

COOKIES

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deep indentations in one direction only. Reflour the fork each time you use it; repeat with each cookie.

6. Bake for 15 to 20 minutes, depending on the thickness of the cookies. Reverse the cookie sheets top to bottom and front to back once during cooking to ensure even baking. Do not allow the cookies to brown — when done, they should be a pale golden color. Transfer the cookies to a wire rack to cool.

7. These cookies will not be the same size. Match them into even pairs before filling them, and turn them flat-side up.

8. To make the filling, melt the remaining 2 tablespoons of butter in a small saucepan over moderate heat. Bring to a boil and cook until the butter browns slightly; shake the pan gently during the last part of heating to keep the sediment from burning.

9. Remove from heat when the butter has a rich golden color and immediately add the powdered sugar, vanilla and 5 teaspoons of cream. Stir until completely smooth. If necessary, add another teaspoon or two of the cream to make a thick filling. Transfer the filling to a small custard cup or bowl for ease in handling.

10. Place a scant spoonful of the filling in the center of a cookie. Repeat with 4 or 5 cookies. Cover each cookie with its matching cookie and, as you do so, press the cookies gently together to spread the filling just to the edges of your sandwich. It will be easiest if you hold the cookie in your hands so you can turn them around to see where the filling is going.

11. Repeat, filling the remaining cookies, 4 or 5 at a time. The filling will thicken as you work with it, so when necessary stir in a few drops of additional cream. Add only a few drops at a time, to keep from making the filling too thin. Let the sandwiches stand for a few hours for the filling to set.

Per serving: 163 calories; 8 g fat; 5 g saturated fat; 29 mg cholesterol; 1 g protein; 21 g carbohydrate; 2 g sugar; no fiber; 4 mg sodium; 11 mg calcium
— Recipe from "Cookies are Magic" by Maida Heatter

CHOCOLATE-DIPPED ORANGE SHORTBREAD

Yield: About 54 servings

3 cups all-purpose flour, plus more for rolling and cutting out dough
1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
1/4 teaspoon salt
8 ounces (2 sticks) salted butter, room temperature
1 cup firmly packed dark brown sugar
1 large egg
Grated zest of 1 orange
3 tablespoons fresh orange juice
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
6 ounces semisweet chocolate, coarsely chopped

1. In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder and salt. In a large bowl or stand mixer set on high speed, beat the butter and brown sugar until combined, about 1 minute. Beat in the egg, followed by the orange zest, orange juice and vanilla. With the mixer on low speed, mix in the flour mixture until just combined.

2. Divide the dough in half and shape each half into a thick disk. Wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate until chilled, about 2 hours. (The dough can be refrigerated for up to 2 days; if it is too



Hillary Levin/St. Louis Post-Dispatch-TNS

Holiday cookies.

firm to roll out, let stand at room temperature for 15 to 30 minutes to soften slightly).

3. Position the oven racks in the top third and center of the oven and preheat the oven to 325 degrees. Line 2 large rimmed baking sheets with parchment paper or silicone baking mats.

4. Working with 1 disk at a time, briefly knead the dough on a lightly floured work surface until smooth. Roll out the dough to 1/8 inch thick. Dip a 2 1/2-inch round cookie cutter or another shape of similar size in flour and cut out cookies, cutting them as close together as possible to avoid excess scraps.

5. Arrange the rounds 1 inch apart on the prepared baking sheets. Gather up the dough scraps and gently knead together, and cut out more cookies. If the dough becomes too soft to roll out, refrigerate until chilled. Refrigerate any remaining dough while you bake the first batch.

6. Bake, rotating the positions of the sheets from top to bottom and from front to back halfway through baking, until the cookies are lightly browned on the edges and bottoms, about 20 minutes. The cookie tops will not brown, but do not underbake them. Let cool on the baking sheets for 5 minutes. Transfer to wire cooling racks and let cool completely. Repeat with the remaining dough.

7. To dip the cookies, line baking sheets with parchment paper or baking mats. Put the chocolate in a microwave-safe medium bowl. Heat the chocolate on medium, stirring at 30-second intervals, until fully melted. Let stand, stirring occasionally, until the chocolate has cooled to 89 degrees on an instant-read thermometer.

8. One at a time, dip one half of each cookie into the chocolate. Drag the bottom of the cookie

across the rim of the bowl to remove excess chocolate, and place the cookie on the baking sheet. If the chocolate cools and thickens, warm in the microwave for 15 seconds at medium power. Let the cookies stand until the chocolate sets and they can be easily lifted from the baking sheet, about 1 hour.

Per serving: 71 calories; 4 g fat; 2 g saturated fat; 12 mg cholesterol; 1 g protein; 9 g carbohydrate; 4 g sugar; no fiber; 40 mg sodium; 15 mg calcium
— Recipe from "Baking for Friends" by Kathleen King

SUGAR-TOPPED MOLASSES SPICE COOKIES

Yield: 24 servings

2 1/3 cups all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
2 teaspoons ground ginger
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon ground allspice
Pinch (small or large, your choice) of cracked or coarsely ground black pepper
12 tablespoons (1 1/2 sticks) unsalted butter, room temperature
1 cup packed light brown sugar
1/2 cup molasses (not blackstrap)
1 large egg
About 1/2 cup granulated sugar, for rolling

1. Whisk together the flour, baking soda, salt, ginger, cinnamon, allspice and pepper.

2. Working with a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment or with a hand mixer in a large bowl, beat the butter on medium speed until smooth and creamy. Add the brown sugar and molasses and beat for 2 minutes or so to blend,

scraping down the sides of the bowl as needed.

3. Add the egg and beat for 1 minute more. Reduce the mixer speed to low and add the dry ingredients, mixing just until the flour and spices disappear. If some flour remains in the bottom of the bowl, to avoid overbeating the dough, mix in the last of the dry ingredients by hand with a rubber spatula. The dough will be smooth and very soft.

4. Divide the dough in half and wrap each piece in plastic wrap. Freeze for 30 minutes or refrigerate for at least 1 hour or up to 4 days.

5. Center a rack in the oven and preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment or silicone mats.

6. Place the granulated sugar in a small bowl. Working with one packet of dough at a time, divide it into 12 pieces and roll each piece into a small ball between your palms. One by one, roll the balls around in the bowl of sugar, then place them on one of the baking sheets. Dip the bottom of a glass into the sugar and use it to press down on the cookies until they are between 1/4 and 1/2 inch thick.

7. Bake the cookies one sheet at a time for 12 to 14 minutes, or until the tops feel set to the touch. Remove the baking sheet from the oven and, if the cookies have spread and are touching, use the edge of a metal spatula to separate them while they are still hot. Transfer the cookies to a rack to cool at room temperature.

Per serving: 167 calories; 6 g fat; 4 g saturated fat; 23 mg cholesterol; 2 g protein; 27 g carbohydrate; 18 g sugar; no fiber; 162 mg

sodium; 27 mg calcium
— Recipe from "Baking" by Dorie Greenspan

PECAN SQUARES

Yield: 24 servings

For the shortbread layer

Softened butter for the pan
1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
12 tablespoons (1 1/2 sticks) cold, salted butter, cut into 1/2-inch cubes
1/3 cup granulated sugar

For the topping layer

10 tablespoons (1 1/4 sticks) salted butter, cut into tablespoons
1/2 cup firmly packed dark brown sugar
1/4 cup honey
1/4 cup Grade B pure maple syrup, see note
1/4 cup heavy cream
3 1/2 cups coarsely chopped pecans
Note: Grade B maple syrup can be hard to find. If you can't find it, use Grade A.

1. Position an oven rack in the center of the oven and preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Butter a 13-by-9-inch baking pan. Line the bottom and the 2 short ends with a 20-inch long piece of aluminum foil, pleating the foil to fit and letting the excess foil hang over the ends. Lightly butter the foil.

2. To make the shortbread layer: In a medium bowl, mix the flour, butter and sugar with an electric mixer set on low speed until just combined and crumbly. Do not mix into a dough; it should remain crumbly. Press firmly and evenly into the prepared pan. Bake until golden brown, about 30 minutes. Remove from the oven and let stand on a wire cooling rack. Leave the oven on.

3. To make the topping: In a medium saucepan, bring the butter, brown sugar, honey, maple syrup and heavy cream to a boil, stirring until the butter melts. Boil for 2 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in the pecans. Pour and spread the pecan mixture over the crust.

4. Return to the oven and bake until the pecan mixture is bubbling and golden brown around the edges, about 30 minutes. Let cool completely in the pan on a wire cooling rack.

5. Run a dinner knife around the edges of the shortbread to release it. Lift up the foil "handles" and remove the shortbread from the pan. Using a long, sharp knife, cut into 24 rectangles.

Per serving: 162 calories; 11 g fat; 7 g saturated fat; 29 mg cholesterol; 1 g protein; 18 g carbohydrate; 11 g sugar; no fiber; 85 mg sodium; 8 mg calcium
— Recipe from "Baking for Friends" by Kathleen King

CINNAMON BUN COOKIES

Yield: 24 cookies

1 1/2 cups powdered sugar, divided
6 ounces (1 1/2 sticks) unsalted butter

1/2 teaspoon table salt
2 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract, divided
1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
1 egg white
1 tablespoon water
1/4 cup granulated sugar
1/2 teaspoons cinnamon
1/4 cup heavy cream

1. In a medium-sized mixing bowl, cream together 1/2 cup of the powdered sugar, the butter, the salt and 1 1/2 teaspoons of the vanilla extract. Add the flour, stirring just enough to make a cohesive dough. Flatten the dough into a disk, wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate at least 2 hours or until you're ready to use it.

2. On a piece of parchment or waxed paper, roll the dough into a 9-by-12-inch rectangle. In a small bowl, mix together the egg white and water. In a different small bowl, mix together the granulated sugar and cinnamon. Brush the dough with the egg white glaze. Sprinkle evenly with the cinnamon mixture.

3. Starting with the long edge, roll the dough into a log, sealing the edge. Wrap in plastic wrap or parchment and freeze until firm.

4. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. grease 2 baking sheets or line with parchment paper. Remove the dough from the freezer and unwrap it. With a sharp knife, gently cut it into 1/2-inch slices. Transfer slices to the prepared baking sheets.

5. Bake for 12 to 15 minutes, until they're a light golden brown. Transfer to a rack to cool.

6. When cookies are completely cool, sift the remaining 1 cup of powdered sugar into a medium-size bowl. Whisk the cream into the sugar to make a smooth glaze. Stir in the remaining 1 teaspoon vanilla. If not using immediately, cover with plastic wrap until ready to use, to prevent a crust from forming.

7. Drizzle or brush cookies with glaze.

Per serving: 120 calories; 6 g fat; 4 g saturated fat; 15 mg cholesterol; 1 g protein; 16 g carbohydrate; 10 g sugar; no fiber; 52 mg sodium; 3 mg calcium

— Recipe from "The King Arthur Flour Cookie Companion"

WHITE CHOCOLATE CHUNK MACADAMIA COOKIES

Yield: 40 servings

3/4 cup lightly packed very fresh dark brown sugar
1/2 cup quick (1-minute) oats
1/3 cup granulated sugar
1 3/4 cup all-purpose flour, spooned in and leveled
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
8 ounces (2 sticks) unsalted butter, slightly firm
2 tablespoons light corn syrup
1 large egg
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
8 ounces fine-quality white

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