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## **Ashley Moulton Work Sample**

### **Excerpt from “Let’s Party! Kids Cookbook”**

#### **Audience**

Kids age 8-12

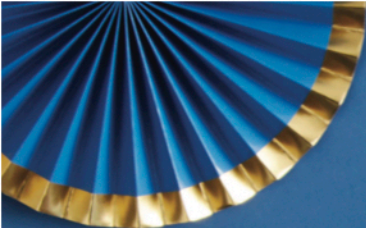
#### **What this is**

An excerpt from the kids cookbook I authored, which has recipes for kids centered around 12 party themes. Cookbook published by Rockridge Press in December 2019.

#### **What I did**

Developed and tested recipes, then wrote recipe text. Developed ideas for party activities, crafts, and decorations, then wrote the directions.

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**BOOM!**

**POW!**

**ZAP!**

**BAM!**



**BUILDS MUSCLES!**

**ENERGY BOOST!**

**SUPER SPEED!**

**X-RAY VISION!**





## CHAPTER 4

# Superhero Party

It's a bird, it's a plane, it's a . . . superhero party! Because superheroes need food to fuel their adventures, this party features a Super Snack Buffet and a Super Snack-tivity. Invite your guests to come dressed as their favorite superhero or action star so they can help you save the day.

For your Super Snack Buffet, make the Super Smoothie drink (page 44) and the Kapow! Cupcakes (page 49) in advance. Round out your buffet with snacks like pretzels, hummus, and grapes. When your guests arrive, combine powers to make Superhero Shield Tortillas (page 46), and customize them with your own superhero symbol before fueling up.

# SUPER SMOOTHIE

SERVES 4 PREP TIME: 5 MINUTES

DAIRY-FREE, GLUTEN-FREE, NUT-FREE,  
VEGETARIAN



## TOOLS TO GATHER

Blender  
Dry measuring cups  
Liquid measuring cup

## INGREDIENTS TO HAVE

1 ripe banana  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  cup frozen pineapple  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  cup frozen blueberries  
 $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups plain soymilk (or milk  
of choice)



Power up with this smoothie and you'll be leaping over buildings and catching the bad guys! Pineapple and blueberries combine to make the potent purple color that will wow the superhero gang. Plus, it blends faster than a speeding bullet, leaving you plenty of time to save the day (or hang out with your friends).

1. **Banana.** Peel 1 ripe banana, then put it in the blender. 🖐️
2. **Add the pineapple and blueberries.** Pour the frozen pineapple and frozen blueberries into the blender.
3. **Add the milk.** Pour the milk into the blender.
4. **Blend.** Blend the smoothie until all ingredients are combined.
5. **Serve.** Pour into 4 glasses or into a pitcher for guests to serve themselves.

**Make ahead:** For the brightest purple possible, serve the smoothie right away. You can make it a few hours ahead and store in the fridge, but make sure to keep it in a tightly sealed container to keep it purple-y. Place the smoothie in a lidded pitcher on the buffet just before guests arrive and set out clear cups.

## Decorate Your Superhero Buffet

Decorate the wall behind the buffet graffiti-style, with some superhero-inspired word cutouts. Start with sheets of construction paper in different colors and cut them into burst shapes. With a black marker, write a different comic action on each burst, like “Pow!” “Wham!” “Bam!” “Bang!” Be sure to make the letters thick so your guests can read them from far away. When you’re finished, tape them to windows with clear tape or to walls and doors with non-permanent tape like masking tape or painter’s tape.

Take it to the next level by creating paper labels for fruits and veggies to let your guests know what superpowers they’ll gain by eating them. Cut out small bursts and write superpowers on them (ideas: “Invisibility,” “Energy Boost,” “X-Ray Vision”). Tape the small bursts to toothpicks. Serve each fruit and veggie in an individual bowl and place a superpower label in each.



# SUPERHERO SHIELD TORTILLAS

SERVES 4 PREP TIME: 20 MINUTES COOK TIME: 10 MINUTES

NUT-FREE, VEGETARIAN



## TOOLS TO GATHER

Blender or food processor  
Chef's knife  
Cutting board  
Measuring spoons  
Dry measuring cups  
Mixing bowl  
Fine-mesh strainer  
Wooden spoon  
2 baking sheets  
3-inch cookie cutters (or a butter knife)  
Wide spatula

## INGREDIENTS TO HAVE

4 (8-inch) **tortillas** of choice  
3 **ripe tomatoes**  
2 **limes**, divided  
¼ teaspoon **ground cumin**  
¼ teaspoon **garlic powder**  
¼ teaspoon **salt**  
4 slices **sliced cheese** (cheddar, pepper Jack, or Monterey Jack)  
½ cup **shredded cheese**  
1 (18-ounce) container **plain Greek yogurt**

Ward off evil—and hunger—with these delicious shields! Superhero Shield Tortillas are a version of a tostada, a Mexican dish that resembles a flat crunchy taco. Every hero should design their own shield, so make these with your friends at the party.

- 1. Preheat the oven and prepare the pans.** 🖐️ Set the oven racks with room for 2 pans and preheat the oven to 375°F. Place 2 tortillas on each baking sheet, then set aside.
- 2. Pulse the tomatoes.** 🖐️ Quarter the tomatoes (see How to Cut Tomatoes, page 48). Put the tomatoes in a blender or food processor and pulse for about 10 short bursts. Don't over-pulse or you'll have a tomato smoothie.
- 3. Strain the tomatoes.** Set a mesh strainer over a medium mixing bowl. 🖐️ Pour the tomatoes into the strainer (watch out for the blade!). Use a wooden spoon to press liquid out of the tomatoes. Discard the liquid and pour tomatoes into a mixing bowl.
- 4. Season the salsa.** 🖐️ Cut the first lime in half and add juice from one of the halves to the mixing bowl, saving the second half for later. Add ground cumin, garlic powder, and salt to the mixing bowl. Stir to combine.

5. **Add your superhero crest.** Put the 4 cheese slices on a clean cutting board. Cut them into your individual superhero symbols (like a star or your initials) with a cookie cutter or by cutting your own design with a butter knife. Place 1 cheese symbol in the middle of each tortilla.
6. **Add salsa and shredded cheese.** Add 2 tablespoons shredded cheese to the edge of each tortilla, using your fingers to pinch it into a stripe about ½-inch wide. Add 2 tablespoons salsa to each tortilla (making a stripe between your superhero symbol and the shredded cheese).
7. **Bake.** 🖐️ Put both trays in the oven and bake for 8 to 10 minutes. Use the oven light to watch the tortillas closely; bake them long enough that the cheese bubbles, but not so long that you can't tell what your superhero crest is anymore.
8. **Serve.** To make a crema sauce, cut the second lime. Squeeze 3 lime halves into the Greek yogurt container and stir to combine. While still warm, serve each guest one tortilla with crema and extra salsa on the side.

**Quick tip:** To make your superhero symbol look extra awesome, keep your cheese slices cold in the fridge until just before you cut them. Once you cut your shape with a cookie cutter or knife, peel the extra cheese away from the shape. When you put the salsa on the shield, make sure it isn't touching the symbol in the middle.

## How to Cut Tomatoes

Tomatoes are another vegetable that can be confusing to cut, but with a little practice they'll be no problem! If you have a serrated knife (the kind with the bumpy blade), it can make cutting tomatoes easier, but a regular chef's knife works too.

### HOW TO CUT LARGE TOMATOES (BEEFSTEAK OR ROMA)

Remember to hold the tomato with the claw grip and to use the correct grip on the knife (see Knife Skills, page 24). Slice off the stem and use the tip of the knife to cut a circle around the hard part where the stem used to be (the core). Pull out the core with your fingers. Place the tomato cut-side down, which will keep it from rolling.

#### To QUARTER THE TOMATO

Cut the tomato in half, then put the halves flat-side down. Cut these halves in half again to make four pieces total.

#### To SLICE THE TOMATO

With the cut side facedown, make up and down cuts from right to left (if you're right-handed) or left to right (if you're left-handed).

#### To DICE THE TOMATO

Slice the tomato first (see above), then put all the slices flat on the cutting board. Cut each slice into strips. Rotate the cutting board and cut all the strips in the other direction to make cubes.

### HOW TO CUT SMALL TOMATOES (CHERRY OR GRAPE)

Hold the tomato using the bridge grip, pinching between your pointer finger and thumb. Cut between your two fingers (see Knife Skills, page 24).



# KAPOW! CUPCAKES

MAKES 12 CUPCAKES PREP TIME: 15 MINUTES COOK TIME: 20 MINUTES

NUT-FREE, VEGETARIAN



## TOOLS TO GATHER

Food processor or blender  
Muffin tin  
12 cupcake liners  
Mixing bowls  
Dry measuring cups and spoons  
Liquid measuring cup  
Whisk  
Flexible spatula  
Spoon

## INGREDIENTS TO HAVE

½ cup **oil** (canola, avocado, or sunflower oil)  
½ cup plus 2 tablespoons **milk** of choice, divided  
**1 ripe banana**  
1 (5-ounce) package **baby spinach**  
1½ teaspoons **vanilla extract**, divided  
**1 egg**  
2 cups **all-purpose flour**  
⅔ cup **granulated sugar**  
2 teaspoons **baking powder**  
½ teaspoon **baking soda**  
¼ teaspoon **salt**  
1 cup **confectioner's sugar**

These cupcakes will give you super strength because of their hidden superpower ingredient: spinach! Don't worry, though; only someone with superhuman tasting powers can taste the spinach, and it can be your secret because the cupcakes mostly taste like banana. A quick glaze-style icing adds the Kapow! burst to the cupcakes.

- 1. Preheat the oven and prepare the pan.**  Preheat the oven to 350°F. Line a muffin pan with 12 cupcake liners.
- 2. Process the wet ingredients.** Add the following to a food processor (or blender if you don't have a food processor): oil, ½ cup milk, banana, baby spinach, 1 teaspoon vanilla extract, and egg. Process until all ingredients are completely combined.
- 3. Mix the dry ingredients.** In a large mixing bowl, pour in the all-purpose flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda, and salt. Whisk until combined.
- 4. Combine the wet and dry ingredients.** Pour the spinach puree into the dry-ingredient bowl.  Be careful you don't pour out the blade! Fold together with a rubber spatula by gently scraping from the bottom of the bowl and turning the mixture on top of itself until just combined.

CONTINUED

## Kapow! Cupcakes **CONTINUED**

- 5. Bake.** Scoop the batter into the prepared tray, using a quarter cup measuring cup to fill each cupcake slot about two-thirds of the way. 🖐️ Bake for 18 to 22 minutes, until cupcake is firm to touch.
- 6. Make the icing.** In a small mixing bowl, combine confectioner's sugar,  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon vanilla extract, and 2 tablespoons milk.
- 7. Decorate.** Wait until the cupcakes are completely cool to decorate. If icing hardens before you're ready to decorate, just stir to soften. To make a Kapow! burst shape: Use a spoon to drizzle icing in the shape's outline, then drag the icing with the spoon to fill in the center. Icing will harden after a few minutes.

**Make ahead:** You can bake the cupcakes up to 2 days before the party. Let the cupcakes cool completely, then store the cupcakes only (with no icing) in a food storage container at room temperature. Do not refrigerate; it dries out the cupcakes! Then make the icing and decorate the cupcakes right before your party.

## Superhero Mask Craft

Spend the party transformed with these masks! To set up, you'll need a paper plate for each guest and a few sheets of thick paper like construction paper or card stock. You'll also need materials to decorate the masks (like markers, pipe cleaners, sequins, paint, glitter, or colored paper). Finally, gather up scissors, glue, and tape or a stapler.

Cut the paper plate in half and cut one half into the shape of the mask you want to make. Cut eye holes by using the scissors to punch two small holes, then use the scissors to cut them larger. (Note: don't punch the eye holes while the mask is on your face!) Try it on to make sure you can see. Decorate your mask to match your superhero identity. To keep the mask on your face, cut two long strips of thick paper and attach one to each side of the mask with tape or a stapler. Put the mask on and get a friend to help you adjust the two paper strips tight enough, then secure with tape or a staple. Now fly up, up, and away!





# CHAPTER 14

## Holiday Craft Fest

Invite your guests to come dashing through the snow to make awesome holiday crafts! Set the mood by playing holiday music, putting a Yule log video on the TV, and holding your party in a room near your holiday decorations. Secure your spot on the nice list with your festive snacks and crafty plans.

You can make and decorate the Gingerbread People (page 150) several days in advance, as long as you store them at room temperature in an airtight container after the icing dries. Prepare the Festive Hummus Pinwheels (page 148) the day before and assemble your pinwheel tree just before party time. Serve the pinwheels and any other snacks as guests arrive. Wait until dessert to whip up the Minty Hot Chocolate (page 146) and serve the Gingerbread People.



# MINTY HOT CHOCOLATE

SERVES 6 PREP TIME: 10 MINUTES

GLUTEN-FREE, NUT-FREE, VEGETARIAN





## TOOLS TO GATHER

Large stockpot  
Measuring spoons and dry  
measuring cups  
Whisk  
Ladle (optional)

## INGREDIENTS TO HAVE

½ gallon (8 cups) **milk** of choice  
¼ cup **granulated sugar**  
1⅓ cup **dark chocolate chips**  
1 teaspoon **peppermint extract**

This hot chocolate uses milk (dairy, nut, or soy), real chocolate, and peppermint extract to bring that special warmth to your party. It's so easy, you can whip it up while your guests are crafting. Garnish with mini candy canes and marshmallows for extra holiday cheer.

- 1. Bring the milk and sugar to boil.** Pour the milk into the large stockpot.  Add the sugar to the stockpot and bring to boil over high heat. When the milk starts to boil, turn off the heat (it's okay if a skin forms on the top of the milk). Whisk to combine.
- 2. Add the chocolate and peppermint.** Add the chocolate chips (or if using chocolate bars, break up first and then add). Whisk to combine. Add the peppermint extract, then whisk to combine.
- 3. Serve.**  Very carefully pour into 6 mugs. Remember to keep your non-pouring hand out of the way (don't hold the mug!) so you don't burn yourself if you spill. If it's easier, use a ladle to scoop the hot chocolate into mugs.

**Swap it:** If any of your guests don't drink regular milk, you can use almond milk, soymilk, or oat milk. If you can't find dairy-free chocolate, use dairy-free cocoa powder instead (about ½ cup, or more to your liking).

## Holiday Snack-orations

Snack-orations means both snacks *and* decorations! Make a cheese wreath snack with cheese cubes, cherry or grape tomatoes, and ribbon. Arrange cheese cubes on a platter in a ring shape, place the tomatoes on top of the cheese. Tie a bow out of ribbon and place it at the bottom of the ring, and voilà! Cheese wreath snack-oration.

Make Santa hats with strawberries, bananas, mini marshmallows, and toothpicks. Cut the leafy ends off of the strawberries and slice the bananas into pieces  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch thick. Slide a banana slice to the bottom of a toothpick, put a strawberry on top (flat edge on the banana), and top it with a mini marshmallow. These Santa snack-orations are sure to make you jolly.



# FESTIVE HUMMUS PINWHEELS

SERVES 6 PREP TIME: 35 MINUTES

GLUTEN-FREE, NUT-FREE




## TOOLS TO GATHER

Dry measuring cups and spoons  
Colander  
Food processor or blender  
Cutting boards  
Chef's knife  
Flexible spatula  
Toothpicks

## INGREDIENTS TO HAVE

1 (14 ounce) can **chickpeas**  
¼ cup **olive oil**  
¼ cup **tahini paste**  
½ teaspoon **salt**  
1 clove **garlic**  
1 **lemon**  
2 **bell peppers**  
6 10-inch burrito-sized **tortillas**  
(spinach, if possible)  
1 pound **sliced turkey**  
12 slices **sliced cheese**

These protein-packed pinwheels will keep your guests spinning with enough energy to wait up for Saint Nick! They're filled with hummus, peppers, turkey, and cheese (or, leave out the meat to make them vegetarian). Arrange them like a tree with tomato ornaments for some extra holiday flair.

- 1. Make the hummus.** Drain and rinse the chickpeas in the colander, then pour into the food processor (or a blender if you don't have a processor). Add the olive oil, tahini, and salt to the processor. Smash 1 garlic clove, peel, and add to the processor. Cut the lemon in half and squeeze the juice from both halves into the processor. Process until completely smooth.
- 2. Cut the bell peppers, warm the wraps.**  Cut both bell peppers into strips about ½-inch wide. If tortilla wraps have been refrigerated, microwave for 30 seconds (this keeps the wraps from breaking).



- 3. Assemble the wraps.** Place one tortilla on the second, clean cutting board. Scoop  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup hummus (watch out for the blade!) and spread on the wrap with the flexible spatula, stopping about  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch from the edge of the wrap. Place 4 bell pepper strips on the edge closest to you. Place 2 slices of turkey on the hummus. Place 2 cheese slices on top of the turkey. Roll tortilla tightly around the bell peppers and keep rolling until the wrap is complete. Repeat for 6 wraps.
- 4. Cut into pinwheels.** 🖐️ With a sharp chef's knife, cut each wrap into sections about 1-inch wide. You should end up with 6 pinwheels from each wrap. Keep each piece from unraveling by poking a toothpick through the center of each pinwheel.
- 5. Serve.** Keep the pinwheels refrigerated until serving, up to 24 hours.

**Decorate:** Make your pinwheels look like a tree waiting for presents to be put under it! Get a serving platter that's at least as big as a dinner plate. Make a circular layer of pinwheels on the bottom layer that's 12 to 14 pinwheels total (8 to 9 on the outside of the circle and the rest to fill it in). Make another layer on top that's a little bit smaller, and another layer that's a little bit smaller than that. The fourth level should be about 2 pinwheels, and the top only 1. For the tree topper, cut a star out of yellow paper, tape to a toothpick, and stick it on the top pinwheel. To make "ornaments," stick grape or cherry tomatoes on toothpicks and tuck them into the tree in between pinwheels.

# GINGERBREAD PEOPLE

MAKES 12 COOKIES PREP TIME: 25 MINUTES  
COOK TIME: 10 MINUTES CHILL TIME: 1 HOUR

NUT-FREE, VEGETARIAN



## TOOLS TO GATHER

Mixing bowls  
Measuring cups and spoons  
Whisk  
Electric mixer or stand mixer  
Spoon  
Flexible spatula  
Plastic wrap  
Rolling pin  
3-inch gingerbread people cookie cutters (or other holiday shapes)  
Wide spatula  
Baking sheet  
Nonstick spray  
Cooling rack

## INGREDIENTS TO HAVE

1 cup plus 2 tablespoons **all-purpose flour**  
1½ teaspoons **ground cinnamon**  
1½ teaspoons **ground ginger**  
½ teaspoon **ground cloves**  
¼ teaspoon **baking soda**  
⅛ teaspoon **salt**  
2 packed tablespoons **brown sugar**  
¼ cup (half stick) **unsalted butter**  
1 **egg yolk**  
3 tablespoons **unsulfured molasses**  
½ teaspoon **vanilla extract**

Gingerbread cookies not only are yummy, but also make your whole house smell like the holidays! Use gingerbread-people-shaped cookie cutters or other holiday themed cutters like stars, candy canes, or snowflakes. Leave cookies plain or decorate with a simple confectioner's sugar icing!

- 1. Mix the dry ingredients.** In a medium mixing bowl, combine the all-purpose flour, cinnamon, ginger, cloves, baking soda, and salt. Whisk to combine.
- 2. Cream the butter and sugar.** In a large mixing bowl, combine the brown sugar and softened butter (microwave butter for about 10 seconds if coming right from the fridge). Use an electric mixer or stand mixer to cream the butter and sugar together.
- 3. Beat the wet ingredients.** Separate the egg yolk from the white over a small bowl. Pour the yolk into the large mixing bowl with the butter and sugar, then discard the white. Add the molasses, using a spoon to scrape from the measuring spoon. Add vanilla extract. Beat with electric mixer.

4. **Combine the wet and dry ingredients.** Add the flour mixture to the wet ingredients a little at a time, beating thoroughly to combine each time you add more flour mixture. The mixture will look crumbly but will stick together when pinched.
5. **Shape the dough and chill.** Cut a long piece of plastic wrap about 2 feet long. With your hands, form the dough into a ball. Press the dough on the plastic wrap into a rectangle shape, then cover with another piece of plastic wrap. Refrigerate for at least 1 hour or up to 3 days.
6. **Preheat the oven, prepare the pan, cut out the cookies.** 🖐️ Preheat the oven to 350°F and spray the baking sheet with nonstick spray. Take the dough out of the fridge and leave in the plastic wrap. Use a rolling pin to roll the dough to about ¼ inch thick and cut out 12 cookies. See *Cookie Dough Like a Pro* (page 152) for more.
7. **Bake and serve.** Carefully transfer to the prepared pan. 🖐️ Bake for 8 to 10 minutes; cookies will harden more when cooled. Let cool for 5 minutes, then transfer with wide spatula to cooling racks. Serve plain, with a dusting of confectioner's sugar, or decorated (see tip below).

**Decorate:** Decorate your cookies with a simple icing: In a medium bowl, mix 1 cup powdered sugar, 1 tablespoon milk, and ½ teaspoon vanilla extract. You want the icing to be pretty sticky, but you might need to add a few more splashes of milk until you can stir the icing easily. Transfer to a small sandwich bag with a slider seal and cut a tiny bit from the corner of the bag. Squeeze icing out of the hole to add your designs to the cookies.

## Cookie Dough Like a Pro

When you're making cookies with cookie cutters (instead of ones where you just plop a ball of batter on the cookie sheet), these tips will help them look great.

### CHILL THE DOUGH

Chilling the dough helps cookies keep their shape better. It also makes it easier to cut the cookies out with cookie cutters. Here's how: First, cut a two-foot-long piece of plastic wrap and place on the counter. Next, form your dough into a ball, then place it on the middle of the plastic wrap and smooch down. Shape it into a rectangle going in the same direction as your plastic wrap. Cut another piece of plastic wrap the same length and put it on top. Refrigerate for at least an hour, or up to three days in the fridge in an airtight container.

### ROLL THE DOUGH

When the dough has been chilled for at least an hour, take it out of the fridge. Put it on the counter still in the plastic wrap. Use a rolling pin to roll the dough between the two pieces of plastic wrap until it's about  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch thick. Try to make all parts of the dough the same thickness.

### CUT YOUR COOKIES

Peel off the top layer of plastic wrap, set aside. Use your cookie cutter to punch as many cookies into the dough as you can. (If you don't have a cookie cutter, you can also draw shapes with a butter knife). Here's the secret to keeping them from breaking: Peel away the extra dough first, and *then* pick up the cookies and transfer them.

With your hands, carefully peel up the cut cookies and transfer them onto a greased baking sheet. Now it's time to take the dough scraps and make more cookies! Roll them into a ball, then shape into a rectangle. Put the top plastic wrap piece back on top, then roll out again. Cut as many cookies as you can and place on the baking sheet.



## Let It Snow

Dreaming of snow? Make snowflakes out of paper! Gather 8½-x-11-inch printer paper and scissors. To make the printer paper into a big triangle, take one corner and fold it to the opposite side of the paper. Flatten the crease, then cut off the extra where the paper doesn't overlap. (You can also make snowflakes out of coffee filters.)

Fold it again, point to point, making a smaller triangle.

Cut shapes into all three edges of the triangle. Try half circles, squares, triangles, half hearts, or whatever you'd like.

Carefully unfold, and you'll have a snowflake! Repeat as many times as you'd like to make a blizzard!

These snowflakes make great window decorations; just tape to the window with clear tape. To make your snowflake sparkly, put craft glue on your snowflake and sprinkle glitter on top. To turn it into an ornament: Thread ribbon or yarn through one of the holes and tie.



