

# GOOD THINGS

Fresh Ideas to Elevate the Everyday



MAKE & TAKE

## BRING MAY FLOWERS

If you think you need to be a pastry chef to create these little beauties, think again. Simply top frosted cupcakes with a small garden's worth of cut-up candies in an artful arrangement. Serve your blooms at parties, bake sales, brunches—even on Mother's Day. Everyone will love eating them petal by petal before biting into the cake underneath. (For the how-tos, see page 120.)

PHOTOGRAPHS BY AARON DYER

## GOOD THINGS

RECIPE  
REMIX

## Churro Champs

Forgo the traditional frying—and mixing up the batter—for this Latin American treat. Instead, bake store-bought puff pastry for churros that are easier to make but full of the same spicy sweetness: ¡Muy delicioso!

Preheat oven to 425°. On a lightly floured surface, roll out 14 ounces all-butter puff pastry into a 12-by-16-inch rectangle. Brush lightly with a beaten egg. Fold in half into a 6-by-16-inch rectangle; press out air bubbles, then cut crosswise into ½-by-6-inch strips. Twist into spirals, pressing ends to gently adhere. Place 1 inch apart on 2 parchment-lined baking sheets; freeze 30 minutes. Bake, rotating sheets halfway through, until puffed and golden, 20 to 22 minutes. Combine ½ cup sugar and 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon. While still hot, toss half of churros with half of sugar. Repeat with remaining churros and sugar.

Upgrade 2 cups of chocolate sauce with ½ teaspoon each of ancho chile powder, vanilla extract, and cinnamon.

BETTER,  
FASTER

## Brisk Brew

Here's a quicker way to whip up a robust batch of iced tea: To make 2½ cups, place 3 to 4 tablespoons loose-leaf tea (we used green) in the strainer of a teapot. Pour in 2 cups boiling water and let steep 3 minutes. Then add 2 cups ice. The cubes will begin to melt—and the drink will reach the perfect strength in a few minutes. Serve in glasses filled with more ice.

Use a ceramic or tempered-glass pot for this quick steeping technique.



## TIP

For crisp, clear lines, always press your stamp against the bleach-soaked sponge brush before hitting the fabric. Also remember to wash the rubber well with stamp cleaner once you're done.



## DIY STYLE

## Put Your Stamp on It

Frill-free napkins turn into a customized hostess gift when stamped with—surprise!—bleach. Just dampen a sponge brush with it (don't dilute), and use it as “ink” for any rubber stamp. Let excess drip off, then apply quickly and evenly to tightly woven cotton napkins. The images will appear as the bleach sets. Machine-wash, dry, and iron the napkins, then bundle them with twine and a tag.

Fete cotton napkins, in Aqua and Coral, \$4 each, [crateandbarrel.com](http://crateandbarrel.com).

**GREEN THINGS****Bug Off**

Make your home an insect-free zone with all-natural pest repellents that don't rely on harmful chemicals—or create unpleasant fumes.

**NEST DECOY**

You may be able to ward off wasps by fashioning a fake hive out of an inflated brown paper bag. Embellish it with marker lines, and hang it upside down in your yard; the territorial stingers might think another colony has already claimed the spot.

**ORANGE-OIL OFFENSE**

To get rid of ants, dampen a cotton swab with a few drops of orange essential oil, then wipe it on baseboards and entryways. This will deter whole armies from entering, since the compound d-limonene in the oil is toxic to them.

**PERSONALIZE IT****Sweet Sentiments**

No more searching for the right card—now a truly one-of-a-kind option is at your fingertips. Press your thumbs into an ink pad to make the momma animals, and dip your (or your little one's) pinkies for the babies; let dry. Draw the details with a fine-tipped marker, and post as thank-yous, invites, and more.



Cut card stock to the same height and twice the length of your envelope; fold in half.

**SIP &  
REPEAT****Toast the Sunrise**

A basic brunch turns into a tropical party when you serve this mouthwatering ombré mocktail. In a blender, purée a peeled, cored, and chopped **pineapple** with a pinch of **coarse salt**. Fill a pint glass with ice. Pour in  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup **guava** or **passion-fruit juice** and 1 tablespoon **fresh lime juice**. Add 2 teaspoons **grenadine syrup**; let settle (don't stir). Gently spoon  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup purée on top.

Save the pineapple leaves to tuck in as a garnish.

**CLUTTER CONTROL****Off the Rack**

Keep your necklaces, bracelets, and earrings in fine order (instead of a fine mess) by repurposing a good old spool rack, typically used for sewing thread. Mount the rack to a wall, or set one with legs on a vanity.

**Mini Mega Rack II** (similar to shown), by June Tailor, \$21, amazon.com. **Thin beaded glass-and-gold necklaces** (similar to shown), by Debbie Fisher, \$175 each, abchome.com.

**TASTY  
SPIN****Quite a Spread**

Give any bread the savory taste of an everything bagel with this garlicky, seed-sprinkled spread. To make it, combine 1 tablespoon each **toasted sesame seeds**, **poppy seeds**, and **dried minced onion** with  $\frac{3}{4}$  teaspoon **dried garlic flakes**. Stir half the mixture into 8 ounces room-temperature **cream cheese**. Smear on a plain toasted bagel, topped with extra seeds, or serve as a spread to amp up crackers.