

Easter PARADE

Show off your skills with an eggs-traordinarily glam display of decorative, chocolate goodies

Craft CLARE SPENDER and recipes NFWI Cookery Adviser VICKY MURPHY Photography LOUISE HAYWOOD-SCHIEFER

DECORATED EGGS

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

A selection of eggs (white chicken, duck and geese eggs were used for this project)

- An egg-blowing kit: please follow the instructions that come with the kit, or see right for how to blow an egg by using a sharp needle*
- Small squeeze bottle with a very fine point (to rinse out your eggs)
- Wire (thin gardening wire will do)
- Black marker pen
- Glitter spray
- Gold glitter
- Glue
- Black and

- gold card
- Small sharp scissors
- Bowls, bucket and newspaper
- Hot soapy water

* **Follow instructions on the kit or download 'How to blow an egg' from the WI Moodle at witraining.org.uk and blow your eggs ahead of the decoration.**

TO DECORATE THE EGGS

1 Rinse the eggs and once they have dried completely, push a length of wire into each one. Carefully thread it through and push it out of the opposite hole.

2 Next, twist the wire around and create a 'handle' to hold your egg when decorating. This also allows you to hang it up when it is drying. You can suspend the eggs anywhere, but make sure that they are above newspaper to protect surfaces (or hang them outside on the washing line).

3 Write Easter messages in marker pen: a poem or song lyrics, a joke, whatever you wish. Leave the writing plain or spray gold glitter over the words: this will make the ink disperse and

create an interesting effect on the egg shell.

4 To spray the eggs: line a bucket with newspaper. Bend the wire 'handles' on the eggs around the rim, making sure they are secure, then spray the eggs. Always spray in a well-ventilated room or in an outside space.

5 For the remaining eggs, paint glue on with a brush - in a precise line/pattern, or just blob the glue haphazardly. Next, roll the eggs around in the gold glitter to create a pattern of your choice.

Craft and cookery

BIRD'S NEST

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- 1 roll of covered wire (any type)
- Secateurs or wire cutters
- Large wool needle and thick thread or wool
- Feathers to decorate (from a craft shop or an old feather cushion or pillow)

WHAT TO DO

- 1** Start by curling one end of the covered wire. It's best to keep the wire on the roll and twist and stitch until you have made the nest to the size that you want; then cut the wire at the end.
- 2** Thread a wool needle with either thick thread or wool and secure the end at what will be the base of the nest. Then start stitching by passing the needle around two curled pieces of wire. You are going to need to 'stitch'

like this all the way around. Keep the spaces about 2cm apart and keep turning your wire. As you curl the wire, create a stitch and after two or three curls you can start to mould your nest to your desired size.

3 When you are happy with the final nest, cut the wire and secure the end with a couple of stitches.

4 Fill with feathers to cushion the eggs.

5 To make birds, draw a wing onto a folded piece of card and cut out two. Glue onto either side of the egg. Cut a small equilateral triangle and fold in half to create a beak, and glue on. Dot the eyes on with a marker pen.



DITSY EGG PLANTERS

These cute eggs make ideal table decorations

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- large white eggs
- pair of sharp scissors
- glue
- card
- small potted succulents

WHAT TO DO

1 Draw an oval/circle shape onto the egg and then, as if cutting fabric or card, gently cut around the line with scissors and remove the shell. We used white duck eggs they have thin shells, but a larger goose egg would need to be cut with a special blade.

2 Decorate the eggs as before, or just leave them plain.

3 Create 'stands' by glueing the eggs to squares of card.

4 Prepare small succulents or herbs by gently loosening their roots. Remove some of the soil from their pots and carefully place it in the egg shells (you could spoon it in), then firm it down using a pen or a plant label.

5 Insert a plant in each egg, top up with the remaining soil, then press surface down firmly.

CHOCOLATE *eggs*

What would Easter be without chocolate eggs? Make your own with this easy guide to tempering chocolate and gooey, deliciously decadent fillings

YOU'LL NEED

To make six chocolate eggs, you will need at least 300g dark chocolate – but using a greater quantity, for instance 600g, will make it easier to dip the balloons. Leftover chocolate is not wasted; it can be stored and re-melted another time. The method below is specifically for tempering dark chocolate; the temperatures for tempering milk and white chocolate are different. For best results, choose a dark chocolate with minimum 70% cocoa solids.

EQUIPMENT

- A piece of string to use as a drying line
- Clothes pegs ■ A flexible spatula
- A digital kitchen thermometer
- Mini balloons (or water balloons)

TO MAKE THE EGGS

- 1** Before you start, rig up a string drying line between two kitchen cupboards or hooks. Have the clothes pegs handy so that once you have dipped your balloon you can hang it up to set.
- 2** Melt two-thirds of the dark chocolate in a bowl over a pan of hot water. Make sure the bowl isn't touching the water. Chop the remaining third into fairly equal pieces and put to one side.
- 3** Wash, dry, and inflate six mini balloons until they are roughly the size of large eggs. You can manipulate their shape with your hands once they are inflated and tied.
- 4** When the chocolate is melted, remove the bowl from the pan and place it on a tea towel.
- 5** Add the remaining chocolate pieces and stir to melt. This will bring the temperature of the melted chocolate down, but you will need to continue stirring for at least 15 minutes or so in order to temper the chocolate. To speed this up, you could spread the chocolate out on a clean, dry, metal baking tray.
- 6** Use a digital thermometer to measure the temperature: firstly, cool the melted chocolate to 27°C.
- 7** Once at 27°C, place the bowl back over the hot water and bring the temperature of the chocolate up to 30–31°C.
- 8** Transfer to a jug or narrower bowl to aid dipping.
- 9** Dip the first balloon into the jug of melted chocolate and tilt or push down lightly to coat it - leave clearance of about 2cm around the knot of the balloon.
- 10** Peg the chocolate-covered balloon by its knotted end

onto the string line and leave it to dry.

- 11** Repeat with the other balloons.
- 12** If needed, use extra clothes pegs to create spacing on the line - don't let the chocolate-covered balloons touch.
- 13** Leave to set for around 15 minutes. Keep your kitchen cool and free of steam to help the chocolate set.
- 14** Once set, the chocolate should have a smooth shine to it. Unpeg the balloons and use scissors to snip a small hole in each balloon for the air to escape. Loosen each one from its chocolate shell and carefully remove it - this will leave you with egg-shaped shells.
- 15** If your shells dry with a mottled, streaky effect, the tempering has not worked and the chocolate has 'bloomed'. You can re-melt this and try again - it will not be wasted.



BAILEYS PANNA COTTA FILLING

INGREDIENTS

- 5 gelatine leaves (or 12g gelatine powder)
- 300ml double cream
- 20ml milk
- 75g caster sugar
- 100ml Baileys Irish Cream (or similar)
- chocolate for grating

- 1** Prepare gelatine as per the packet instructions.
- 2** In a pan over a medium heat, bring the cream, milk and sugar to the boil. Stir to melt the sugar.
- 3** Simmer for 1 minute, and then remove from heat.
- 4** Stir in the Baileys Irish Cream and allow to cool a little.
- 5** Add the gelatine and stir to ensure it dissolves. Leave to cool in a jug.
- 6** When cool, pour the panna cotta mix into the chocolate egg shells and refrigerate overnight or for at least six hours.
- 7** Before serving, grate a little chocolate over the top and serve in an egg cup with a teaspoon.



SALTED CARAMEL FILLING

You can add this filling to the chocolate shells you've made or cheat with bought ones. Dip a sharp knife in hot water for a few seconds, wipe it dry, then score around the top of the egg and slice the top off.

INGREDIENTS

- 100g unsalted butter, cubed (at room temperature)
- 100ml double cream (at room temperature)
- 125ml water
- 200g caster sugar
- 1 tsp sea salt

WHAT TO DO

- 1** Bring the butter and cream to room temperature; this will help prevent the sauce from crystallising.
- 2** Place the water and sugar in a heavy-based pan over a medium heat. Swirl gently to ensure all the sugar is submerged: do not stir.

- 3** Keep an eye on the pan while it heats; after a few minutes bubbles will have formed on the surface, and you will start to see some colour around the edge.
- 4** When the overall colour is light amber, remove the pan from the heat.
- 5** Add the cubed butter and whisk.
- 6** Slowly pour in the cream and whisk (adding it too fast can cause it to crystallise).
- 7** Add half of the salt to begin with, taste, and add more if needed.
- 8** Allow to cool, then spoon into your chocolate egg shells to serve as a dessert.