they indisputably the most heavenly treats, but also I think cooking and baking for others is symbolic of how much they mean to you. You've spent your precious time on them, not on yourself. It also means you didn't point, click, and send directly from the online store—complete with the five-dollar gift wrapping.

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Every year, I go to Carrs in Wasilla—our town’s great grocery store—and buy the best ingredients for my Christmas concoctions. I love to give pots of homemade moose chili, tubs of scrumptious smoked salmon dip (made from wild salmon we caught), peanut butter balls sprinkled with the kids’ handiwork, and Juanita’s famous cookies for gifts every year.

Indicative of my family’s highbrow foo-foo, chi-chi tastes, I told Willow I was including favorite recipes in this Christmas book and she insisted on her traditional favorite. No, not the warm baked brie with a cranberry base in a flaky crust, and not Heather’s to-die-for, inch-thick, frosting-piled-high soft gingerbread men, and not Grandma Sally’s beer-battered halibut I request every potluck. Instead, Willow claimed, “You *cannot* write a book without including our Rice Krispies treats, Mom. It’s not Christmas without them.”

Sigh.

We went to the party and our friend in Colorado smiled when he opened the package and saw the gooey treats.

“This is deeply touching,” he said, inhaling the sweet aroma. “Thank you.”

It was a sweet moment, and I could tell he really appreciated the time and love that went into that batch of cookies.

*Sarah Palin*

I'd rather have seen the look on his face after opening the oosik. It would have been even better to see his face after he googled the term to find out what it was! However, his sincere response to my homemade gift confirmed the lessons learned from Mom. Nothing says Christmas like strapping on an apron, heading to the kitchen with friends and family, and cooking and baking yourself into the Christmas spirit.

I hope you enjoy these special Palin recipes we've been loving for years.

Some have been passed down and around without exact measurements, and I'm passing them along to you the same way I received them.

That means you get to experiment a little to discover the perfect combination for your family. (And, by the way, I'm including that famous cookie recipe in this book for you to enjoy. . . . Just don't tell Juanita!)

Enjoy!

*Sarah*

## Merry Christmoose Chili



*I guarantee this will become a family favorite—not only for your guests, but for you, because it's so easy to make.*

*Everyone loves it!*

*TIME TO PREPARE: 1 to 5 hours, depending on how long you want it to simmer in your Crock-Pot.*

*SERVES: I promise you this meal is so hearty and so good! The recipe as follows will serve eight, but just add more cans of kidney beans to the pot to keep up with the number of guests coming through your door. We usually have a Crock-Pot full on the counter all throughout the holidays.*

1 pound moose hamburger  
(or caribou or, heck, I suppose you can use beef)

1 package of regular chili seasoning mix

1 package of hot chili seasoning mix

Two 16-ounce cans of tomato sauce

Eight 16-ounce cans of kidney beans

1. Over a medium flame brown the meat in a large stovetop pan. Once it is browned, transfer the meat to a Crock-Pot if you are using one. Add the chili seasoning mixes, tomato sauce, and



kidney beans. (I drain about half the cans of beans, the rest I just pour in.)

2. Stir the chili, bring to a boil, and then simmer for at least one hour.

3. The toppings make the chili. We use shredded cheese and dollops of sour cream atop each bowl. I set out chopped onions as another option. Todd and the other guys in the family tend to go for Pilot Bread to dip into their chili. (It's also called Sailor Boy. It's a thick, round dry wafer that is one of our most versatile foods. You can spread peanut butter or Spam on it, and you'll find this staple in every tackle box or cooler up north. I don't believe these crackers *ever* expire.) Others prefer tortilla chips to sprinkle on top.

## Rice Krispies Treats



*In honor of Willow Bianca, I present the holiday's simplest classic. It might not be the fanciest Christmas recipe, but it's definitely one of the more delicious!*

TIME TO PREPARE: 20 minutes

YIELDS: *Twenty-four 2 x 2-inch squares, but you might want to cut them a little bigger. They are that good!*

3 tablespoons butter or  
margarine

1 package (approximately 40)  
marshmallows

6 cups Rice Krispies cereal

1. In a large pan on the stovetop melt the butter over low heat. Add the marshmallows and stir until it's a gooey white cloud of marshmallow.
2. Pour your Rice Krispies in the pan, remove from the heat, and stir well.
3. Using buttered fingers, press the cooled mixture into a buttered 13 x 9 x 2-inch pan. Add decorative candies on top, like red hots. You can even decorate them with tiny green frosting leaves to look like mistletoe and holly.

## Smoked Salmon Spread



*Everyone loves this, except Bristol, who—inexplicably—is the only Alaskan I know who does not like to eat our Bristol Bay-caught salmon.*

TIME TO PREPARE: *30 minutes*

YIELDS: *1½ pints*

1 8-ounce can of salmon, preferably smoked (if not, add liquid smoke to the spread)	½ teaspoon Worcestershire sauce Tabasco, a dash, optional mayonnaise, optional, to taste jalapeños, diced, optional, to taste
8 ounces cream cheese, softened	
2 tablespoons onion, finely chopped	1 tablespoon freshly squeezed lemon juice, optional
⅓ cup ranch dressing	

1. For the basic recipe, use a jar or can of salmon (preferably smoked) that you caught yourself. (Dad, if you are following this recipe, avoid salmon circa 1992!) In a large mixing bowl, combine the cream cheese with the onion (you can substitute onion powder). Add the ranch dressing—to make it more

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moist—a little Worcestershire sauce, and a dash of Tabasco. If your salmon is not smoked, add the liquid smoke.

2. Really, you can't go wrong adding small amounts of other ingredients—like mayo, jalapeños, lemon juice—as long as you have that very basic, very perfect easy recipe as your base.

3. We also make this with halibut, and it doesn't have to be smoked. Mix mayonnaise with the cream cheese if you choose the halibut spread.

4. Spread on crackers, small squares of homemade bread, pita, or thinly sliced toasted bagels.

## Heather's Gingerbread Cookies



*“Just roll the dough thicker and underbake!”*

*Heather insists that's it—her deep, dark secret revealed to baking the season's best gingerbread men.*

*So perfect! Everyone asks Heather to bring these to parties. My siblings and I have birthdays all bunched together near the holidays, including Chuck and Heather—who are less than a year apart. Then I came along just barely twelve months later. So we have joint birthday potlucks, and thankfully gift giving is made easier now that I ask Heather to just make this cookie dough for my present. I freeze it, then roll it out for other shindigs.*

*It's a great gift!*

*She uses this adapted classic Betty Crocker recipe.*

*Note: Kids can cut the shapes. Frost generously.*

TIME: 10 to 12 minutes

YIELDS: About 20 5-inch cookies

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<i>Gingerbread People:</i>	1 teaspoon salt
1½ cups dark molasses	1 teaspoon ground allspice
1 cup packed brown sugar	2 teaspoons ground ginger
⅔ cup cold water	1 teaspoon ground cloves
⅓ cup shortening	1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
7 cups all-purpose flour*	Heather's Frosting (see follow-
2 teaspoons baking soda	ing page)

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. In a large bowl, mix the molasses, brown sugar, water, and shortening.
3. Fold in the remaining ingredients except frosting. Cover and refrigerate the dough for at least two hours.
4. On a floured surface, roll the dough ¼-inch thick. Cut the dough with a floured gingerbread cutter or any other favorite shaped cutter you like.
5. Place the cookies about 2 inches apart on a cookie sheet sprayed with Pam or greased with butter.
6. Bake the cookies until no indentation remains when touched, about 8 minutes. Make sure you don't overbake them! Cool and decorate with Heather's Frosting (recipe follows).

NOTE: If you want to make gingerbread cookies instead of the people, then:

\* If using self-rising flour, omit the baking soda and salt.

Decrease flour to 6 cups. Roll dough  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch thick and cut with floured  $2\frac{1}{2}$ -inch round cutter. Place about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches apart on lightly greased cookie sheet. Bake *less than* 15 minutes—remember to underbake them to get them soft.

*Heather's Frosting:*

4 cups powdered sugar  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  cup shortening  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  butter or margarine  
1 teaspoon vanilla

1 teaspoon mint flavoring  
(optional, but tastes great on  
gingerbread men, especially,  
it seems, if you use green  
food coloring)  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  cup milk

1. Mix on high speed, but you may need more or less milk, depending on the consistency you desire for your frosting. Be prepared to add a few drops until the frosting is soft enough to spread easily on top of the cookies—or add more powdered sugar if you need to thicken it up.
2. We scoop out some frosting and put it in separate bowls and add to these separate portions different colored drops of food coloring—usually using lots of green and red—depending on how you want to decorate your cookies.
3. We add red hots and sprinkles and tiny candies or anything else on top of a base of this simple, delicious frosting to create and decorate our gingerbread men!

## Juanita's Soft, Goopy Oatmeal Raisin White Chocolate-Chip Heaven



*Now, you can have the perfect gift to give your loved ones at Christmas! It's fun to give these away in festive packaging. These delicious little treats deserve it!*

TIME TO PREPARE: *20 minutes*

YIELDS: *About 4 dozen cookies*

2 sticks semi-hard butter (still chilled from the fridge, <i>not</i> softened in the microwave, and don't overmix the butter with the sugars, eggs, and vanilla)	1½ cup flour plus a smidge more
1 cup brown sugar	1 teaspoon baking soda plus a smidge more
½ cup white sugar	½ teaspoon salt
2 eggs	1 teaspoon cinnamon and a few pinches of allspice
1 teaspoon vanilla	3 cups oatmeal
	lots of white chocolate chips; Juanita adds some dark and semisweet chocolate chips, too.



raisins, to taste (or dried  
cranberries to make cookies  
more colorfully festive)

1 cup (or so) chopped walnuts  
unless your kids demand  
“no nuts!”

1. Preheat your oven to 350° F.
2. In a large mixing bowl, mix together the butter, brown sugar, white sugar, eggs, and vanilla. Add the flour, baking soda, and salt. Fold in the oatmeal, white chocolate chips, raisins, and walnuts. You can chill the cookie dough in the fridge before scooping it out with a medium-sized ice-cream scoop, but it's not necessary. Scoop the dough onto ungreased cookie sheets.
3. Bake for about only 8 minutes.

NOTE: The cookies *have* to be gooey soft, almost raw in the center. They'll harden a bit as they cool on the counter.

## Peanut Butter Balls



*No one can remember which homemade cookbook we found this in a few decades ago—it was one of those handwritten kids' cookbooks. We quit measuring ingredients back in the 1980s, so now we have a general feel for this recipe. Once you make a successful batch of these delicious treats, you won't go by a strict recipe, either. However, I'll include my best guesstimate of quantities to help you when you are picking up ingredients from the grocery store. Please feel free to experiment with the quantities on this recipe—it's truly hard to mess up a recipe like this one!*

PREP TIME: 30 minutes

YIELDS: *About 60 pieces, depending on how big you make them*

2 cups creamy peanut butter	9 ounces chocolate chips
2 to 2½ cups powdered sugar	sprinkles, nuts, flavored
¼ cup butter	chocolate chips for topping,
splash vanilla	to taste

1. Mix together the creamy peanut butter, powdered sugar, and butter in a big bowl. Then add a splash of the vanilla. It's

got to be thick enough to scoop out the dough and form balls, so experiment a little to get the right thickness. If it's not stiff enough, just add more sugar. Meanwhile, melt the chocolate chips in a bowl in the microwave. Form the dough into balls; however large or small you would like. Then dip the balls into the melted chocolate chips. You can get fancy and add paraffin to the melted chocolate to add shine, but I usually skip that step.

2. After the balls are coated in chocolate, we roll some of them in colorful sprinkles, nuts, and different-flavored chopped chocolate chips to fit the Christmas theme. But the classic combination of simple chocolate and peanut butter without a lot of embellishment tastes best to me.

3. You can save the decorations for the small boxes you'll put them in, and I assure you the recipient will just love the plain peanut butter balls.

4. These taste better than Reese's!

## Faye's Blueberry Pie Recipe



*In this recipe, my mother-in-law, Faye Irene Palin (affectionately called FIP by family), uses fresh, wild, handpicked Alaskan blueberries. FIP bakes this perfect pie for holidays and every autumn at her rustic Crosswinds Lake cabin, but notes, “I just have to get to the blueberries before the bears do!”*

*Enjoy this pie with the flakiest, most delicious crust (there are two different crust variations below), from a lifelong classy Alaskan woman!*

*Note, in the recipe below the crust ingredients have been doubled from FIP's original version, so expect some leftover dough. Faye must be able to roll the dough out so delicately and thinly that she needs half the amount I do to cover the entire pie crust. Not me. I'm too clumsy and need more dough to patch the holes. I have to double the recipe just to fit my one pie. What to do with the leftover dough? We use it for what we call “kids' crust.” We drizzle melted butter on it and sprinkle on some cinnamon and sugar before baking it in a small pie tin for the kids to enjoy.*

PREP TIME: 1 hour

YIELDS: 1 pie crust

*First Pie Crust Option: 8- or 9-inch one-crust pie or baked shell*

2 cups plus 4 tablespoons flour	the back of a table knife)
(measure by the dip-level	1 teaspoon salt
method. Level off the	$\frac{2}{3}$ cup vegetable oil
measuring cup with a	4 tablespoons cold water
straight-edged tool, such as	

Preheat oven to 425° F. In a large bowl, mix the flour and salt. Add the oil and mix with a fork until it starts to look like meal. Sprinkle the flour mixture with water and continue to mix with a fork. Gather the dough together and press into a ball. Roll the crust between two long strips of waxed paper. Place the dough, paper-side-up, in pie pan. Peel off the wax paper. Fill with the blueberry filling (below) and finish the pie crust edges. Bake for 35 to 45 minutes, or until crust is brown.

*Second Pie Crust Option: 8- or 9-inch two-crust pie*

3½ cups flour	1 cup vegetable oil
2 teaspoons salt	6 tablespoons cold water

1. Preheat oven to 425° F. In a large bowl, mix the flour and salt. Add the oil and mix with a fork until it starts to look like meal. Sprinkle the flour mixture with water and continue to mix with a fork. Gather the dough together and press into a ball. Divide the flour almost in half. Use the larger half for the pie's bottom.

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Roll the bottom portion of the dough between two long strips of waxed paper. Place the dough, paper-side-up, in pie pan. Peel off the wax paper. Fill with the blueberry filling (below) and trim the edges. Roll the top portion of the dough on waxed paper. Cut slips in middle. Place the dough over the filling. Trim the dough  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch beyond rim, fold under, seal and flute.

2. I find that by always being exact in my measurements, the consistency of the crust is good. When you roll the dough out between the wax paper sheets, you can roll the crust very thin. You just have to be patient when you peel back the wax paper when you put the crust on the pie.

### *Fresh Blueberry Pie Filling*

#### *9-inch pie*

1 to  $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups sugar

$\frac{1}{3}$  cup flour

$\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon cinnamon

4 cups fresh berries

$1\frac{1}{2}$  tablespoons butter

#### *8-inch pie*

$\frac{2}{3}$  to 1 cup sugar

$\frac{1}{4}$  cup flour

$\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon cinnamon

3 cups fresh berries

1 tablespoon butter

1. Wash and drain the berries. Pick them over and remove any stems and hulls. Use the smaller or larger amount of sugar according to your taste and the sweetness of the blueberries.

2. Mix the sugar, flour, and cinnamon. Fold in the berries. Pour the berry mixture into a pastry-lined pie pan. *Dot with butter.*

*Sarah Palin*

(I do this with every fruit pie—no matter what kind—apple, rhubarb, cherry, strawberry). Cover with the top crust if using. Seal and flute. Bake for 35 to 45 minutes or until crust is brown and juice begins to bubble through slits in crust.



My dad, my aunt Carol, and my grandmother Marie in 1944, when they lived in North Hollywood.





I remember one present specifically from Christmas 1968 in our tiny Gold Rush town of Skagway, Alaska—this sweet teddy bear, which I kept for years.



Chuck Jr., Heather, and I anticipate opening presents in Skagway, Alaska, in 1968. Though the tree looks Charlie Brown-ish here, it was actually very pretty!



Heather and our black lab, Woosha,  
at Hatcher Pass in 1980. After Christmas, we'd  
take advantage of the remaining Christmas break to  
go ptarmigan hunting on our skis.



In our home, athletics have always been a priority . . . and we didn't stop for Christmas vacation. Here I am in a pre-Christmas "Fun Run" in the snow in 1981.



In 1986, the Heath kids were college students,  
all at once! Me, Heather, Molly, and Chuck—all home  
from college, reunited and getting ready for our annual  
high school alumni basketball games.



I always love to have all the kids around during Christmas. This is the crew in 2005—check out Todd’s Tom Selleck mustache!



Piper and Santa delivered gifts with me when I served as head of the state's National Guard. In 2008 we traveled to various villages in Alaska to share Christmas joy.



In 2008, supercute Trig starred on the state of Alaska governor's Christmas cards.





During Christmas Break in 2010, Todd, Bristol, Greta Van Susteren, and I traveled to Haiti with Reverend Franklin Graham's organization, Samaritan's Purse. One highlight was handing out Christmas gifts to precious, innocent orphans who could not survive without generous people like Greta or the Grahams.