

## FAMILY RECIPES

Great Dishes From Local Chefs | By Christina Elston



Raddish Kids founder Samantha Barnes with her family



# Cute and Chocolatey Hits the Spot

Samantha Barnes used to teach cooking classes to kids all over L.A., offering after-school enrichment programs, summer camps and weekend parties through her company Kitchen Kid. Years before the coronavirus pandemic, she decided to bring her lessons into home kitchens instead. “Really, the most important place to learn to cook is your home, and it’s a really powerful activity for families to do together,” Barnes says. Seven years ago, she created [Raddish Kids](#), a cooking club that ships monthly kits and recipes to families across the country.

Barnes is a former middle-school teacher with a 10½-year-old daughter (a vegetarian and baking enthusiast) and an 8½-year-old son (lover of sloppy Joes and banana bread), so she’s got some great tips for bringing kids into the kitchen. Her first is not to try to hurry your cooking projects. “Make sure you have enough time,” she says. “Cooking takes time, and when you’re baking it takes even longer.”

Another great tip is to let kids practice essential skills before you tackle a recipe. “It took me years before I’d let my kids measure into muffin cups, because half the batter would be in between the cups,” admits Barnes, whose kids help her test Raddish recipes. She suggests filling a liquid measuring cup with water and letting your kids get a feel for pouring with that. “Once you get that skill, you can do cupcakes and muffins and all sorts of things,” she says. You can also let your kids put on oven mitts and practice moving pans in and out of a cold oven to give them confidence.

To keep kitchen mess to a minimum, put a sheet of wax paper over your counter before the kids measure ingredients. Wrap up with a big sink full of soapy water and let your kids scrub the dishes.

For families that might be missing some of their usual holiday traditions this season, Barnes recommends creating a new food tradition. “Food is so inextricably linked with memory, that’s a great way for kids to develop their own personal food story for when they are older and have their own family,” she says. Barnes will be enjoying the usual Christmas Eve raclette (similar to a fondue), Christmas Day posole and New Year’s Eve “fancy food” hors d’oeuvres with her family. Maybe your kids would like baking these adorable cupcakes. “When they are put together,” she says, “it really does look like a cute little mug of hot cocoa.”

PHOTOS COURTESY RADDISH KIDS

## Hot Cocoa Cupcakes from Raddish Kids

### For the cupcakes

¾ cup flour  
½ cup cocoa powder  
¾ teaspoon baking powder  
¾ teaspoon baking soda  
½ teaspoon salt  
1 egg  
1 cup sugar  
¾ cup canola oil  
1 cup milk  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

### For the topping

¾ cup butter, softened  
½ cup powdered sugar  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
7-ounce jar marshmallow fluff  
2 tablespoons milk  
12 mini candy canes  
¾ cup mini marshmallows

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Line a muffin tin with paper liners or spray with nonstick cooking spray.

In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour, cocoa powder, baking powder, baking soda and salt.

Crack the egg into a large bowl. Throw away the shells and wash your hands.

Add the sugar, oil, milk and 1 teaspoon of vanilla extract to the egg. Whisk until combined.

Add the flour mixture to the egg mixture. Whisk until smooth.

Transfer the batter to a liquid measuring cup and fill the muffin cups evenly with batter.

Bake the cupcakes for 17-20 minutes, until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Let the cupcakes cool 10 minutes.

Meanwhile, make marshmallow frosting. With an electric hand mixer or in the bowl of a stand mixer, beat the butter, powdered sugar and 1 teaspoon of vanilla until creamy.

Add the full jar of marshmallow fluff and 2 tablespoons of milk. Beat the frosting until it is smooth.

Use a butter knife to spread frosting on top of each cupcake.

Top the frosted cupcakes with mini marshmallows.

Set one candy cane on the side of each cupcake to create a "handle." Taste and share! ♦



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