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## That's gross! Good Halloween food

BY BILL LOHMANN

TIMES-DISPATCH STAFF WRITER

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What mother wouldn't want to have a son help in the kitchen and hear him say:

"Mom, you want me to put some blood on the maggots?"

Eleven-year-old Ian Just asked precisely that of his mother, Lynne, the other day. Nearly overcome with pride, she responded, "Yes."

While you digest that conversation, it's important to remember one thing . . .

It's almost Halloween!

Lynne Just teaches "Kids in the Kitchen," a series of classes for children at Mise En Place Cooking School in Shockoe Slip. Her Halloween course is called "Freaky Foods" and features, among other ghoulish grub, Maggot Cookies.

Of course, they're not maggots, merely sugar cookies with the dough run through a potato ricer. A red, sugary glaze drizzled over the wormy-looking cookies adds the bloody-looking finishing touch.

But it's Halloween, so appearances are supposed to be deceiving.

And gross.

"I've found kids of any age love these things," said Just, who also owns Just Desserts, a local dessert company. "How can you not love



Some simple Halloween snacks from Lynne Just such as (from bottom left) spider webs, mousse brains, bloodshot eyeballs, bloody vampire teeth, eyeball tacos and bloody worms.

LINDY KEAST RODMAN/TIMES-DISPATCH

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Halloween food?"

On a recent morning at Mise En Place, Just laid out a spread of disgusting delectables and demonstrated how easy creepy foods are to prepare.

Besides the Maggot Cookies, she offered samples of:

- Witch Finger Cookies (thin strips of sugar cookies with almond slivers for fingernails);
- Cobweb Cookies (thin batter drizzled in weblike designs on a pan and fried like pancakes);
- Worms on a Bun (curled hot dog slices on hamburger buns);
- Amazing Chocolate Mousse Brain (formed in a plastic brain mold purchased at a Halloween store); and
- Eyeballs (thick frosting rolled into balls with chocolate-chip pupils).
- All washed down with a big, tall glass of Putrid Potion (don't ask).

[That's gross!](#)

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She spared us the Chunky Cat Barf, but brought along the recipe (spaghetti squash and lots of cheese, plus tomato sauce).

"They're all very simple things to make," Just said. "Really, really kid-friendly."

As a kindergarten and preschool teacher in years past, Just discovered how valuable cooking is in the classroom for teaching kitchen safety and for more academic reasons.

"Crazy food stuff," she said, "is a good way to teach them math and to build their vocabulary. It also makes it a lot easier for them to grasp the concepts of weights and measures and volume. It also gives them something fun to do."

And what could be more fun than preparing a menu that will make your skin crawl?

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