



the best

PRODUCED BY **SIMONE OLIVERO**
PHOTOGRAPHY BY **ERIK PUTZ**
ILLUSTRATIONS BY **ANDREA MANICA**
ART DIRECTION BY **STEPHANIE HAN KIM**



TOYS



of



2019



Real kids played with hundreds of toys to help us pick our top 101.



BABY & TODDLER

0+



LEAPBUILDERS FRUIT FUN ELEPHANT
LEAPFROG, \$20, WALMART.CA

Learning about animals, numbers and colours is extra fun when you've got a fruit-loving elephant to help you. There are 21 easy-to-hold pieces, including 10 interactive blocks that respond with educational songs and encouraging words. Tap the question or music button to learn animal facts, or listen to one of five melodies.

BABY & TODDLER

EXPLORE AND MORE SELFIE PHONE

SKIPHOP, \$13, SNUGGLEBUGZ.CA

With a shiny mirror sticker, your babe can mimic the fun selfies you take together on their very own phone. This cute toy makes barking and meowing sounds and has three light-up face filters, including doggy ears and silly glasses.



LEGO DUPLO SUBMARINE ADVENTURE

LEGO, \$25, LEGO.COM

All aboard! With a floating submarine and whale, this underwater adventure set is perfect for bathtime. Two diver figures snap photos of the fish with their underwater camera as it spurts out bubbles to create the perfect shot.



MAGICAL TALES GYMINI

TINY LOVE, \$100, WESTCOASTKIDS.CA

This play mat works at various stages of a baby's development, stimulating the senses on day one, then making a comfy spot for tummy time. Silky ribbons and crinkly flaps to grab and pull encourage fine motor skills. You grow, baby!

SPITZY THE LLAMA

CLUB PETZ, \$35, TARGET.COM

All Spitz the Llama wants to do is eat and make you laugh. He's a goofy, hungry, battery-powered guy who is so noisy when he chews. But that's not all: He's a big burper. And don't even think about pressing his leg, which makes him spit (how rude!). Oh, shoot—he just ate so fast his jaw dislocated. Silly llama. You'd better help him.



CRAWL ABOUT BEE

THE LEARNING JOURNEY, \$25, MASTERMINDTOYS.COM

This buzzing bee is a fun way to get kids moving. Place this striped plastic toy on the floor and he'll wiggle about with lights and cute songs to encourage little ones to follow him.



1.2.3. ZOO

PLAYMOBIL, \$50, WELL.CA

Zoologists in training, step right up! Come and see the monkeys on the swing and the penguins slipping down the slide. This set has two separate enclosures to explore and includes four figures, two monkeys, two penguins and loads of accessories.



ATTACH THIS BOOK TO YOUR STROLLER FOR EASY ENTERTAINMENT ON THE GO!



LLAMA SOFT BOOK

MANHATTAN TOY, \$18, MCNALLYROBINSON.COM

Llamas are having a moment. This soft, wordless book follows the squeaky fellow from page to page as he encounters different activities and textures. There's something to crinkle, a baby-safe mirror to gaze into, Velcro to pull and loops to tug.

HUNGRY HIPPOS FOOT TO FLOOR PUSH RIDING TOY

HASBRO, \$60, TOYSRUS.CA

The childhood classic game has morphed into a ride-on toy with the same head-bobbing, chomping action we all know and love. Push or roll over the seven included balls and watch Hippo gobble them up into his clear plastic belly.



yum

JUNGLE PRESS AND SLIDE

HAPE, \$25, TREASUREISLANDTOYS.CA

Let it slide! This well-crafted wooden toy features an easy-to-grip ball that loops and races around a large jungle tree to the ground below, where a lever shoots it back to the top so it can race down again.



CABBAGE PATCH KIDS CUTIES PETTING ZOO FRIEND

CABBAGE PATCH KIDS, \$17, TOYSRUS.CA

Dressed in a variety of cute animal-themed costumes, like a bunny, kitty, chick, billy goat, puppy and lamb, these nine-inch dolls have plush bodies and make perfect snuggly companions.



RAINBOW CLOUD POP

LE TOY VAN, \$36, INDIGO.CA

This sustainable rubberwood toy promotes colour recognition and hand-eye coordination. It takes some practice, but soon kids will be pushin', poppin', matchin' and catchin' those rainbow rods like it's nobody's business.

SMART SIZZLIN' BBQ GRILL

LEAPFROG, \$50, TOYSRUS.CA

Your bitty Bobby Flay will love using this interactive 'cue to fire up their imagination. Eight different foods to skewer and char can be placed on the grill to teach kids about each item's name and colour. Twist the skewer and count along as you turn up the heat from one to 10. The included utensils and sauce keep it profesh.



LIL' CUDDLES DOLL GIFT SET

MADAME ALEXANDER, \$50, TOYSRUS.CA

Baby dolls are always a hit, and this sweet set is no exception. With a soft cloth body, a lifelike head that bobs and cute little fingers and toes that grasp, this baby comes with an extra outfit complete with a bib and booties.



CUTE RIDER: PANDA

VIKING, \$80, PJKICKERBOCKERS.CA

Hop on! Perfect for practising mobility and balance, this beary cute ride-on is constructed of durable recycled plastic. Parents will love that the wheels spin easily and silently(!), while kids will love the under-seat storage for stashing treasures.

MY FIRST RAILWAY FARM

BRIO, \$75, INDIGO.CA

Things are busy on the Railway Farm. There's a train, and five animals who love to make sounds when placed on the grassy meadow sensor. Constructed of high-quality wood, this 12-piece set is a good point of entry into Brio's more expansive railway systems.



THEY'LL BE HOOKED ON BATHTIME WITH THIS FUN PLAYSET

DOUBLE FUN FISHING SET

HAPE, \$25, BBUGGY.CA

Take tub time to new depths with this fun fishing set. Push your new sea friends into the water, and they'll pop right up. Hook their little gills with your fishing pole then stash them in the included net for later.



SOPHIE TOUCH MUSICAL

SOPHIE LA GIRAFE, \$50, TOYSRUS.CA

Everyone's favourite French giraffe is back and reporting for double duty. Not only is she a soft, cuddly friend, but two special skin-contact sensors on her front hooves also play music to teach babies about cause and effect.

BABY & TODDLER



OCEAN A TO Z PUZZLE AND PLAYSET

BEGIN AGAIN, \$50, THEBAY.COM

Each part of this wooden deep-sea puzzle has a pretty water-based decal that coordinates with a letter, like "O" for "octopus." Once they're done with the puzzle, let them use the pieces as figurines to tell an underwater story, and then tuck them away in the wooden storage box.



LICA BELLA UNICORN

GIPSY, \$40, TOYSRUS.CA

Rainbow dreams come true with soft, fluffy Lica Bella. Full of magic and splendour, your mystical bestie's eyes glow with pretty colours when you press her magical star. Want a little night light ambience? Press her hoof, and her body will shine with a shimmering glow.



ACTIVITY TOY FANTASY BIRD

MANHATTAN TOY, \$19, CHARLOTTEETCHARLIE.CA

The C-clip on this parrot pal makes it easy to fasten to your stroller. The colourful design will help stimulate their imagination, and details like a crinkly tail feather, mini mirror and teether can curb fussiness.



ANIMAL HIGH RISE

HABA, \$36, DILLYDALLYKIDS.CA

The best piece of real estate on the street is this cheery rainbow high-rise. Made of 15 wooden blocks, this stacked apartment complex can be constructed in a multitude of ways.

LATCHES AND DOORS BUSY BOARD

VTECH, \$40, MASTERMINDTOYS.COM

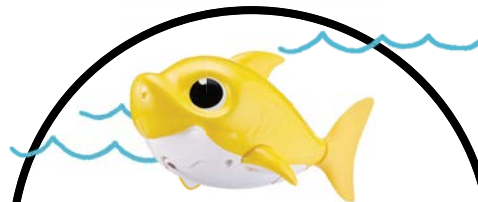
Toddlers are notoriously curious, so give them something safe to explore with this busy board. There are doors to slide or swing open, buttons to press, knobs to turn and locks to unlatch. It's a fun way for littles to develop and build their motor skills while learning numbers, colours and the ABCs.



CRY BABIES

CRY BABIES, \$57, AMAZON.CA

This baby is a little sad sometimes and needs to be cheered up. Remove her pacifier and she'll start to fuss. Her saucer-like eyes will well up and shed real tears (she has a compartment for water), and it's up to pint-sized parents to calm her. Give her the pacifier or lay her down and soothe her, just like a real baby.



ROBO ALIVE BABY SHARK

ZURU, \$20, TOYSRUS.CA

When it comes to bath toys, there's nothing cuter than an on-trend baby shark. Place Sharky in the tub and the water will make him start to swim and sing that catchy tune. Tubby Shark, doo, doo, doo, doo, doo, doo, doo.



**LEGO DUPLO
FROZEN ICE CASTLE**
LEGO, \$60, LEGO.COM

Elsa, Anna and Olaf are living it up in this winter wonderland complete with a snow slide, teapot and snack table. Look out over Arendelle from the castle balcony, or marvel at the changing colours of the illuminated block, which can be placed anywhere your little builder wants to add a bit of magic.



**PLAYSKOOL
MR. POTATO HEAD
MOVIN' LIPS
ELECTRONIC
INTERACTIVE
TALKING TOY**

HASBRO, \$30, TOYSRUS.CA

This interactive version of the classic is a riot. Move around his body parts, attach one of his two mouths and then wait. With a repertoire of over 40 phrases and four parody songs, it's exciting to see what he's going to say next.



**LUVABELLA
NEWBORN**

SPINMASTER, \$80, AMAZON.CA

This lifelike doll pulls different faces, and her tummy will rise and fall in a realistic way as she's rocked to sleep. Put an ear to her chest, and there's an audible heartbeat. If she's upset, she'll cry and she can be comforted with her bottle or soother.



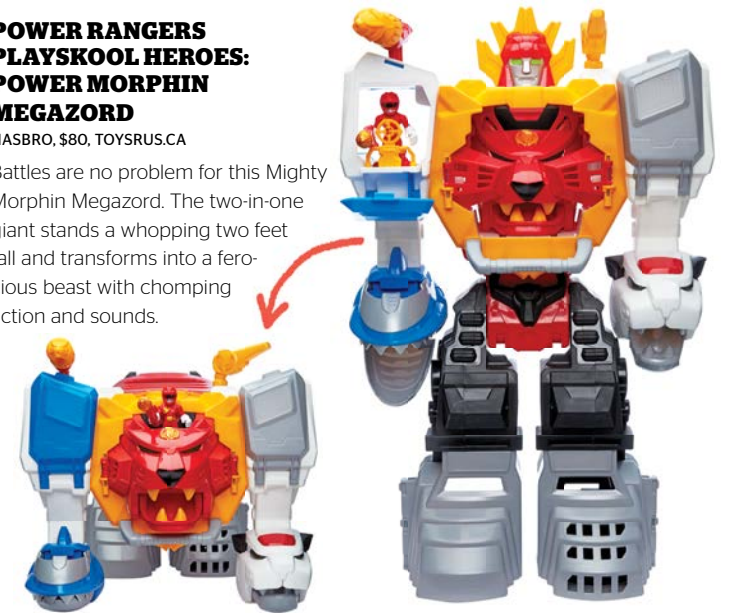
COBBLESTONE FARM
BIGJIGS, \$160, TOYSENSE.CA

Just like a real farm, this large wooden playset includes a stable, a hayloft and a spot for tractor parking. Designed with little hands in mind, the various pieces can be slotted together to create the farm of your dreams. Animals are sold separately.

**POWER RANGERS
PLAYSKOOL HEROES:
POWER MORPHIN
MEGAZORD**

HASBRO, \$80, TOYSRUS.CA

Battles are no problem for this Mighty Morphin Megazord. The two-in-one giant stands a whopping two feet tall and transforms into a ferocious beast with chomping action and sounds.



DIY FEROCIOUS POM CREATURES

CRAFT-TASTIC, \$20 US, ANNWILLIAMSGROUP.COM

There's nothing scary about these pom-pom playmates. Three pre-sewn felt critters are your instant BFFs. Simply stuff 'em with filling and decorate with mini poms. And if you thought it couldn't get any cuter, each one comes with its own adoption certificate and a teeny heart to put inside with the batting.

TIN THROWING GAME

BS TOYS, \$25, BENJO.CA

Old-fangled fun it is with this throwback game. The concept is simple: Use beanbags to topple as many stacked cans as you can. The set includes 10 numbered metal tins and three beanbags.

PRESCHOOL



CODING CRITTERS RUMBLE & BUMBLE
LEARNING RESOURCES, \$50, MASTERMINDTOYS.COM

Break free from screens and code along with the included storybook to bring the pages to life. Program your pet to play games like hide-and-peek and fetch, or design your own challenges!



OOPS SCOOPS
YULU, \$20, CANADIANTIRE.CA

Elbows up—it's time to scoop. In this fun stacking game, kids create towers of ice cream mounds. It's not all chill, though. Keep a steady hand because these cones have been known to shake and shiver, knocking your soaring scoops to the ground.



BABY BORN SURPRISE BATHTUB SURPRISE
MGA ENTERTAINMENT, \$60, WALMART.CA

This baby has lots of surprises, from "charms" hidden in her diaper to hair and eye colour that are revealed with water. Each unique feature corresponds with an included legend that will tell you exactly who your baby is, including the name, birthday and favourite food.



COLORFORMS SILLY FACES GAME
KAHOOTS, \$43, AMAZON.CA

Based on the hit Netflix series *Charlie's Colorforms City*, this game is a race to see who can make the silliest face. Flick the spinner to land on a face and build from there using the 68 pieces. Will you create a wizard with cat ears or a scuba diver with a silly hat? It's anyone's guess.

MIX AND MATCH-A-SAURUS
VTECH, \$45, AMAZON.CA

This dino is here to help kids identify feelings. Plug tiles into his back to show emotions that include happy and angry, create music such as hip hop and ballet, and take on additional personas, like a monster and a robot.



ORANGUTWANG
PLAYMONSTER, \$40, AMAZON.CA

Whoa, easy does it! Players race to hang fruit off an orangutan as he dangles precariously from a tightrope. But be careful, because once he gets overloaded, he'll spring up and send all the fruit into the air.



FURREAL CUBBY, THE CURIOUS BEAR INTERACTIVE PLUSH TOY
HASBRO, \$130, TOYSRUS.CA

This unbearably cute bear is loaded with 100-plus sound and motion combinations. He plays soft music when he's tired and will move his head, ears, eyes, mouth, arms and nose like a real cub. He loves to eat and will be so happy if you feed him.



KINETIC SAND SANDISFYING SET
SPINMASTER, \$27, MASTERMINDTOYS.COM

You know those strangely mesmerizing videos of calming shapes being sliced or smooth textures being poured? Now your kid is the star and can produce their very own satisfying fun. Pull out your camera and choose your tools. You can dice, slice, squish, scoop or grate your sand to create transfixing works of cinematography.



BARBIE DREAMPLANE PLAYSET
MATTEL, \$100, TOYSRUS.CA

Barbie is living her best life on this private plane with reclining seating, ample leg room, personal TV screens and a snack cart fully stocked with munchies, including sushi. Dolls are sold separately, but the set includes 15-plus accessories.



AQUABEADS BEGINNERS STUDIO
EPOCH EVERLASTING PLAY, \$27, AMAZON.CA

You spray, they stay. Use the template sheet to create cute designs, such as puppies and penguins. Spritz the beads with water and wait as they magically merge together. The kit includes more than 800 beads (some in jewel tones!), a flipper, a sprayer, a pen, a template and a box to keep it all neat.

KNUCKLE HEADZ 2-PACK
SKULLDUGGERY, \$35, CREATIVELEARNING.CA

Zoom, crash, smash, zoinks! When these speedy cars collide bumper to bumper, the animal riders launch from their seats into the air. Pop them back in place and do it all over again.



BANANA BLAST
GOLIATH GAMES, \$20, TOYSRUS.CA

Roll the dice to find out how many bananas to pull from the treetop. The monkey could blast out of the tree at any moment, and when he does, it's a scramble to catch him. This game is bunches of fun. (Yep, we went there.)



MY FAIRY GARDEN TREE HOLLOW
PLAYMONSTER, \$30, TOYSRUS.CA

Kids can exercise their green thumbs by planting quick-germinating seeds in this whimsical tree home for Willow the fairy. All the necessary gardening tools, like a shovel, trowel and watering can, are included to tend to this dream garden.

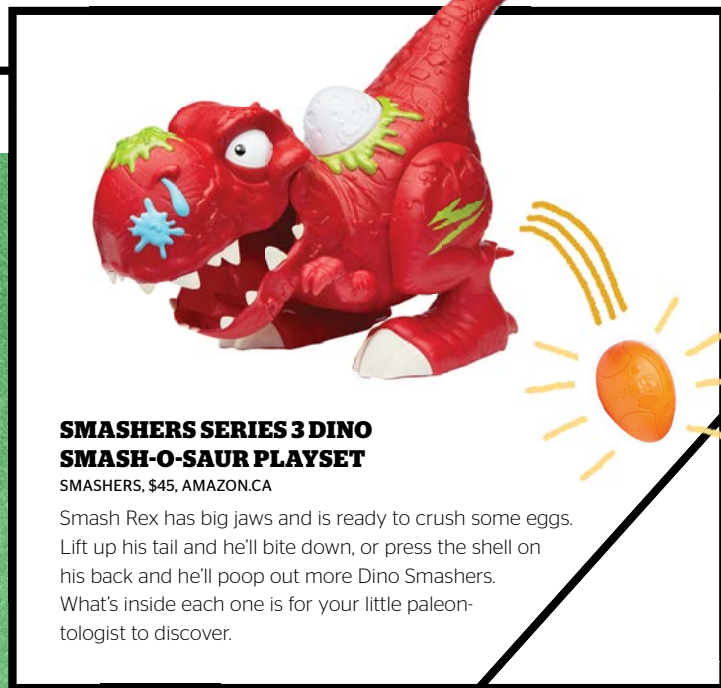
PRESCHOOL



LEGO DUPLO MICKEY'S VACATION HOUSE

LEGO, \$60, LEGO.COM

If there's one thing Mickey Mouse likes to do, it's chill out at his vacation house. Reversible bricks transform these swanky digs into an all-season chalet. Minnie, Goofy and Pluto have also flown in for a little R&R.



SMASHERS SERIES 3 DINO SMASH-O-SAUR PLAYSET

SMASHERS, \$45, AMAZON.CA

Smash Rex has big jaws and is ready to crush some eggs. Lift up his tail and he'll bite down, or press the shell on his back and he'll poop out more Dino Smashers. What's inside each one is for your little paleontologist to discover.



SUPER SPIRALS QUADRILLA SET

HAPE, \$170, SCHOLARSCOICE.CA

We bet you've never seen a marble run quite like this before. Encouraging STEM development, this deluxe set has a corkscrew-like double-sided spiral, a xylophone ramp that will perform a little tune as the marble races over it, and four blocks that reorient the marble in a different direction. Zoom, zoom!



JOBS ROUNDABOUT PUZZLE

HAPE, \$13, ALLSTARLEARNING.CA

This double-sided puzzle aims to teach kids about people's unique contributions, highlighting careers such as teacher, postal worker, doctor, chef, builder and firefighter. One side shows individuals and the other displays a cityscape of where they all go to punch the clock.



DEMO DUKE

SPINMASTER, \$70, TOYSRUS.CA

Rev up this monster truck by pressing the red lever and watch him smash into whatever he encounters. When you want him to uncrumple, press the button on his hood and he magically rebuilds himself. The truck's interactive spike tells alternating fart and burp jokes.



PLAY-DOH WHEELS FIRETRUCK

HASBRO, \$30, WALMART.CA

If there's a fire to put out, Play-Doh is on it. Swirls of blue dough fill one tub to mimic water that can shoot out of the hose. Orange and yellow dough can be moulded into flames or made into badges using a mould on the back of the truck. There's even a ladder for rescuing kitties.



BOPPI, THE BOOTY SHAKIN' LLAMA

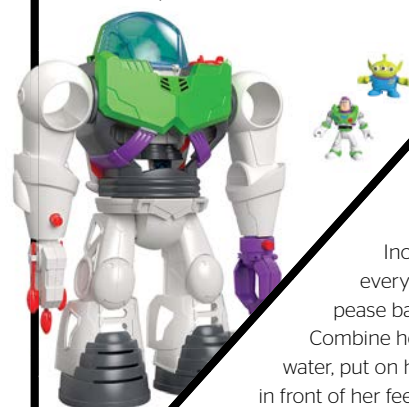
ZURU, \$30, TOYSRUS.CA

Boppi the Llama is down to clown. Invite her into your home, and she'll have everyone giggling and shakin' their booties. Programmed with three dance songs, Boppi has the moves with all of her booty-moving and head-spinning motions. Twerk it!

TOY STORY IMAGINEXT BUZZ LIGHTYEAR ROBOT

MATTEL, \$65, WALMART.CA

Ready to go to infinity and beyond? Put Buzz inside the cockpit and make him blast off in a separate spaceship. The robot's right arm is a projectile launcher, while the left is a claw.



BABY ALIVE HAPPY HUNGRY BABY DOLL

HASBRO, \$70, WALMART.CA

Included in this doll set is everything you need to appease baby's insatiable hunger. Combine her food packets with water, put on her bib and plopp her down in front of her feeding tray. Bring the spoon to her mouth, and she'll open wide. With over 50 sounds and responses, Baby Alive will tell you exactly what she needs, including an "uh-oh" when it's time to change her diaper.



PLUMBER PANTS GAME

HASBRO GAMING, \$25, WALMART.CA

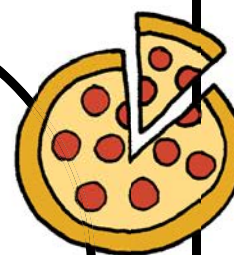
Two or more players take turns raiding the poor plumber's tool box and stashing tools on his belt. His pants slip more and more as they get weighed down. Once his drawers fall to his feet, water sprays out of the sink!



CALICO CRITTERS VILLAGE PIZZERIA

EPOCH EVERLASTING PLAY, \$50, AMAZON.CA

Using an authentic-looking pizza oven, the Village Pizzeria is serving up pies whole and by the slice. With Calico Critters' usual attention to detail, this set comes with teeny kitchen tools, including a cheese grater, rolling pin and pizza cutter.



EXPLORE AND WRITE ACTIVITY DESK

VTECH, \$80, TOYSRUS.CA

Learning is extra fun when you've got a stylus to trace things and five interactive pages that cover colours, shapes, letters and numbers with a corresponding LED screen. As your kid gets older, the desk is easily transformed into an easel and chalkboard with storage.

LITTLE KID

5+

L.O.L. SURPRISE! 2-IN-1 GLAMPER

L.O.L. SURPRISE, \$150, WALMART.CA

Start your engines! This pastel caravan doesn't skimp on accessories. With 55-plus surprises waiting to be unveiled, the toy has over 10 hang-out areas, including a DJ booth and a runway. The headlights and horn really do work (safety first), and the two-storey water slide ensures dolls make a splash when they show up to the pool party.



LITTLE KID

SPRINKLE ART SHAKER

CRAYOLA, \$23, THEBAY.COM

Sprinkles without the mess?! Load the shaker with a template, outline it with glue, fill the vial with sprinkles, close the shaker lid and give it a shake. You can create glittery art without the sparkle explosion!



POMSIES WAVE 4

POMSIES, \$20, WALMART.CA

Psst, this furry pet wants to be your buddy. Loaded with 50 responses that are triggered when you press its mouth, head or nose, Pomsies love to be tickled—and when you dance. The fluffy tail wraps around your wrist or backpack.

FRIENDS LIGHTHOUSE RESCUE CENTER

LEGO, \$80, LEGO.COM

Being a lighthouse keeper is important work. Mia and Emma stay on the lookout and use their water scooter to rescue animals. When they're off-duty, they like to hang out in the TV room, the office or on the observation deck, which has a lamp that shoots beams of light.



FOOD TUBES TACO

PLUS-PLUS, \$10, QHOUSEKIDS.COM

Who knew a tube of little bricks could be so much fun? (We knew.) Tucked inside is everything kids need to build their own 3D taco. But don't stop there: The pieces can also be used to make kids' own creations.

TREASURE X: QUEST FOR GOLD

TREASURE X, \$13, TOYSRUS.CA

Flip a card and make your way around the board. Find buried treasure and unlock chests to collect loot. But don't get too confident, sailor: If Exis attacks, you'll lose all your riches and it'll be back to the beginning for you. This game is great for strategic thinkers.



ZAX

ZING, \$15, MASTERMINDTOYS.COM

Axe throwing is a popular activity, but it's not the safest for kids. Now littles can work out their aggression and test their hand-eye coordination with a soft foam hatchet that suctions to any flat surface.



LITTLE KID

DIY PUFFY CHARMS

CRAFT-TASTIC, \$20, MASTERMINDTOYS.COM

The world is your...pineapple, with this tricked-out set of DIY adornments. Using 210 puffy stickers, 110 metal rings and yards of cord, little crafters can get busy creating 3D charms, from pandas and pears to planets and pizza. It's so simple: Place two puffy stickers together to form a charm and get to work accessorizing.



MARS RESEARCH VEHICLE

PLAYMOBIL, \$55, PLAYMOBIL.CA

Mars is covered in red dust and has lots of canyons and craters. It's a good thing your little astronaut has a research vehicle to check it all out. Functioning lights make it easy to see and the tool arm is interchangeable with a drill bit or defence mechanism, depending on what they encounter.



TRANSFORMERS CYBERVERSE SPARK ARMOR ARK POWER OPTIMUS PRIME ACTION FIGURE

HASBRO, \$70, WALMART.CA

Hailing from the planet Cybertron, this robot stands an impressive 12 inches tall. Optimus Prime harnesses the power of AllSpark to transform from a ship to a truck to a robot in powerful Spark Armor in 11 easy steps.



TREASURE X: ALIENS SINGLE PACK

TREASURE X, \$20, TOYSRUS.CA

Totally gross, but in the best possible way, this slime-filled alien is harbouring a Treasure Hunter. First, dissect the alien's belly to reveal the hunter, and then look for weapons and space gems to add to their collection. When you're done, go ahead and give him a squeeze. Goo will ooze from his eyes, mouth and nose. Ew!



INVASION OF THE COW SNATCHERS

THINKFUN, \$40, MASTERMINDTOYS.COM

In this brainteaser of a game, players will need to beam up cows on the farm while manoeuvring around obstacles. Long-term play is guaranteed with 60 different challenges, ranging from easy to genius.



FINGERLINGS NARWHALS

WOWWEE, \$20, WALMART.CA

This adorable Narwhal will kiss your cheek, blink her eyes, flap her tail and make the cutest little sea creature sounds.

Her horn also changes colour, so you'll know exactly how she's feeling.



TWEET BEATS TREE SET

TWEET BEATS, \$40, MASTERMINDTOYS.COM

Mix and match these music-loving birds on different branches to create sweet melodies. Every feathered friend has its own unique musical style: Beach Bobby likes reggae, Jenny the American is a classic pop star, Binky fancies himself part of a British boy band and MC Jay is a rapper.



RAINBOW SURPRISE DOLLS

POOPSIE SLIME SURPRISE, \$80, TOYSRUS.CA

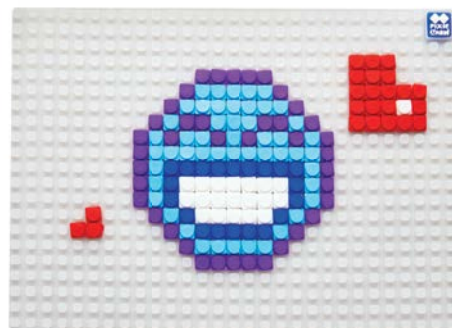
These fashion icons have 20-plus surprises to unbox and play with, including a bevy of rainbow and shimmering slime powders that can be added to the doll's translucent outfit or her '90s platform combat boots.



SERA'S MAGICAL FLOWER BOAT

SCHLEICH, \$70, INDIGO.CA

The gang's all here and ready to set sail on a mystical boat-ride. The flying squirrel will sit in the crow's nest, while Sera steers and keeps an eye out for choppy water or pirates. The baby unicorn likes to chill in her own little dinghy. Come nighttime, the trio can cozy up in the convertible shelter.



PIXIE CREW EDUCATIONAL PANEL

PIXIE CREW, \$16, INDIGO.CA

This two-dimensional design activity will stoke imaginations and create works of art. Here's how it works: Young artists grab a pixel and push it into place on the silicone panel. Anything goes design-wise, but they can get inspiration online if they're feeling stuck. Not happy with the placement of a piece? It's easy to remove and manipulate the pixels.



BLINGER

BLINGER, \$30, TOYSRUS.CA

This tool is ready to affix teeny gemstones to just about everything—yes, even your hair. Place the item you'd like to bedazzle into the blinger and press down. Voila, a little bit of sparkle is left in its wake. The kit comes with 150 gems in a variety of colours.



CITY MARS RESEARCH SHUTTLE

LEGO, \$50, LEGO.COM

Is there life on Mars? It's time to find out with this 270-plus-piece exploration set. Inspired by NASA, it includes a research shuttle with a cockpit, a cargo door that opens and closes, space for stashing a drone and a rover with a grappling arm, solar panel and laser. Two astronaut minifigures can use the heli-drone to explore their surroundings and then report back to Earth.



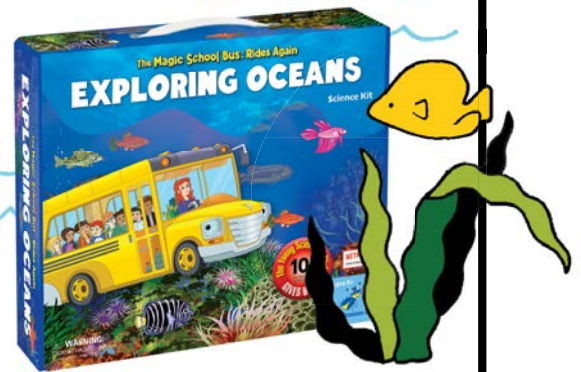
LITTLE KID



DRAGON SNACKS

GOLIATH GAMES, \$20, WALMART.CA

Dragon has very strange taste in snacks: He just ate all the treasure, and it's up to you to get it back. Wave a hand over Dragon's face, and his stomach will magically turn transparent to give you a sneak peek. His nose will glow a specific colour, and you've got to reach your hand into his mouth and try to retrieve the coordinating loot.



THE MAGIC SCHOOL BUS RIDES AGAIN—EXPLORING OCEANS

THE YOUNG SCIENTISTS CLUB, \$40, MASTERMINDTOYS.COM

Beep, beep! Hop on board the Magic School Bus with Miss Frizzle and the crew. Developed by Harvard grads, this ocean-themed box of experiments takes small scientists on a deep dive into STEM learning.



ROBOTS KOMBAT TWIN PACK

YCOO, \$50, TOYSRUS.CA

It's a robot showdown in the ring with these duelling droids. Big, strong fists pack a punch that can help ward off your opponent. The set includes two wireless controllers and two robots, with glowing eyes and realistic sound effects, that can be manoeuvred into different actions and moves.



EMOJI WINDOW ART

CREATIVITY FOR KIDS, \$29, AMAZON.CA

Create window clings (perfect for the car) using 40-plus designs, 3D googly eyes and even shimmering paint. Outline your design, and get colouring. Let your creation dry and then peel it off and stick it. *Insert emoji wearing sunglasses here.



TAMAGOTCHI ON

TAMAGOTCHI, \$80, TOYSRUS.CA

The coolest little virtual pets of the '90s are back! They can now make friends, get married and have their own little My Tamas. With millions of Tama characters, kids can play games, go shopping and pat themselves on the back for being so responsible.



ROCKIT TWIST

LEAPFROG, \$70, INDIGO.CA

With 12 preloaded games in varying levels of difficulty, kids can learn math, problem-solving and science, and create their own music in a fun, WiFi-free way. Parents will love the head-phone jack for quiet learning time.

BIG KID

8+



TROOP!

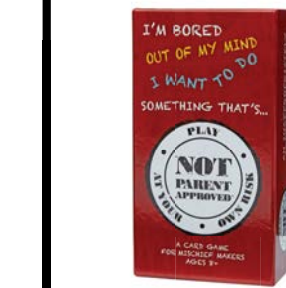


VEX ROBOTICS BUILD BLITZ

HEXBUG, \$195, HEXBUG.COM

The little engineer in your life is going to want this 800-plus-piece set. The snap-together pieces (no tools required) can build various motorized robots—seven, to be exact. Construct a monkey, a crane or a race car, and use the VEX Pilot App to make your creations move.

BIG KID



NOT PARENT APPROVED CARD GAME

NOT PARENT APPROVED, \$35, AMAZON.CA

A family-friendly take on Cards Against Humanity, players fill in the blanks in scenarios like, "In my dream there were zombies" with answers like "farting, moving away and acting casual."



CIRCUIT BLOX LIGHTS STARTER

E-BLOX, \$25, SCHOLARSCHOICE.CA

Kids use colourful transparent blocks to build a multitude of designs that can connect to a sound-activated module. LED lights illuminate your structure when you speak or play music.



BEYBLADE BURST TURBO SLINGSHOCK CROSS COLLISION BATTLE SET

HASBRO, \$80, TOYSRUS.CA

A quadruple rail system will force your Beyblade top into the ring for a white-knuckle clash with its opponent. Battle Ring mode is the best for defence, and Slingshot mode propels you into the ring.



Y'ART FLAMINGO CRAFT KIT

KAHOOTS, \$20, MASTERMINDTOYS.COM

A special grippy canvas secures the yarn as your little Van Gogh weaves it around the design template. And don't worry if they make a mistake: The yarn will easily lift off and can be placed down again.



PRETTY PIXELS ERASER MAKER

BAN DAI, \$13, AMAZON.CA

So cute and kawaii, this DIY kit lets kids make cupcake- and doughnut-shaped erasers. Load the template into the mould maker, and use tiny tweezers to place small bits of rubber into place. Add water, microwave it and then let it cool to set.



TURBO JETTS

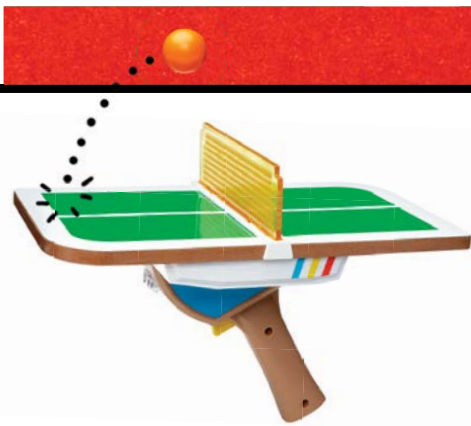
RAZOR, \$125, AMAZON.CA

Look at you, gliding by in style. These electric jets fasten to your kids' shoes with a strap and can be secured to a range of sneaker sizes. The rechargeable 12-volt lithium-ion battery lets you rip around at a speed of 16 kilometres per hour for up to 30 minutes. These are best for kids age nine and up with strong coordination skills.



SPA LAB BATH BOMBS
SMART LAB TOYS, \$37, TOYSENSE.CA

Kids can make their own fizzy bath bombs to enjoy or give as gifts with this fun set. Everything needed to make 20 different all-natural bombs is included. Experiment with colours, scents and various mould shapes. It's also fun to learn the cause and effect of why these little fizzers create so much fuzz through sodium bicarbonate reactions.



TINY PONG SOLO TABLE TENNIS KIDS ELECTRONIC HANDHELD GAME
HASBRO GAMING, \$25, TOYSRUS.CA

Keep the ball bouncing from one side of the net to the other without letting it fall in this solo hand-held table tennis game. Match point!



BOOMTRIX SHOWDOWN
GOLIATH, \$50, MASTERMINDTOYS.COM

Woo hoo! Get ready to have a bouncing good time with this trampoline set. Kids can tell gravity to back off as they launch metal balls through a riveting course of trampolines, a stunt ring and obstacles to score a goal. Not only is it fun to watch, but setting up the course also requires imagination and fine motor and planning skills.



SCORPION

HEXBUG, \$20, HEXBUG.COM

Say hello to your stinging little friend. This battery-powered scorpion has a moving tail and bouncing legs for crawling all around the house. It scurries at warp speed, so watch out. (Available in five colours.)

3UP 3DOWN CARD GAME
OK2WIN, \$32, AMAZON.CA

In this fast-paced card game, each player receives nine cards: three face down, three face up and three for their hand. The goal is to be the first to get rid of all your cards by matching the discard pile with the same or a greater number.



KING ME!
RAVENSBURGER, \$30, MASTERMINDTOYS.COM

This two-player game is a journey, with the goal of capturing your opponent's pieces. Travelling through various regions, like the Bone Yard and the Red Forest, players use a deck of cards to make moves and earn points.



ARTIE 3000 THE CODING ROBOT

EDUCATIONAL INSIGHTS, \$100, WELL.CA

Artie will draw whatever you design for him on a computer or tablet (no WiFi required). Place him in the centre of a single sheet of paper and tweak angles and degrees to make unique and interesting designs or to play games.



SPARKLING SLIME EXPERIMENT KIT

SCIENCE4YOU, \$25, INDIGO.CA

Ready to make a mess? This kit is packed with 14 experiments to create everything from sticky, sparkling dough to scented slime. The instructional booklet is written by real scientists and gives more than just how-tos—kids can also read up on the history and science of slime. To make the kit even more legit, the set includes gloves, goggles and a special dropper.



FORTNITE AR-L NERF ELITE DART BLASTERZ

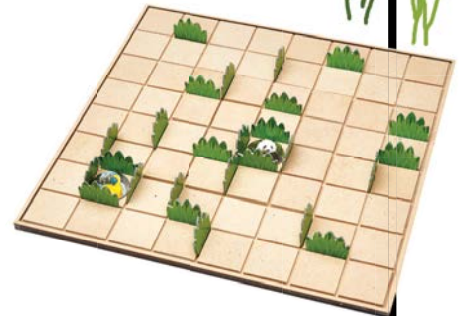
HASBRO, \$70, TOYSRUS.CA

Modelled after the blaster in Fortnite, this motorized dart-shooter lets you take your game from digital to reality. The clip holds 10 shots, so you've got plenty of chances to slay. (WARNING: Do not aim the blaster at eyes or faces.)



CLAIM AND SAVE GAME
CHALK & CHUCKLES, \$23, BENJO.CA

This board game encourages kids to create reserves to help save the animals. Players add grass hedges to create enclosures to protect their endangered species. The more endangered the animal, the higher the points kids earn.



DINNER ON THE CHEAP



Grocery bills can spike during the holidays. These five weeknight dinners will help get your budget back on track without compromising taste.

RECIPES BY **THE CHATELAINE KITCHEN** PHOTOGRAPHY BY **ERIK PUTZ**
FOOD STYLING BY **ASHLEY DENTON** PROP STYLING BY **RAYNA MARLEE SCHWARTZ** PRODUCED BY **SIMONE OLIVERO**
FELT CRAFTS BY **CORINA LO** ART DIRECTION BY **STEPHANIE HAN KIM** FELT PROVIDED BY **THEFELTSTORE.CA**



SHEET PAN CHICKEN FAJITAS WITH SALSA FRESCA
p.80

LÄTSA 11-PIECE SHOPPING BASKET SET (OPPOSITE PAGE); IKEA.CA RED ROVER BAMBOO FIBRE PLATES (THIS PAGE); WELL.CA KALAS TUMBLER (THIS PAGE); IKEA.CA

**LOADED POTATO
+ BEAN SOUP**

p.80



HOME COLLECTION AT THE REAL CANADIAN SUPERSTORE BOWLS (OPPOSITE PAGE): REAL CANADIANSUPERSTORE.CA KALAS SPOON (OPPOSITE PAGE): IKEA.CA
HOME COLLECTION AT THE REAL CANADIAN SUPERSTORE PLATE (THIS PAGE): REAL CANADIANSUPERSTORE.CA KALAS FORK + TUMBLER (THIS PAGE): IKEA.CA



**PESTO PASTA
WITH SAUSAGE
MEATBALLS**

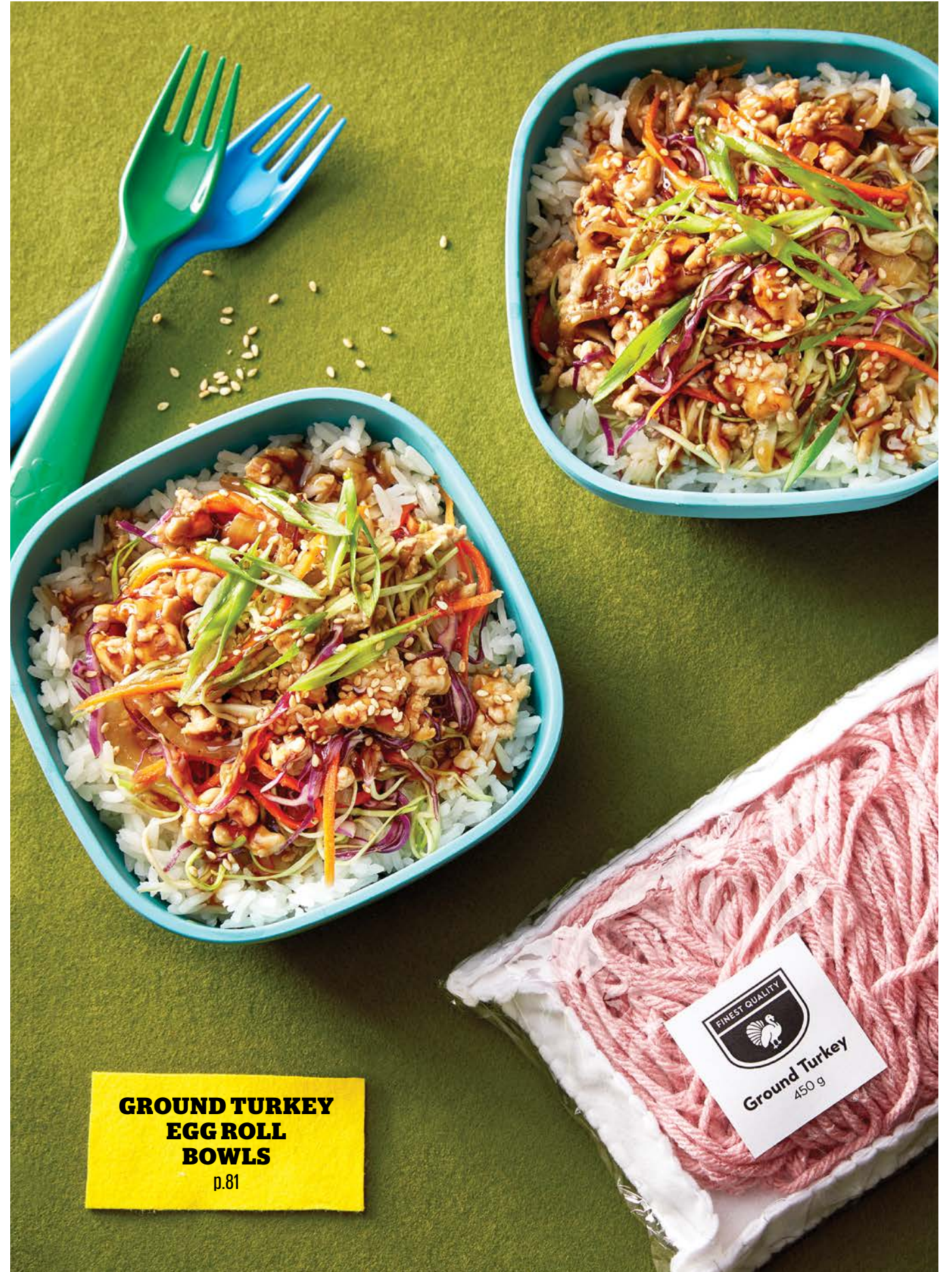
p.80

**TUNA CAKES
WITH
TARTAR SAUCE**

p.81



KALAS FORK (OPPOSITE PAGE):IKEA.CA HOME COLLECTION AT THE REAL CANADIAN SUPERSTORE BOWLS (THIS PAGE):REAL CANADIAN SUPERSTORE.CA KALAS FORKS (THIS PAGE):IKEA.CA



**GROUND TURKEY
EGG ROLL
BOWLS**

p.81



FINEST QUALITY

Ground Turkey
450 g



SHEET PAN CHICKEN FAJITAS WITH SALSA FRESCA

PREP 20 MIN TOTAL 30 MIN

- 500 g skinless, boneless chicken thighs, cut in long strips
- 2 bell peppers (any colour), cut in thin strips
- 1 onion, sliced
- 2 tbsp canola oil
- 2 tsp chili powder
- 2 tsp ground cumin
- ¼ tsp salt, divided
- 8 to 10 small flour tortillas

Salsa fresca

- 3 plum tomatoes, finely chopped
- 1 tsp lime zest
- 2 tbsp finely chopped cilantro
- ½ cup regular sour cream
- lime wedges, for serving

1. Position rack in centre of oven, then preheat to 450F.
2. Toss chicken with bell peppers, onion and oil on a large baking sheet until coated. Season with chili powder, cumin, ½ tsp salt and pepper. Roast, stirring halfway, until chicken is cooked through and vegetables are golden brown, about 18 to 20 min.
3. For salsa fresca, stir tomatoes with lime zest, cilantro and remaining ¼ tsp salt in a small bowl. Season with pepper.
4. Divide chicken mixture among warmed tortillas, then top with salsa fresca and sour cream. Garnish with more cilantro, if desired. Serve with lime wedges.

MAKES 4 SERVINGS. PER SERVING: CALORIES 504, PROTEIN 33 G, CARBS 46 G, FAT 22 G, FIBRE 5 G, IRON 5 MG, SODIUM 1,014 MG. EXCELLENT SOURCE OF VITAMIN A.



LOADED POTATO + BEAN SOUP

PREP 20 MIN TOTAL 40 MIN

- 2 tbsp butter
- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 russet potatoes, peeled and cut in ½-in. cubes
- 398-mL can cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
- 3 cups vegetable broth
- ½ tsp salt
- ¼ cup grated cheddar cheese
- 1 green onion, finely chopped
- 2 tbsp finely chopped sun-dried tomatoes in oil

1. Melt butter in a large pot set over medium heat. Add onion and garlic. Cook, stirring occasionally, until softened, 3 to 4 min. Stir in potatoes, beans, broth, salt and 2 cups water. Season with pepper. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to medium-low. Simmer until potatoes are tender when pressed with a fork, about 13 to 15 min.
2. Purée soup using an immersion blender until smooth, or transfer in batches to a blender and whirl until smooth. Divide among bowls. Top with cheddar, green onion and sun-dried tomatoes.

MAKES 4 SERVINGS. PER SERVING: CALORIES 272, PROTEIN 11 G, CARBS 40 G, FAT 9 G, FIBRE 7 G, IRON 2 MG, SODIUM 1,102 MG. GOOD SOURCE OF VITAMIN B6.



PESTO PASTA WITH SAUSAGE MEATBALLS

PREP 20 MIN TOTAL 20 MIN

- 340 g spaghetti
- 3 mild Italian sausages, casings removed
- 1 tsp olive oil
- 2 pints cherry tomatoes, halved
- ½ cup store-bought basil pesto
- ½ cup grated Parmesan
- basil leaves (optional)

1. Cook pasta following package directions, until tender, 7 to 8 min. Reserve ¼ cup pasta water, then drain pasta.
2. Roll sausage meat into ¾-in. meatballs and set aside. Heat a large non-stick frying pan over medium heat. Add oil, then meatballs. Cook, stirring and shaking pan often, until meatballs are golden all over and cooked through, 4 to 6 min. Add tomatoes. Cook until tomatoes just start to soften, 1 to 2 min.
3. Add pasta, pesto and reserved pasta water to pan. Toss to coat. Remove from heat and stir in Parmesan.
4. Divide pasta among plates. Top with more Parmesan and basil, if desired.

MAKES 4 SERVINGS. PER SERVING: CALORIES 674, PROTEIN 28 G, CARBS 76 G, FAT 28 G, FIBRE 5 G, IRON 4 MG, SODIUM 895 MG. EXCELLENT SOURCE OF FOLATE.

Make your own For homemade pesto, combine 2 garlic cloves, 2 cups packed basil leaves, ¼ cup pine nuts, 3 tbsp grated Parmesan, 1 tbsp lemon juice and ¼ tsp salt in a food processor. Pulse until finely chopped. With motor running, slowly pour in ¼ cup olive oil, stopping after every 2 tbsp to scrape down sides with a spatula. Measure out ½ cup to use in recipe and refrigerate remaining pesto in a sealed container for up to 1 week.



TUNA CAKES WITH TARTAR SAUCE

PREP 15 MIN TOTAL 30 MIN

- 2 eggs
- ½ cup plain bread crumbs
- 2 170-g cans chunk tuna in water, drained
- ¼ cup finely chopped celery
- ¼ cup corn kernels
- 2 tbsp mayonnaise
- 2 tbsp olive oil, divided
- 2 tsp Dijon mustard
- 1 green onion, thinly sliced

Tartar Sauce

- ½ cup mayonnaise
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- 1 tbsp relish

1. Beat eggs in a medium bowl. Stir in bread crumbs, then mash in tuna. Stir in celery, corn, mayo, 1 tbsp oil, Dijon and onion until combined. Season with pepper, if desired.
2. Scoop ⅓ cup tuna mixture and form into patty about ½ in. thick. Repeat with remaining tuna mixture to make 8 patties.
3. Heat a large non-stick frying pan over medium heat. Add remaining 1 tbsp oil. Place 4 patties in pan. Cook until golden, about 3 min per side. Repeat with remaining patties.
4. To make tartar sauce, stir mayo with lemon juice and relish in a small bowl. Season with pepper.
5. Serve tuna cakes with tartar sauce and a side salad, if desired.

MAKES 4 SERVINGS. PER SERVING: CALORIES 400, PROTEIN 17 G, CARBS 14 G, FAT 31 G, FIBRE 1 G, IRON 2 MG, SODIUM 481 MG. EXCELLENT SOURCE OF VITAMIN B12.



GROUND TURKEY EGG ROLL BOWLS

PREP 15 MIN TOTAL 25 MIN

- 2 tsp sesame oil
- 1 small onion, thinly sliced
- 450 g ground turkey
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1½ tsp minced ginger
- 397-g bag coleslaw mix
- ¼ cup oyster sauce
- 1 tbsp low-sodium soy sauce
- 1 green onion, thinly sliced
- 1 tbsp toasted sesame seeds
- cooked rice (optional)

1. Heat a large non-stick frying pan over medium-high heat. Add oil, then onion. Cook, stirring often, until softened, 2 to 3 min. Add turkey, garlic and ginger. Cook, stirring often, until no pink remains, about 4 to 5 min.
2. Add coleslaw, oyster sauce and soy sauce. Cook, stirring often, until cabbage is wilted, 4 to 5 min.
3. Divide among bowls, then top with green onion and sesame seeds. Serve with rice, if desired.

MAKES 4 SERVINGS. PER SERVING: CALORIES 249, PROTEIN 22 G, CARBS 11 G, FAT 13 G, FIBRE 3 G, IRON 2 MG, SODIUM 738 MG. GOOD SOURCE OF VITAMIN A.

CHOCOLATE-MINT CANDY CANE THUMBPRINT COOKIES

PREP 20 MIN TOTAL 1 HR + 45 MIN (+ COOLING TIME)

- 2¼ cups all-purpose flour
- ½ cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- ½ tsp baking powder
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 cup unsalted butter, softened
- ¾ cup granulated sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 36 candy cane-flavoured chocolate kisses, unwrapped

1. Stir flour, cocoa, baking powder and salt in a medium bowl. Set aside. Beat butter with sugar in a large bowl, using an electric mixer on medium-high, until fluffy, 2 to 3 min. Beat in egg and vanilla. Reduce speed to low and gradually beat in flour mixture until combined.
2. Divide dough in half and wrap in plastic. Chill until firm, about 1 hr.
3. Position rack in centre of oven, then preheat to 350F. Line 2 large baking sheets with parchment.
4. Scoop heaping 1 tbsp portions of chilled dough and roll into 1-in. balls. Arrange 2 in. apart on prepared sheets.
5. Bake until tops begin to crack, 10 to 11 min. Remove cookies from oven, then gently press 1 chocolate kiss in centre of each cookie. Transfer cookies to a rack to cool until firm, about 3 hr or overnight. Cookies will keep well, stored in an airtight container at room temperature, for up to 3 days.

MAKES 36 COOKIES. PER COOKIE: CALORIES 119, PROTEIN 2 G, CARBS 14 G, FAT 7 G, FIBRE 1 G, IRON 1 MG, SODIUM 44 MG.



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