

In this Issue:

- ◆ Strange Things 1
- ◆ Try to Have Just One 1
- ◆ Christmas Trivia 3
- ◆ Riley's Corner 5

Wealth Builder

CHRISTMAS
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STRANGE THINGS I'VE EATEN OVER THE HOLIDAYS

BY MIKE BERRY, CFP®

Let me preface this article by stating that these are memories from my past and as a child I had different tastes and ideas about food than I do now (maybe not in some instances). So, this is not a commentary on what you might like or dislike, it is merely a reflection from my childhood.

My childhood impression of food during the holidays was “what’s all this weird stuff I have to eat and where is my mac and cheese? Let me share some examples.

Continued on page 2



TRY TO HAVE JUST ONE

BY JEFF FUNDERBURK, CFP®

Every year Mom would ask what types of cookies we wanted around for the Christmas season. For me, the answer was always the same – those little chocolate peanut butter balls. Creamy peanut butter balls with a Rice Krispy crunch covered in chocolate, these things are fantastic (as is anything that combines chocolate and peanut butter). And on top of being THE best holiday treat around, they are extremely easy for anyone to make.

See recipe for *Chocolate Peanut Butter Balls with Rice Krispies* on page 5.

Continued on page 5

STRANGE THINGS I'VE EATEN OVER THE HOLIDAYS *Continued from p. 1*

My mother is 100% Swedish and so when we got together with my grandparents over the holidays, my grandmother always served **lutefisk**. It's really better not to know what lutefisk is, but it starts out as cod. It is then dried until such a time as it is tough as leather and has the texture or corrugated cardboard. Then to restore the fish to some edible texture it is soaked in **lye**. YES, LYE! It smelled fishy, looked sketchy and I wanted no part of it, yet the grown-ups seemed to enjoy it. I always wondered how we avoided a trip to the emergency room after lutefisk was consumed.

Another staple over the holidays was **mincemeat pie**. This pie has its origin in England. It's a mixture of fruit, spices, beef suet (fat) and minced lamb. Generally, it has raisins too. The name itself was a turn off. I wasn't used to having my meat in a pie. On a bun, for sure. But a pie? The filling was dark so I wasn't sure that the raisins weren't actually something else. This dish was definitely a two thumbs down!

How about **fruitcake**? Think about having dark raisins, golden raisins, dried apricots, pears, peaches, figs cherries and prunes all soaked in a generous amount of rum. Then you have the audacity to throw it all into a cake mixture that contains spices like cinnamon, ginger and nutmeg. I remember the first time I took a bite, it began to swell up in my mouth and I had to spit it out in my hand, which promptly got me sent to my room. Not a bad trade. By the way, did you know that fruitcake was actually outlawed in early 18th century Europe because it is so rich, it was considered sinful.

Another choker was **bread pudding**. How can anything that starts with STALE BREAD be any good? Sure, you mix up some milk, eggs, vanilla and sugar, add the bread and bake it, but you still end up with stale bread sogged up in a custard. My thoughts on pudding, were that it was creamy, smooth, flavored with chocolate and came from a box labeled J-E-L-L-O.

To close out my culinary mis-hit parade are **rum balls** and **eggnog**. I was not allowed to indulge in either of these items until late in my teen years and only in limited quantity. Which was fine with me. The rum balls hit me kind of like my first bite of fruitcake and I don't care how much booze you dump into raw eggs, they are still raw eggs.

Lest you think that I am Ebenezer Scrooge about holiday fare, let me say that Christmas candy is at the top of my list. Fudge, toffee, peanut brittle and chocolate truffles are all hard to beat. You can add Christmas cookies in there also. Spritz cookies, snowballs, snickerdoodles and jam thumbprints, just to name a few. Holiday pies, like pumpkin and pecan are terrific. There seems to be a trend here...

Treat your tummy to whatever makes it happy!

Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year!♦



CHRISTMAS TRIVIA

BY DAN FUNDERBURK, CFP® , CKA®

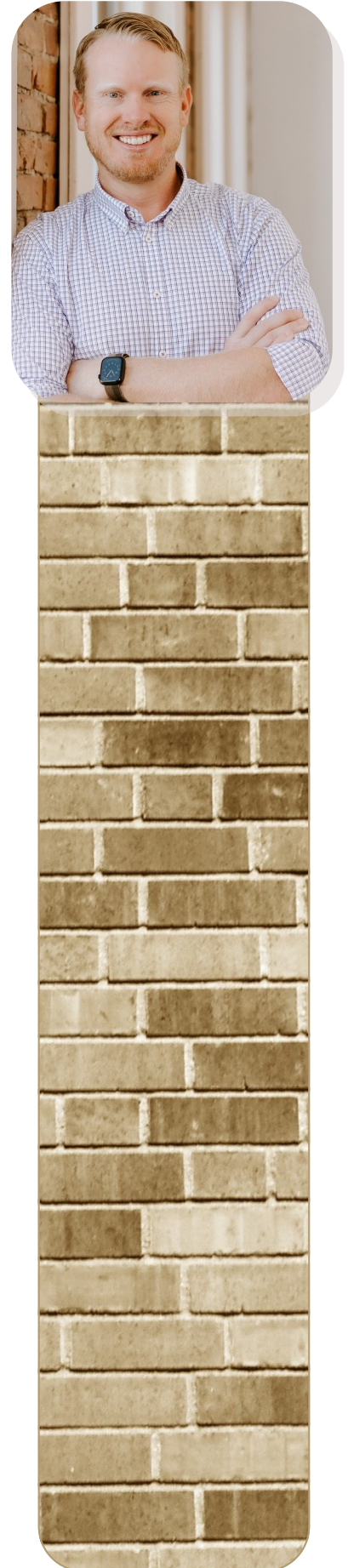
Who doesn't love trivia? Well... I don't, now that I think about it. Whenever I play trivia, I realize I'm not nearly as knowledgeable as I'd like to believe. However, I know there's lots of trivia buffs out there, so this one's for you!

- 1) In which modern-day country was St. Nicholas born?
- 2) How many ghosts show up in A Christmas Carol?
- 3) Where was baby Jesus born?
- 4) Which of Santa's reindeer has the same name as another holiday mascot?
- 5) What is the best-selling Christmas song ever?
- 6) Which fairy tale served as an inspiration for the first gingerbread house?
- 7) What gifts did the wise men bring to baby Jesus?
- 8) If Elvis isn't going to have a white Christmas, what kind of Christmas is he going to have?
- 9) Which country does the seasonal beverage, eggnog, originate from?
- 10) In the movie *Home Alone* where are the McCallisters going on vacation when they leave Kevin behind?

(Answers at bottom of this page)

So, how'd you do? If you're like me, not nearly as well as you'd like... That's ok, though. You can now take your newfound knowledge and impress your friends and family during Christmas dinner.

I hope you all have a joyful and fulfilling Christmas Season!♦



Answer Key: 1. Turkey 2. Four 3. Bethlehem 4. Cupid 5. "White Christmas" by Bing Crosby 6. Hansel and Gretel 7. Gold, Frankincense, and myrrh. 8. Blue Christmas 9. England 10. Paris



RILEY'S CORNER *Interpreted by Mike Berry, Riley's Owner*

There's only one thing that makes my tail wag more than supper, and that's Christmas! I don't totally understand it, but I do like what happens. Shortly after the day when the humans eat too much and don't share enough with the dog, Master goes to the shed and brings out boxes of tangled cords and begins the process of cursing and then attaching the untangled cords to the house and shrubs. Soon after that, Master brings a big box into the house and builds a tree, right there in our family room! I wanted to help the tree grow, so I go along side it, lift my leg, and just when I am about to water it, Master yells 'NOOOO!'", then grabs me by the collar and tosses me out the door. Like I said, I don't totally understand some things about Christmas, but what comes next is pretty exciting. Brightly wrapped boxes and packages begin to appear under the tree. I think the cat really likes this because he can hide under the tree amongst the packages and play with the bright balls hanging on the tree. He especially loves to knock them off the tree and bat them around the house until they break apart. This makes the Mrs. and Master very upset. Soon my girl, Kayla, and my boy, Jason, come to the house with their families. There's lots of laughter, music and food! Mrs. makes me a special dinner on Christmas: steak, cooked medium, to go on top of my regular chow - *YUM!* Finally, something marvelous happens. My girl, Kayla, and my boy, Jason, start handing out the brightly wrapped boxes and packages and they even set some in front of *me!* Now, I don't have thumbs, so removing the bright paper is difficult, but luckily someone always helps me. I get so excited that I want to go water the tree, but Master stops me and tosses me outside. Now I have to watch through the door as everyone finds all the wonderful surprises in their boxes. Having been forgotten, I begin to bark and Mrs. lets me back in and I get to open my boxes! A new frisbee; a big new rawhide bone; and a new toy skunk. I can't wait to rip out all the stuffing and scatter it all over the house! Merry Christmas to all!♦



TRY TO HAVE JUST ONE *Continued from p. 1*

Chocolate Peanut Butter Balls with Rice Krispies

Ingredients You'll Need:

- 1 ½ cups (400 g) no-stir creamy peanut butter
- 3 cups (360 g) confectioners' sugar
- ½ cup (113 g or 1 stick) unsalted butter, room temperature
- 2 cups (50 g) Rice Krispies
- 2 cups (350 g) dark or semisweet chocolate chips, for dipping
- ¼ cup sprinkles, optional

How to Prepare:

- 1) In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, combine peanut butter and butter. Slowly add confectioner's sugar and then Rice Krispies. Mix until combined.
- 2) Cover and chill the dough for 1 hour. This will firm up the dough and make it less sticky when rolling into balls.
- 3) Scoop 1 tablespoon of dough. Roll into 1-inch balls and place on baking sheet lined with parchment paper or wax paper.
- 4) Place in freezer for at least 15 minutes so the balls will hold their shape when dipped in chocolate.
- 5) When ready to dip, place chocolate chips in a microwave-safe bowl and heat in the microwave on 50% power level. Start with 1 minute, stir the chips. Continue microwaving on 50% power level, stirring every 15 seconds, until smooth.
- 6) Dip balls in melted chocolate and transfer to lined baking sheet. Immediately add sprinkles if desired. Let the chocolate harden before serving or storing in an airtight container for later.

Show up to a party with a tray of these and watch the holiday cheer spread. But be careful. These things are addictive, and you can eat one in a single bite. And if there are any kids around – you'd better double the recipe. Give these a try and enjoy!

Blessings to you and yours this Christmas season.♦

Merry Christmas from Legacy Wealth Management

Dan, Amanda, Jeff, Sondra, Mike and Alyssa





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372 Ridges Boulevard • Grand Junction • Colorado • 81507 • (970) 241-5143
www.legacywealthgj.com