

# Ashton Falls COZY COOKBOOK

RECIPES FROM  
ZOE DONOVAN AND FRIENDS



By Kathi Daley



**ASHTON FALLS  
COZY COOKBOOK**

**BY  
KATHI DALEY**

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# Christmas Eve in Ashton Falls

December 24



Christmas in Ashton Falls is a special time of year, when the entire community comes together to decorate and enjoy everything the town has to offer. The snow is falling gently on the busy sidewalk as holiday shoppers scurry from one brightly lit store to the next. I know this may seem odd, but while I like to complete the bulk of my shopping early, every Christmas Eve I make a solitary trip into town to shop for people I have never met and will most likely never

meet.

The tradition began when I was just a small child. My grandmother and I attended morning service on Christmas Eve at the Ashton Falls Community Church. After the service ended the pastor mentioned to my grandmother that he'd just been informed about a family in need. My grandmother, who was the type to help anyone anytime, immediately volunteered to provide what she could for the family. I had plans of my own with my best friends, Levi and Ellie, but Grandma insisted that Christmas was about giving to those who crossed our paths. I wasn't happy about it, but I canceled my plans and the two of us went into town.

Neither Grandma nor I had ever met this family, but we had a handwritten note letting us know what type of gifts they'd requested. Most of the items were practical, such as a warm winter coat and heavy wool socks. I hadn't wanted to be bothered with the errand, but as we shopped for people we would never meet, I found a deep joy that I didn't even know I was missing. That special shopping trip turned into an annual event for the two of us, and now that I'm an adult, I continue the tradition in memory of the special woman who taught a little girl the true meaning of Christmas.

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## **APPETIZERS**



**Pizza Rolls**

**Bacon Herb Cheeseball**

**Chicken and Green Chili Dip**

**Artichoke Dip**

**Chipped Beef Dip**

**Beefy Nachos**

**Crab and Artichoke Dip**

**Buffalo Chicken Appetizer Pizza**

# Pizza Rolls

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1 loaf frozen bread, thawed  
½ cup grated mozzarella cheese  
½ cup grated cheddar cheese

4 oz. pepperoni (or other pizza topping)  
3 tbs. butter, melted  
½ cup grated Parmesan cheese

Roll a loaf of the bread so that it's flat. Place mozzarella cheese, cheddar cheese, and pepperoni in the center. Fold in both ends of loaf and then roll so that seam is on the bottom.

Slice rolls into 12 pieces and place in greased 9 x 13 baking pan. Brush butter over the top of each roll. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese.

Let rise until double in size.

Bake at 375 degrees for 15–20 minutes.

Serve with ranch or bleu cheese dressing for dipping.

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## Bacon Herb Cheeseball

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12 oz. cream cheese, softened



6 pieces bacon, cooked crisp and crumbled  
1 can (4 oz.) diced green chilis  
1 tbs. chopped garlic  
1 tbs. chopped fresh basil  
1 tbs. chopped chives  
1 cup grated Parmesan cheese  
1 cup grated Jack cheese  
1 cup grated cheddar cheese  
2 tsp. horseradish  
 $\frac{2}{3}$  cup chopped almonds

Mix all ingredients except almonds in a bowl. I just use my hands to mix everything together. Form ball. Lay almonds on a breadboard. Roll cheese ball in almonds until coated.

Wrap in plastic wrap and chill overnight. Serve with crackers.

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## Chicken and Green Chili Dip

Combine in large bowl:

2 large chicken breasts, cooked and cubed

2 cups artichoke hearts, chopped

8 oz. cream cheese, softened

1 cup grated Parmesan cheese

1 cup Pepper Jack cheese, grated

1 cup cheddar cheese, grated

14 oz. diced green chiles (Ortega)

1 cup mayonnaise

Salt and pepper to taste

Pour into 9 x 13 pan. Top with additional grated cheese (as much as you want).

Bake at 350 degrees until bubbly, about 45 minutes.

Serve with chips, crackers, French bread slices, or tortillas.





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## Artichoke Dip

2 cans (approx. 15 oz. each) artichoke hearts, drained and diced  
1 can (approx. 7 oz.) Ortega or other diced green chili  
1 cup mayonnaise  
2½ cups grated Parmesan cheese

Mix everything in a square baking dish and bake at 425 degrees f  
35–40 minutes until bubbly and slightly brown on top.

Serve hot with French bread or tortilla chips.



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## Chipped Beef Dip

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16 oz. sour cream

8 oz. cream cheese, softened

1 can jalapeños (or more if you like it really hot)

1 large jar of dried beef, rinsed and chopped

Mix ingredients above. Bake at 350 degrees for 1 hour.

Serve with French bread squares or tortilla chips.

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## Beefy Nachos

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Make meat the day before your football gathering.

Trim all fat off boneless rib roast (size depends on amount of meat desired). Season with salt, pepper and garlic powder. Place in slow cooker. Cover meat with store-bought salsa, either hot or mild depending on preference.

Cook on high until meat begins to pull apart. Continue to shred meat as it cooks. When it's completely done (cooking time depends on size of meat and heat of slow cooker, but about 8 hours), spoon meat from sauce with slotted spoon. Refrigerate.

Next day:

Layer tortilla chips on cookie sheet. Cover with grated cheese; I use sharp cheddar and Jack, but you can use whatever.

Place cookie sheet under broiler with heat set on low.

Reheat the meat on stove or in microwave; when cheese is melted on tortilla chips cover with meat—be sure it's drained of excess fluid—and serve with sour cream, guacamole, diced tomatoes, or whatever you'd like to add.

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## Crab and Artichoke Dip

8 oz. cream cheese, softened

8 oz. Havarti cheese, grated



2 cans (approx. 14 oz. each) artichoke hearts, diced

8 oz. crab meat, fresh or canned

2 cups Parmesan cheese, grated

1 cup sour cream

2 tsp. horseradish (add more if you like it hot)

Mix and bake at 450 degrees for 30–45 minutes; stir after 20 minutes.

Serve with baguette slices, tortilla chips, or crackers.

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## Buffalo Chicken Appetizer Pizza

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4 tortillas  
1 jar Alfredo sauce, any brand  
4 cups mozzarella cheese, shredded  
2 chicken breasts, cooked, cubed, and tossed with Frank's RedHot Buffalo Wing Sauce  
1 can artichoke hearts, diced (approx. 14 oz.)  
1 can spinach (approx. 14 oz.)  
1 cup grated Parmesan cheese

Makes 4 servings

For each serving:

1 large flour tortilla, toasted (I put it on a sandwich grill, but you can toast in oven)

Cover with:

2 tbs. Alfredo sauce (you can use more or less per your taste)  
1 cup mozzarella cheese  
½ prepared chicken breast  
¼ can artichoke hearts  
¼ can spinach, squeezed of excess liquid

Sprinkle with grated Parmesan to taste.

Bake in 350-degree oven for 15 minutes or until cheese is melted and toppings are heated.

Note: you can leave off the chicken for a vegetarian variety or replace toppings with pepperoni, olive mushrooms, whatever your taste. You can also replace the Alfredo sauce with pizza sauce.



One of my favorite things to do on Christmas Eve is to view the windows along Main Street. If you view the windows in order from west to east they tell a story that's slightly different every year. This year the story is about a young boy who hopes to find the perfect Christmas gift for his mother, who has been forced to stay at home as she awaits the birth of his new baby sister. His mom has endured a difficult pregnancy and her spirits are at an all-time low, but the little boy knows deep in his heart that if he can just find the right gift, everything will turn out okay. Although the child has but a few pennies he managed to earn doing odd jobs, he's determined to find the one gift that will make his mom smile. Each of the windows tells the story of the boy as he embarks on his journey. Many of the displays feature the shops the boy visited in search of his gift, but others demonstrate the side tours he takes along the way. My favorite window this year re-creates the park where he followed a stray dog who had been living under a bridge. The dog and the boy spend some time playing before the boy realizes he should be on his way. The story ends with the boy standing in front of the nativity scene at the local church. As he contemplates the meaning of the scene, he realizes that the best gift you can give comes not from a store but from the heart.

## **Muffins and Sweet Breads**

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**Pumpkin Patch Muffins**

**Zak's Easy Sticky Buns**

**Banana Macadamia Nut Muffins**

**Apple Pie Biscuits**

**Amaretto Pumpkin Bread**

**Cranberry Muffins**



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# Pumpkin Patch Muffins

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3 cups sugar  
1 cup vegetable oil  
4 eggs  
1 16 oz. can pumpkin (2 cups)  
½ cup water  
3½ cups flour  
2 tsp. baking soda  
1 tsp. baking powder  
½ tsp. salt  
1 tbs. cinnamon  
1 tsp. ginger  
1 tsp. ground nutmeg  
½ tsp. ground cloves

½ tsp. all spice  
4 cups walnuts, chopped

Combine sugar, oil, and eggs. Add pumpkin and water and mix well.

Combine dry ingredients and add to pumpkin mixture. Add nuts.

Spoon into greased cupcake pans (or use papers). Bake at 350 degrees for 28–30 minutes.

## **Cream Cheese Frosting (optional):**

¾ cup of butter, softened  
6 oz. cream cheese, softened  
1 tsp. vanilla  
3 cups powdered sugar

Whip all ingredients together and spread on to cooled muffins.

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## Zak's Easy Sticky Buns

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Take 6 tbs. butter and melt in a pan. When melted add  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup brown sugar and  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup corn syrup. Stir mixture over medium low heat, bringing to a boil.

When at a full boil remove from heat. Do not overboil. The syrup will set up to hard.

Pour into the bottom of a 9 x 13-inch pan. Add  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of chopped pecans on top of the syrup mixture. Set aside.

In a pie pan, melt 4 tbs. butter. In a separate pie pan, mix  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup sugar and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  tbs. cinnamon. Set aside.

Take  $1\frac{1}{2}$  loaves of thawed frozen bread dough and cut into 12 equal pieces. Take each piece and roll into a tube. Take each piece of dough and roll first into the melted butter and then in the cinnamon sugar. Tie the piece into a knot and set in the prepared baking pan on top of the syrup pecan mixture.

Put the rolls in a warm place to rise until they fill the pan.

Bake at 400 degrees for 20–25 minutes. The rolls are done when they are nice and brown. Make sure they're cooked through. Do not undercook.

When the rolls are baked, take out the pan. Cover the top of the pan with a foil-lined cookie sheet. Invert the pan onto the cookie sheet. The pecan mixture will seep down on top of the rolls.

Serve warm.

Makes 1 dozen.



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## Banana Macadamia Nut Muffins

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1¼ cups mashed ripe bananas (about 3 large)

½ cup sugar

¼ cup dark brown sugar, firmly packed

½ cup (1 stick) butter, melted

¼ cup milk

1 large egg

1½ cups flour

1½ tsp. baking soda

¼ tsp. salt

½ tsp. ground nutmeg

½ tsp. cinnamon

2 cups macadamia nuts, toasted, chopped

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease 12 muffin cups or line with muffin papers. Combine bananas, both sugars, butter, milk, and egg in large bowl. Mix in flour, baking soda, and spices. Fold in half of nuts. Divide batter among prepared muffin cups. Sprinkle tops of muffins with remaining macadamia nuts. Bake until muffins are golden brown and tester inserted into center comes out clean, about 20 minutes.

# Apple Pie Biscuits

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Preheat oven to 375 degrees.

Spray a 6 x 9 baking dish on all sides with nonstick spray.

Open 1 can large buttermilk biscuits (I use Pillsbury Grands!).

Melt 1 stick ( $\frac{1}{2}$  cup) butter (I melt it in a bowl in the microwave).

Combine in a bowl:

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup white sugar

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup brown sugar

1 tsp. nutmeg

1 tbs. cinnamon

Prepare biscuits:

Dip each biscuit into butter, coating on both sides, then dip each biscuit into sugar mixture, coating on both sides. Place into baking dish.

The topping:

Top with one can of apple pie filling.

Combine remaining butter with remaining sugar mixture. Add  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup oatmeal and 1 cup chopped pecans. Pour over top of biscuits.

Bake at 375 degrees for 35 minutes.

Drizzle over top when baked:

Combine:

1 cup powdered sugar

$\frac{1}{4}$  cup heavy cream

Serve hot.

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## Amaretto Pumpkin Bread



1 cup flour  
¼ cup brown sugar, packed  
1 tsp. baking powder  
1 tsp. ground cinnamon  
½ tsp. ginger  
¼ tsp. baking soda  
¼ cup molasses  
¼ cup pumpkin  
1 egg  
3 tsp. butter, softened  
2 tbs. milk  
½ cup chopped walnuts

Combine above ingredients until well blended. Pour into greased bread pan and bake at 350 degrees for 25 minutes. Remove from pan and let cool.

### **Frosting:**

½ cup powdered sugar  
1 tbs. amaretto

Mix well, then drizzle over top. Garnish with additional chopped walnuts.

# Cranberry Muffins

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Combine in large bowl:

2 cups flour

1 cup sugar

1½ tsp. baking powder

1 tsp. ground nutmeg

1 tsp. ground cinnamon

½ tsp. ground ginger

½ tsp. baking soda

½ tsp. salt

Cut in:

1 stick butter

Add:

¾ cup orange juice

2 eggs, beaten

1 tbs. vanilla extract

Fold in:

1½ cups cranberries, chopped

2 cups pecans, chopped

Bake in greased muffin cups at 375 degrees for about 20 minutes (toothpick should come out clean)

Cool.



I bought my gifts and viewed the windows before heading over to Zoe's Zoo, the wild and domestic animal rescue and rehabilitation shelter I run. I've always wanted to come down to the Zoo at midnight on Christmas Eve to see if the animals do in fact talk to one another. My guess is that they do, and how wonderful it would be to hear what they had to say. I imagine the bear cubs who are staying with us for the winter would tell me to keep it down because they're trying to sleep and the kittens in residence would talk about what fun it would be

to climb the Christmas tree my assistants, Jeremy and Tiffany, had erected in the lobby. The dogs who are visiting would most likely want to have a chat to ensure that I'd find them forever homes with wonderful people who would love them as much as they had always loved the humans in their lives.



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