

Home Heart Strings  
Your Home, Your Heart

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Cindy Thomas, editor  
Home Heart Strings  
<http://www.homeheartstrings.com>



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=> From the Editor  
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Thursday is Valentine's Day, a day when most of us often remember and think of our Significant Other. On this day, it's nice and sweet to also think and remember our special friends and family that are dear to our hearts. Valentine's Day isn't just for lovers, it's for those who hold a special place in our hearts.

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=> Everyday Living  
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It takes courage to grow up and become who you really are.  
-- e.e. cummings

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Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous.  
1 Peter 3:8

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=> Recipes and Cooking Tips

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### Valentine Popcorn Heart

- 2 quarts unsalted popcorn
- 2 cups granulated sugar
- 1 cup light corn syrup
- 1 cup water
- 1/2 cup butter
- 1 (16 ounce) can cherry pie filling

Place popcorn in large buttered bowl; set aside.

Draw a heart on a sheet of heavy duty aluminum foil (approximately 8 inches in diameter). Combine remaining ingredients except pie filling in a saucepan and cook to 260 degrees F (soft crack stage). Pour syrup in a thin stream over popcorn and mix. Quickly press onto foil heart, building edges to form rim. Allow to cool. Spoon cherry pie filling into heart shaped popcorn shell. Chill.

Makes 4 to 6 servings.

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### White Cake With Raspberry Sauce

- 1 package (18-1/4 ounces) white cake mix
- 4 ounces cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup confectioners' sugar
- 1 cup whipping cream, whipped
- 1 carton (16 ounces) strawberry glaze
- 1/2 cup water
- 2-1/2 cups fresh or frozen unsweetened raspberries

Prepare and bake cake according to package directions, using a 13-in. x 9-in. x 2-in. baking pan. Cool on a wire rack.

In a small mixing bowl, beat cream cheese and confectioners' sugar until smooth. Fold in whipped cream. Spread over cooled cake. Refrigerate until serving. Just before serving, combine strawberry glaze and water in a

bowl; gently fold in raspberries. Serve over cake. Yield:  
12-15 servings.

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### Swiss Dijon Chicken Rolls

1 pound boneless, skinless chicken breast halves  
3/4 cup shredded Swiss cheese  
6 tablespoons evaporated skim milk  
4 tablespoons Dijon mustard  
3/4 cup bread crumbs  
4 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese  
2 teaspoons dried tarragon  
Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Preheat the oven to 375°. Lightly coat an 8" x 8" baking dish with nonstick spray.

Place the chicken between sheets of wax paper or plastic wrap. With a meat mallet, pound to about 1/4" thickness. Place an equal amount of the Swiss cheese in the center of each breast. Set aside. In a small bowl, mix the milk and mustard. Set aside.

In a medium bowl, combine the bread crumbs, Parmesan, tarragon and pepper. Roll up each of the chicken breasts, beginning with the smaller end. Dip each roll into the milk mixture and then into the bread crumbs to coat completely. Place in the prepared baking dish with the rolled end down. Cover and bake for 30 minutes. Uncover and bake 15 minutes more, or until golden.

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### Chocolate Love Knots

#### DOUGH

1/2 cup water (70° to 80°F)  
1/3 cup butter or margarine (2/3 stick) -- cut up  
1/4 cup milk  
1 large egg  
3/4 teaspoon salt  
2 3/4 cups bread flour  
1/2 cup sugar  
1/2 cup unsweetened cocoa  
1/3 cup chopped pecans or walnuts -- toasted  
2 teaspoons Fleischmann's® Bread Machine Yeast

#### TOPPING

1 large egg  
2 ounces white chocolate baking bars -- melted

To make dough: Measure dough ingredients into bread machine pan in the order suggested by manufacturer. Process on

dough/manual cycle.

To shape: When cycle is complete, remove dough to floured surface. If necessary, knead in additional flour to make dough easy to handle. Divide dough into 12 equal pieces; roll to 9-inch ropes. Tie into loose knots. Place knots 2 inches apart on greased large baking sheet. Cover; let rise in warm, draft-free place until doubled in size, about 40 to 50 minutes.

Lightly beat remaining egg; brush on knots. Bake at 375°F for 12 to 15 minutes or until done. Remove from pan; cool on wire rack. Drizzle knots with melted chocolate.

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### Cupid's Cherry Cream-Filled Cookies

1 (20-oz.) pkg. Pillsbury Refrigerated Sugar Cookies

#### FILLING

1 teaspoon powdered sugar  
1/4 cup chopped maraschino cherries  
1 teaspoon cherry liquid  
1 (8-oz.) pkg. cream cheese, softened

#### GLAZE

3 cups powdered sugar  
1/4-cup water  
2 tablespoons light corn syrup  
2 tablespoons margarine or butter, melted  
1/4 teaspoon almond extract  
2 drops red food color, if desired

#### DECORATION

Maraschino cherries, fresh fruit, decorator frosting or candy hearts.

Heat oven to 350 F.

Spoon and shape heaping teaspoonfuls of well-chilled cookie dough into balls. Place 2 inches apart on ungreased cookie sheets. Bake at 350 F. for 10 to 14 minutes or until golden brown. Cool slightly; remove from cookie sheets with spatula. Cool completely.

In small bowl, combine all filling ingredients; blend well. Spread about 1 tablespoon filling on bottom of cooled cookie. Top with another cookie, bottom side down, to form sandwich. Repeat with remaining cookies.

In large bowl, combine all glaze ingredients; blend at low speed until moistened. Beat at high speed until smooth. Add 1 to 2 tablespoons additional water if glaze is too thick.\* Arrange filled cookies on wire rack over 15x10x1-inch

baking pan. Spoon glaze evenly over tops and sides of cookies. Glaze that drips off can be reused. Let stand until glaze is dry. Decorate as desired with maraschino cherries. Store in refrigerator.

18 sandwich cookies.

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### Quick Chicken Pasta

- 8 ounces uncooked spiral, pasta
- 1 lb chicken breast; cut in stir fry pieces
- 1 ounce dry ranch salad dressing mix
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 teaspoon finely chop garlic
- 1/2 cup sliced green onion
- 7 ounce jar roasted red peppers drained and sliced
- 1 cup light sour cream
- 2 tablespoon milk

Cook pasta, drain and keep warm. Place the chicken and 2 tablespoons dry salad dressing mix in a bag and shake to coat. Melt butter in skillet and add chicken and garlic. Cook over med high heat stirring until chicken is no longer pink about 5-6 minutes; reduce heat to medium stir in onions and red peppers--cook, stirring occasionally, until all is heated thru about 2-3 minutes. In a medium bowl stir together sour cream, milk, and remaining salad dressing mix then stir in hot, cooked pasta. Spoon pasta onto serving platter, top with hot chicken mixture and parmesan if desired.

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### Honey Stir Fry Chicken

- 1 pound pork steak or boneless chicken breast
- 2/3 cup orange juice
- 2/3 cup honey
- 3 tablespoons soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- 1/4 teaspoon ground ginger
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil, divided
- 2 large carrots, sliced diagonally
- 2 stalks celery, sliced diagonally
- 1/2 cup cashews or peanuts
- Hot cooked rice

Cut pork or chicken into thin strips; set aside. Combine orange juice, honey, soy sauce, cornstarch and ginger in small bowl; mix well. Heat 1 tablespoon oil in large skillet over medium-high heat. Add carrots and celery; stir-fry about 3 min. Remove vegetables; set aside. Pour remaining 1 tablespoon oil into skillet. Add meat; stir- fry

about 3 minutes. Return vegetables to skillet; add sauce mixture and nuts. Cook and stir over medium-high heat until sauce comes to a boil and thickens. Serve over rice.

Makes 4-6 servings.

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=> Deals and Bargains  
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=> Frugal Tips  
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Save money on food storage costs by using store brand freezer and storage zipper bags. Plastic storage containers offer an even bigger savings because the containers are reusable.

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Stove burners that have cooked on food can be cleaned by spraying the burners with a generic brand of Easy Off Oven Cleaner. Remove the burners from the stove and place them in the sink. Spray the burners with the cleaner and allow it to sit for about 30 minutes. Then wash with hot soapy water, and the cooked on food should come off easily. Dry and replace the burners.

-----\*\*Check This Out\*\*-----

Gift Jar Recipes ... Just in Time for Valentines Day!

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=> Home Heart Strings Column  
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## Storage Chests: Small Dressers That Fit in Closets and Bedrooms By Tameka Norris

Like many people, you may find yourself dealing with clutter, trying to manage storage issues in your home and all the while feeling like you simply do not have enough appropriate space. If you have a small bedroom, live in a studio apartment or dorm room, you may face a situation like this. If so, there is one solid solution that you will want to keep in mind that can help you make the most out of your living space and that's storage chests.

In a case like this, you'll find that storage chests are idyllic. Why? Because storage chests can serve a variety of useful purposes. Don't believe me? Well then, let's talk about some of the ways you can benefit from owning a storage chest...

### Low Costs Make Them an Affordable Choice

The first and foremost benefit of storage chests are costs. What makes them so great is that you can purchase a sturdy high quality storage chest that will withstand some use and abuse or wear and tear at an affordable price. Depending on which one you decide to get, they range around \$15-50. This makes storage chests the perfect option for college students and first-time renters on a budget.

### Great Alternatives to Full-Sized Dressers

Storage chests are perfect alternatives to full-sized dressers in that you can keep smaller garments neatly contained without unnecessarily wasting precious space in a your bedroom. A growing number of people are utilizing storage chests for such items as undergarments. Yet, what makes them even more handy is that just about anything can be stored in them--from multimedia items to sewing accessories.

### They Do Double-Duty

Third, storage chests are extremely versatile and can further assist in saving space because they are multi-purpose. For example, storage chests can do double-duty. In addition to storing clothing items and other accessories in them, storage chests can be used as nightstands or end tables to nicely accentuate your bedroom. Simply place a lamp or clock on top, and you've got an affordable bedside set that you can use for years to come.

## The Light Weight and Mobility Makes the Easy to Move

In addition to these wonderful benefits, storage chests are also durable in their construction and lightweight. Many also come with wheels on them, which makes moving them around your room or moving them from room to room a breeze.

## A Great At-a-Glance System

Typically, storage chests will offer drawers that are transparent or translucent, which renders them very practical. For you that means there's no need to memorize where everything is. You will no longer have to scrounge around for a particular item. Instead, you've got the advantage of seeing through the drawers and knowing what's inside before even making the effort to look for it. You'll be able to save plenty of time by instantly locating something right away. This makes storage chests one of the best at-a-glance systems that you can use in your bedroom.

So, if you've got a small bedroom and you're looking for something that will save you plenty of space but not cost too much, storage chests are your answer. Their multi-purpose, lightweight, mobile, at-a-glance and de-cluttering benefits offer first-time renters, college students or anyone on a budget the perfect space saving alternative.

### About the author:

Tameka Norris runs a website called Furniture for Small Spaces, <http://www.furniture-for-small-spaces.com>. It offers solutions for people who living in small places and go through small space trials.

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=> Parenting Tips  
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=> Crafting Corner  
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## Making Your Own Country Wood Crafts By Jared Winston

Country wood crafts have found a place in recent years in many homes that have very little otherwise in the way of country decor. Many different types of crafts have shown up in droves, from the simple things such as plaques and wicker baskets, to much more complex carvings and such. There is a beauty to country wood crafts which goes beyond their obvious qualities. Something in the way they are constructed makes a welcome plaque feel truly welcoming, or a handmade carving of a bear more than just shaped wood, but truly as majestic and powerful as the creature it depicts. While it is impossible to truly explain why this is the case, there can be no doubt that it is true.

If you want to bring a sense of welcome to your own home, there is nothing that does so quite as well as a welcoming plaque. It can carry nearly any message or image you desire, and is probably the simplest of all country wood crafts. However, despite being so simple, it can have a great deal of impact on your home, particularly if you choose a message that has a special meaning to you and your family.

Like all country wood crafts, the first thing you will need for your project is wood. The wood you use does not really matter all that much, apart from the size of the piece. It can be in any shape you want, although leaving it in the natural shape it is cut in will give your end result a little bit of an extra rustic feel. You can get this kind of wood from many craft supply stores, in a number of different varieties. Or, if you are so inclined, you could simply cut a piece of wood from a tree or a fairly thick branch to use for your project. Be sure the piece you cut is large enough to hold the message you intend to use.

Once you have your piece cut out, sand the front surface smooth (this is particularly important, because your painting will look rather odd if the surface is not fairly smooth.) You may choose to remove the ring of bark around the outside of your piece, or leave it in place, whichever seems more appealing to you. Also, be sure the thickness of your piece is uniform, as any slant will cause it to hang poorly when put up on a wall.

The last stage of your adventure in country wood crafts is to add your message. For this, you can simply paint on your words, pictures, or whatever else you like by freehand if you are particularly artistically inclined. If you are not, however, there is no need to fear. Simply type out whatever words you want to use on a computer (an odd tool for country wood crafts, but useful nonetheless,) in a nice font, print it out and use a pencil to cover the back of the paper, and place it on the wood. By tracing around the

letters, you will leave a pencil line on the wood below,  
which you can then fill in with paint.

About the author:

Are you looking to lend your home a rustic touch? Then drop  
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