

get CRAFTY

LEONORA BAMFORD AND NANNY ANITA SEE IN THE NEW SEASON WITH EXCITING ACTIVITIES AND RECIPES FOR YOU TO TRY AT HOME

With Halloween and Bonfire Night in our midst, Nanny Anita and I have been thinking up seasonal crafts to enjoy with the children. One we're all particularly excited about is her Harry Potter's Potions Class. This is one that little ones go mad for, and it won't just keep them amused for hours, but days, as they create their concoctions.

To keep with the back-to-school theme, Anita's been playing around with the Tower of Hanoi, which is a great brain teaser for all ages. It's completely frustrating, but great fun – a simple and inexpensive way of keeping their minds ticking over.

My daughter and I love baking, and this October we'll be making Chef Yusef's seasonal sugar-free butternut cupcakes to take along to the school pick-up. Since my husband went sugar free a few years ago, we're always testing new recipes. We tried this one on our summer holiday and it's just as delicious when made into muffins, which can be frozen and defrosted for breakfasts on the go – perfect for the school run!

We love this adorable skirt from Spanish label Milou & Pilou for perfectly pretty nursery attire!



DENIM SKIRT £32
MILOUANDPILOU.COM



SEASONAL SUGAR-FREE BUTTERNUT CUPCAKES

You will need:

- 750g butternut squash • 400g Medjool dates • 250ml vegetable oil • 4 eggs • ¼ tsp salt • 2 tsp ground cinnamon • ½ tsp grated nutmeg • 3 tsp baking powder • 2 tsp bicarbonate of soda • 225g flour • 75g pecan nuts • 300g soft cream cheese • 125g butter • 1 vanilla pod

Method

- Peel and dice the squash. Cook on the hob with a splash of water.
- When soft, put the squash into a blender, add most of the pitted dates and blend until smooth. Leave the purée aside to cool.
- Whisk the eggs, adding the purée.
- While whisking, add the oil in a steady stream.
- Sift all the dry ingredients over the wet mixture and fold in carefully.
- Chop the remaining dates and 50g of pecan nuts, and fold in.



- Spoon the mix into lined moulds.
- Bake at 180°C for 12-15 minutes.

To make the icing

- Melt the butter, leave to cool.
- Whisk the vanilla with the soft cheese and add the cooled butter.
- Pipe onto the muffins and decorate with the remaining pecans.

We're mad about these new learning packs from Mrs Wordsmith, which include vocab cards, daily dinner-table placemats, stories and flashcards.



VISUAL LEARNING PACKS FROM £34.99 PER MONTH
MRSWORDSMITH.COM

HARRY POTTER'S POTIONS CLASS

You will need:

- empty containers • spoons
- pipettes • bowl

Method

- For your ingredients, use things that you have around the house – for example, bicarbonate of soda, vinegar, dried herbs, olive oil or water with food colouring.
- Let your little ones mix their own ingredients to create their own potions!



JOIN THE CLUB

There's always plenty to do in the capital at this time of the year, and with the dark nights setting in earlier, I'll be taking the kids to the Children's Film Club at The Soho Hotel, which starts again from Sunday 25 September with *Finding Dory*. Children's Film Club will run once month, with hit films being shown in the state-of-the-art screening room with popcorn and drinks, followed by a special children's brunch. We may throw in a game of bowling afterwards, too! firmdalehotels.com

TOWER OF HANOI

You will need:

- cardboard • compass • pencil
- paper • scissors • paint

Method

- Draw and cut out a minimum of three cardboard circles, each one has to be bigger than the last, and paint them.
- On the paper, draw three circles in a row.
- Place all the circles on top of each other (largest to smallest) on the first circle on the piece of paper.
- The idea is to move the tower from the first circle to the last circle in as few moves as possible.
- You can only move one circle at a time and you can't place a bigger circle on top of a smaller one.
- You can jump over other pieces and move them backwards.

