

One Cake, Three Ways

Trick out a chocolate-frosted sheet cake—homemade or store-bought—with cookies, candy, and a few pint-size toys.



Grave intentions

The key to this mini-cemetery: tombstones fashioned from Pepperidge Farm's Milano and Bordeaux cookies. To decorate the tombstones, fill a resealable plastic bag with chocolate frosting, seal the bag, and snip off a tiny corner. Pipe *RIP* or *X* on the upper half of each cookie. Push the cookies into the cake (as shown) and pile crushed chocolate wafers in front of a few to conjure dirt mounds. Trim the perimeter of the cake with a fence of Rademaker chocolate sticks (\$9.47 for six boxes of 12 sticks; amazon.com), cut to various heights. Finally, separate and insert pieces of small plastic skeletons (\$2.70 for garland of four; amazon.com) into the cookie-crumb dirt.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY HECTOR SANCHEZ; FOOD AND PROP STYLING BY PAUL LOWE



A clever way to serve cheese and crackers

This little labyrinth takes the cake when it comes to speedy assembly time. To begin, you'll need graham crackers (we used five sheets of four crackers), a rubber mouse (\$2.95; makebelievecostume.com), and a lemon Starburst candy. Using the photo as a guide, arrange the crackers atop the cake to form the maze walls, breaking the crackers into smaller pieces as necessary. (To make clean breaks, first use a sharp knife to score the fronts and backs of the crackers.) Create the cheese by cutting the Starburst diagonally in half, then using a clean cocktail straw to make indentations atop the candy. Place the candy in one spot of the maze and the mouse in another.



X-ray vision

No bones about it, this scene's painless to produce. The essential tool? A box of white fondant (\$6.99 for 24 ounces; joann.com). Microwave fondant for 8 to 10 seconds, then roll it out on a clean work surface. Create the control panel by cutting a strip that's long enough to wrap around both sides of one of the cake's narrow ends; lay in place. For the X-ray label, cut a small fondant rectangle and dampen one side with water, then center it on the panel. Fill a resealable plastic bag with choco-

late frosting, seal the bag, and snip off a tiny corner. Pipe X-ray on the label. Devise knobs by affixing white Necco wafers, then Reese's Pieces, to the panel with dabs of chocolate icing. Using this photo as a guide, cut fondant strips and roll with your hands to shape skinny bones; for the spinal column, form strips into balls and flatten slightly. Transfer the bones to the cake. Next, give the whole thing a little heart—literally—with a hard candy (\$10.99 for five; nycake.com).