

COOKIES

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5. Bake until the cookies are set in the center and the dough barely retains an imprint when touched very gently with a fingertip, 11 to 15 minutes, rotating the baking sheets front to back and switching positions top to bottom halfway through the baking time. Do not overbake.

6. Cool the cookies on the sheets 2 minutes, then remove with a wide metal spatula to a wire rack; cool to room temperature. Gather the scraps, repeat rolling, cutting and baking in steps 2 and 4. Decorate with royal icing.

Per cookie: 111 calories; 4 g fat; 3g saturated fat; 11 mg cholesterol; 1 g protein; 18 g carbohydrate; 8 g sugar; 1 g fiber; 67 mg sodium; 24 mg calcium

— Recipe from "Baking Illustrated"

ROYAL ICING

Yield: 3 cups

¼ cup meringue powder, see note
¼ teaspoon salt
3 to 4 cups powdered sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
Food coloring, optional

Note: Meringue powder can be found in the baking aisle of many large grocery stores.

1. In a medium mixing bowl, whisk together the meringue powder, salt and powdered sugar. Add the vanilla and ¾ cup cool water and stir or beat on slow speed. The mixture will seem hard and lumpy, but the sugar will dissolve after 4 or 5 minutes and everything will smooth out.

2. Once the mixture is smooth, gradually increase the mixer speed to high, taking several minutes for the transition. Beat at high speed until the icing is fluffy. Add food coloring, if desired. Keep the icing covered with plastic wrap or a damp cloth to prevent it from drying out, if you won't be using it right away or if you're tackling extra-long projects.

Per (¼ cup) serving: 108 calories; no fat; no saturated fat; no cholesterol; 1 g protein; 27 g carbohydrate; 25g sugar; no fiber; 62 mg sodium; 20 mg calcium

— Recipe from "The King Arthur Flour Cookie Companion"

THE ESSENTIAL CHEWY SUGAR COOKIE

Yield: 36 cookies

1½ sticks (12 tablespoons) unsalted butter
¾ cup granulated sugar
½ cup brown sugar
¼ cup light corn syrup
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
¼ teaspoon nutmeg
1½ teaspoons baking powder
½ teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon salt
1 large egg
2½ cups all-purpose flour
¼ cup coarse or granulated sugar, for coating

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Lightly grease (or line with parchment) 2 baking sheets.

2. In a large mixing bowl, beat together the butter, granulated sugar, brown sugar, corn syrup, vanilla, nutmeg, baking powder, baking soda, salt and egg. Stir in the flour.

3. Place the coarse sugar in a shallow dish. Drop the dough by the tablespoonful into the sugar, rolling the balls to coat them. Place them on the prepared baking sheets.

4. Bake for 10 minutes, until the edges are just barely beginning to brown. Remove from oven and cool on the baking sheets for 5 minutes before transferring to a wire rack to cool completely.

Per cookie: 104 calories; 4 g fat; 2 g saturated fat; 15 mg cholesterol; 1 g protein; 16 g carbohydrate; 9 g sugar; no fiber; 54 mg sodium; 14 mg calcium

— Recipe from "The King Arthur Flour Cookie Companion"

SHERPA CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES

Yield: About 50 cookies

2 cups walnut or pecan halves or pieces
½ cup (1 stick) plus 7 tablespoons unsalted butter, divided
1 cup packed dark brown sugar
½ cup granulated sugar
2 eggs
1 tablespoon vanilla
2 cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon kosher salt
1 teaspoon baking soda
2 cups semisweet chocolate chips

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Spread nuts on a baking sheet. Toast until fragrant, about 7 to 10 minutes. Remove nuts; turn off the oven.

2. Measure 1 cup of nuts into a small bowl. Stir in 1 tablespoon butter. When butter melts, coarsely chop the nuts. Let cool, then cover and set aside.

3. When the remaining 1 cup of nuts have cooled completely, transfer to a food processor. Grind until fine, almost powdery. Dump onto a paper towel and let sit until dry, preferably overnight.

4. Melt the remaining ½ cup plus 6 tablespoons butter in a saucepan or in the microwave. Let cool slightly.

5. Combine brown and granulated sugars, eggs, vanilla and melted butter in a mixing bowl. Stir with a whisk or a fork until smooth. Let sit for several minutes, then stir again. Let sit again, then stir for a third time. (This process results in a mixture that has an icing-like texture and produces cookies with chewier centers.)

6. Place ground nuts, flour, salt and baking soda in a large mixing bowl; combine with a fork until nuts are well-distributed. Make sure nuts do not clump.

7. Stirring with a fork, slowly add the wet ingredients to the flour mixture just until blended. Do not overmix. Mix in chocolate chips, then chopped nuts.

8. Cover the bowl and refrigerate at least 1 hour or as long as overnight. (Chilling makes the dough easier to manage and reduces spreading.)

9. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Line two or three cookie sheets with nonstick aluminum foil. Using a 1 ½-inch cookie scoop, drop dough onto cookie sheets, placing them about 2 inches apart.

10. Bake one cookie sheet at a time for 11 to 14 minutes or until cookies are lightly brown at the edges. Let cookies cool on the sheet for 1 minute, then transfer to a wire cooling rack. Note: To minimize spreading, let the cookie sheets cool completely between batches.

Per cookie: 147 calories; 9 g fat; 3.5 g saturated fat; 18 mg cholesterol; 1.5 g protein; 15 g carbohydrate; 10 g sugar; 1 g fiber; 70 mg sodium; 12 mg calcium; 60 mg potassium.

— Recipe by Joe Holleman

CHOCOLATE CANDY CANE KISS COOKIES

Yield: 36 cookies

1½ cup (about 5 tablespoons) butter, softened
½ cup brown sugar
¾ cup granulated sugar
1 egg
1½ cup plain Greek yogurt
2/3 cup dark cocoa powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 ½ cups all-purpose flour
Coarse red, green and white sanding sugars
36 Candy Cane Kisses, unwrapped

ments, therefore setting themselves apart as a special fruit for obvious reasons.

Even if you think all the ancient beliefs about pomegranates are fake news, you must admit that a pomegranate tastes good, it has eye appeal (each seed resembles a garnet), and that you are more

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

2. Beat the butter, brown sugar and granulated sugar until creamy. Add the egg and yogurt, and beat again. In another bowl, stir together the cocoa powder, baking soda and flour. Slowly beat the butter mixture into the flour mixture.

3. Roll the dough into 36 balls and roll them in the red, green and white sugars. The cookie dough will be very sticky. Place on a baking sheet. Bake for 8 minutes. Cool on baking sheet for 1 to 2 minutes. Remove to a sheet of waxed paper on the counter.

4. Press a Kiss into the top of each cookie. Do not move the cookies until they are completely cool and the kiss has set back up. Store in a sealed container.

Per cookie: 90 calories; 4 g fat; 2 g saturated fat; 10 mg cholesterol; 2 g protein; 14 g carbohydrate; 9 g sugar; 1 g fiber; 43 mg sodium; 19 mg calcium

— Recipe by insidebrucrewlife.com

CHOCOLATE HAYSTACKS

Yield: 48 pieces

24 ounces chocolate chips (milk, semisweet or dark)
2 cups chow mein noodles
1 cup toasted nuts; choose from almonds, peanuts, cashews or pistachios
Salt, optional

1. Prepare 2 sheet pans with parchment paper. Set aside.

2. Melt chocolate chips according to package's instructions. Add chow mein noodles and nuts to the melted chocolate and carefully combine until noodles and nuts are well-coated with the chocolate.

3. Heap teaspoons full of mixture onto parchment paper and allow to cool. Sprinkle with salt, if desired. Serve or store in an airtight container.

Per serving: 121 calories; 6 g fat; 3 g saturated fat; no cholesterol; 2 g protein; 15 g carbohydrate; 9 g sugar; 2 g fiber; 144 mg sodium; 7 mg calcium

— Recipe from addapinch.com

SPRITZ COOKIES

Yield: About 66 cookies

2¼ cups all-purpose flour
½ teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon salt
2 sticks butter, softened
½ cup granulated sugar
1 large egg
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

healthy after consuming the anti-oxidant that it provides. The grenadine syrup made from pomegranate is a main ingredient in many cocktails.

If you have garden questions or comments, please write: greengardencolumn@yahoo.com Thanks for reading!

1 teaspoon almond extract Candy decors, optional

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Place 2 large cookie sheets in freezer.

2. On waxed paper, combine flour, baking powder and salt. In large bowl, with mixer on medium speed, beat butter and sugar until pale and creamy. Beat in egg, then beat in both extracts. With mixer on low speed, gradually add flour mixture. Beat just until blended.

3. Spoon one-third of dough into cookie press or large decorating bag fitted with large star tip. Onto chilled cookie sheets, press or pipe dough as desired, spacing 2 inches apart. Sprinkle with decors, if using.

4. Bake until lightly browned around edges, 10 to 12 minutes, rotating cookie sheets between upper and lower oven racks halfway through. Place cookie sheets on wire racks to cool 2 minutes. Using a wide metal spatula, transfer cookies to racks to cool completely. Re-chill cookie sheets and repeat with remaining dough. Store cookies in airtight container

up to 1 week, or freeze up to 1 month.

Per cookie: 50 calories, 1 g protein, 5 g carbohydrate, 3 g total fat, 2 g saturated fat, no fiber, 10 mg cholesterol, 10 mg sodium

— Recipe from "The Baker's Book of Essential Recipes," by Good Housekeeping



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SEASON

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Pomegranates have finally fallen a little in price. They are great anti-oxidants and very healthy for you. Since ancient times they are a symbol of eternal life. All that in a little pomegranate.

Pomegranate amulets and vases were found in King Tut's tomb. Egyptians, Chinese, Armenian, Jewish, Greek, and other cultures have embraced the special qualities of pomegranates. They are reputed to have the same number of seeds as the number of Jewish command-

ments, therefore setting themselves apart as a special fruit for obvious reasons.

Even if you think all the ancient beliefs about pomegranates are fake news, you must admit that a pomegranate tastes good, it has eye appeal (each seed resembles a garnet), and that you are more

healthy after consuming the anti-oxidant that it provides. The grenadine syrup made from pomegranate is a main ingredient in many cocktails.

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DORY

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And, also to be traditional, I placed an artificial poinsettia on the coffee table and then I hung a wreath on the outside door.

Suddenly Christmas had come into my house in various forms of pleasure. George and I had always enjoyed decorating the house for Christmas, both in and out. The rest of the months he left changing décor to fit the holiday up to me

although he enjoyed the results.

Our 72nd anniversary would be coming up in a few days and I thought of him particularly now as I put out our anniversary plate among the Christmas décor.

While unpacking these things and choosing where to place them, I often felt the tug of days that could no longer be and that my plan to do away with all holidays and celebrations was facing failure.

Life would never be the same no matter how hard I would try. Surely unexpected jabs of heartfelt moments would bring tears and longing.

Still, one can never refuse the knock on the door to one's heart and I'm not sure that we should even try.

Even lights on a Charlie Brown tree just in cooperation with one's neighbor can be the door through which love and peace enter.

Merry Christmas!



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