

The Latest Hullabaloo

ALLERGY AWARE FOOD FOR HEALTHY KIDS!

ISSUE 5 : LATE OCTOBER 2007

Hi all,

Another busy two months have flown by, which is why my October newsletter is only hitting the stands in early November!!!

INSIGHT INTO ALLERGIES: Earlier this month the children and I flew to Sydney to take part in the SBS program "Insight". They were looking at the dramatic rise in peanut and allergies in children. A number of experts, sufferers and carers were involved (we were the representative 'multiple food allergy' family) and although they didn't solve the problem of the epidemic it was definitely interesting to take part and a worthwhile discussion to raise awareness of food allergies. For those of you who caught the program Olivia was the one sucking her thumb and exposing her belly!!

LIVVY TURNS 6: Many people have emailed me over the past year asking how to cope with birthdays. These are the times of the year when children really want and expect a brightly coloured, deliciously tasting cake – and it is easy to think that it is all too hard when your child has food allergies. Olivia, the original Hullabaloo Kid, turned 6 this week and I thought that I would share with you some of the tricks I use to make her birthday cakes look just as exciting as other girls. The basic rule to remember is *"They only have to see the colour, they don't have to eat it."*

I searched the net for a picture of a butterfly which had nice clean lines and a very girly colour. I printed it out in full colour and laminated it to my standard cake board with clear contact. This kept it steady and clean. I then made a very plain "Livy friendly cake" which had even less ingredients than the magic cake, trimmed the corners off the rectangle and covered with plain white icing.

You can decorate cakes with anything – I ran out of time so wove pink ribbon around the candles and bent pipe cleaners for the antenna. The only suggestion is don't use sweets thinking that you will be able to remove them before the cake is eaten. You will have tears.

ICING 101

Judging by the emails I receive lots of people are troubled by how to make icing or cream filling without using terrible or allergic ingredients. Long before I had allergic children or heard of 'Royal Icing' I used to ice cakes in the easiest way possible and it worked.

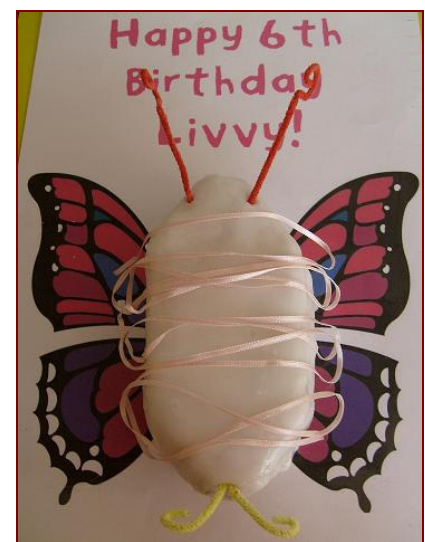
Pure icing sugar is regular white sugar that has been ground into a finer grade. If you don't have any you can put regular or castor sugar into a coffee bean grinder and make your own. To make the icing you SLOWLY add a SMALL amount of liquid – this can be water, fruit juice, passionfruit pulp, a strong espresso coffee, liqueur (for grown-ups). Make more than you think you will need as it disappears down to nothing. Drop onto the cake and slowly with a knife dipped in hot water spread it around. If the sides look a bit messy pin a ribbon around to hide it like the professionals do.

Soft icing sugar has wheat flour added to keep the icing slight soft after it has been applied. If you can't have wheat you can make your own using about a tablespoon of cornstarch per cup of sugar, or a teaspoon of oil.

To make a mock cream frosting for the top or the middle of the cake start by beating ½ cup of margarine. Add any flavour ingredients first, cocoa, fruit pulp, honey, but nothing too watery or the margarine will curdle. Slowly add your icing sugar, about 1-2 cups depending on how hard or sweet you like it. When ready use a spatula to spread on the cake and then quickly lift the flat side of the spatula off the cake to create peaks.

Other Decorating Ideas. The easiest thing to put on cakes to dress them up are dolls, ribbons, toys, jewellery, or stickers? But you could use toy rings and each girl gets her 'food-free' party treat to take home on her slice of cake, or miniature books (small folded paper) with a message from the birthday boy, or lots of different origami creatures set out on the cake or ...

THE CAKE



What else to feed them. Presentation is everything. Children find it easier to choose something if the food is served or cut to a manageable size, and will be attracted to items served in a pretty bowl rather than a plain one. I have a collection of heavy but interesting second hand glass bowls which I use, but you can use all your picture bowls or think about paper doilies which your child can 'decorate' the day before.

- ✚ Fruit; cut up plain or mixed together as a cute fruit kebab.
- ✚ Popcorn: Air-popped is better than oil cooked, but just avoid the microwave packets with the fake butter flavour.
- ✚ Plain Smiths crisps or plain Corn Chips.
- ✚ Freedom Foods gluten-free pretzels (gone in a flash) or Poppadums done in the microwave for 30 secs.
- ✚ Breakfast cereals such as Basco gluten-free Honey Rings or Nutri-Grain for a sugar hit.
- ✚ Noughts and Crosses: Tiny cheese cubes and slices of ham laid out on bread like noughts and crosses. Grilled on cold days.
- ✚ Devils on Horseback – Preservative-free prunes (remove the pip) and prosciutto (thinner and tastier than bacon and usually less additives) wrap, stick with toothpick and grill for 10 mins each side. Pre-cook and just warm.
- ✚ Carrot sticks, snow peas, capsicum stick, Sakata plain rice biscuits with a hummus or avocado dip.
- ✚ Rice Balls; To steamed rice add a small amount of peas, corn, ham, grated cheese, tuna, anything really and a bit of seasoning, place 1-2 tsp in the middle of a tissue sized piece of gladwrap and twist tight into a ball. Make zillions then pop in the fridge and serve the next day.
- ✚ Homemade Wedges: Microwave washed spuds for 2 mins. When cool, slice into wedge shapes. Lightly spray with oil, sprinkle with paprika and salt, and oven bake for 20 mins.
- ✚ Jelly, jelly and more jelly – homemade with fruit juice, sugar and gelatine.
- ✚ Icy poles – for summer parties just buy 5 boxes of lemonade icy poles.
- ✚ Plain milk is a great alternative to flavoured milk and if you buy the ones in a box with a straw the children love it. Dilute Fruit Juice instead of Fizz. Fancy cups are everything.

Party Bags and Favours. Should be outlawed, but if we have to have them try using balloons, pencils, or other small toys instead of sweets. One year we painted large paper cups, and with some punnets of seedling and potting mix each child made their own take home plant as part of the party fun.

THE GIRL



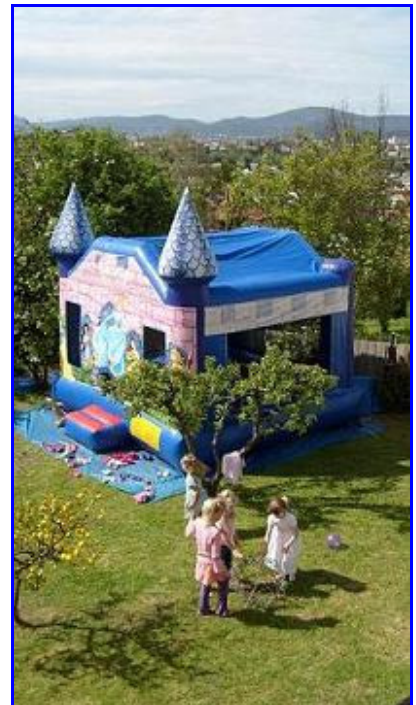
I have generally moved away from competitive party games – less agro, less management and less need to hand out more sweets, and towards play games, that the children move in and out of. Setting up a few play areas (just steal ideas from your local childcare centre – play-dough table, dressing up box, boot throwing, obstacle course, tower building) will let the children find their own way.

This year I really splurged and hired a Princess Jumping Castle – it seemed expensive at \$190 but considering that I didn't buy all of the usual party things which add up very quickly, and we had it for the whole day (it got a very good workout) and I didn't have to set it up or stay up until 3am making party game things, it was the easiest, and maybe the cheapest party ever.

Cheers

Jane

THE CASTLE



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