

Local Markets Are Ready for You in the Pre-Holiday Time



It's Christmas Cookie Baking Time

By ZOLA VINCENT

Cookie baking time!
So much fun for the family! The children of the family will enjoy helping with the baking and will have good ideas for the packaging of sweetstuffs for good neighbors, for favorite aunts and cousins and others appreciative of home baking. Thoughtful, handsome gifts at budget prices are yours in ways like these: Cookies like the Chocolate Bars in the mailing box pictured are designed to travel well because they pack snugly. All kinds of inexpensive toys like the drum and wheelbarrow make perfect gift holders for cookies and candies. A visit to the local dime-to-a-dollar store will give you many good ideas. These are best for local delivery for obvious reasons. Cellophane lined with tissue, bringing the edges of the paper together at the top of the toy packaging is the only satisfactory wrapping we've been able to achieve. Ribbons tie the corners that flare. Christmas time and all the time, chocolate continues the favorite flavor of the entire family. So some chocolate goodies are a foregone conclusion. Here we use the small morsels

of semi-sweet chocolate because they melt and blend quickly.
Chocolate Bars
2 packages (2 cups) semi-sweet chocolate morsels
½ cup shortening
1 cup sugar
4 eggs
2 teaspoons vanilla
1 cup sifted all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon salt
½ cup pecan halves
¼ cup chopped nuts
In top of double boiler, put semi-sweet chocolate morsels and shortening. Heat over hot water until melted and mix until smooth. Remove from heat. Add sugar; mix thoroughly. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Stir in vanilla. Sift together flour, baking powder and salt; add to chocolate mixture and mix until blended. Turn into a greased 10 x 15 x ¾ x 1 inch pan. Place (plentiful) pecan halves in rows on top of one-half batter. Sprinkle chopped nuts over remaining half. Bake in a moderate oven, 375 degrees, 20 to 25 minutes. When cool, cut into bars approxi-

mately 2½ x 1 inch. Makes 60 bars.
Here the chocolate morsels are used without melting and retain their shape during baking; a popular idea with many sweet-tooths.
Chocolate Crunch Cookies
½ cup butter or margarine
6 tablespoons sugar
6 tablespoons brown sugar
1 egg
1½ cups sifted all-purpose flour
½ teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon salt
Few drops hot water
½ cup chopped nuts
1 package (1 cup) semi-sweet chocolate morsels
½ teaspoon vanilla
Cream butter, add sugar gradually, blending together until light and fluffy. Add egg and beat thoroughly. Sift together flour, baking soda and salt; add to mixture, mixing well. Add a few drops of hot water and mix until well blended. Stir in nuts, chocolate morsels and vanilla. Drop by teaspoonfuls on a greased cookie sheet. Bake in moderate oven, 375 degrees, about 10 to

12 minutes. Makes 50 cookies.
Christmas Jumbles
Here we work 1½ cups finely diced mixed candied fruits into the dough for colorful, flavorful effect. For tree decorations, make a small hole in cookies with tip of toothpick before baking; insert string when cool. Distinctive ginger flavor. Cream ½ cup soft shortening and ½ cup brown sugar. Add 2 eggs and ¾ cup unsulphured molasses and beat with rotary beater until smooth. Sift dry ingredients together and work into shortening mixture. Work in 1½ cups finely diced mixed candied fruits into dough. Chill one hour. Work with half the dough at a time. Drop by spoonful onto greased cookie sheets and bake. Perhaps you'd like to shape the other half into small balls. Bake in moderately hot oven, 375 degrees 8 to 10 minutes. Watch carefully because these cookies sear easily. Cool and decorate with colored icing and colored sugars, if you like. Roll some of the balls in powdered sugar. Makes about 5 dozen cookies.

Vegetables Abundant In Marts

West coast vegetable bins are overflowing with good things to eat. Potatoes which appear daily on the menus of many families are abundant, of excellent quality and bargain priced. So are onions which are as staple as sugar and flour in most families. Plenty of high quality, crunchy, flavorful celery for the relish tray, for combining with apples, nuts and mayonnaise is making the ever popular Waldorf salad, for seasoning many things and for "creaming" as a vegetable for a change.

Vegetable Buys

Cauliflower is at its snowy white, firm best. So easy to fix; simply steam the entire head or break into flowerets and steam. Pour over it, melted butter, cream sauce, pimiento sauce, cheese sauce and sprinkle generously with paprika and parsley for a holiday season touch. Lettuce has been moving to market in tremendous quantity as the peak of the season passes. Good quality in most markets, unusually heavy heads, reasonable in price when you consider the weight.

Other good vegetable buys include winter squash, cabbage and most of the "roots." Reasonable prices mark cucumbers, eggplant, peppers, sweet potatoes and yams. Fruit buys are loose apples, grapes, small oranges, Comice pears, Tangerines are "in" for the holidays. Their season is short. Children love their kid-glove skinning. Available but in light supply are persimmons, pomegranates, pineapples, some melons.

Meat situation is exceptionally good with beef plentiful and reasonable. Lamb and pork "specials" are offered by most markets. Large turkeys are quite reasonable.

A Gift of Groceries

Consider groceries as "family" gifts. Practically anything that grows or is packaged in the food line will be welcomed. A single jar or an assortment of jams, jellies, pickles, spices, salad dressings, fancy sauces, an individual cheese such as Edam, Gouda or a "Pineapple" or an assortment of fancy cheeses. Fancy cookies and crackers would please any family. Fancy canned meats and pate's would be most welcome.

A quick and easy breakfast dish for a holiday morning is dry cereal topped with apple sauce or canned apple slices. Fruit and main dish combined! Sprinkle with nutmeg, if you wish, and serve with brown sugar and milk or light cream.

Holiday Cookies

Use your favorite rolled-out sugar cookies. Make stars and sugar with gold frosting sugar. Make circles with center removed. Trim wreaths with red cinnamon candies (also angelica bits or pistachio nuts) to look as Christmas wreaths. Bake center cookies with a red cinnamon candy and three green angelica or pistachio leaves.

Rich Baked Oysters Good

Western oysters are less expensive but if you insist on eastern oysters, you'll find them readily available, also. Did you know that a poppa oyster doesn't need a mamma oyster because he is also a mamma? In other words, no single oyster needs help in order to become a parent. Also, before an oyster bed is planted, it is literally vacuum cleaned to remove starfish and oyster drills which are the natural enemies of oysters. But let us get on with our de luxe oyster baking.

Rich Baked Oysters

1 dozen large oysters
1 large onion
6 mushrooms
½ cup chopped parsley
2 tablespoons butter or margarine
2 cups white sauce
Parmesan cheese
Salt and pepper

Chop the onion, rinse the mushrooms and chop them, then, then cook both five minutes in melted butter. Stir in the white sauce and let boil for 5 minutes. Add the parsley, (rinsed, drained and chopped). Season with salt and pepper. Lay the oysters in a buttered baking dish. Cover with the parsley sauce, sprinkle top with grated cheese and set the dish in a hot oven, 400 degrees, till the top is browned. Six servings.

Try Mustard Butter

Mustard butter, niftily made with prepared mustard is a fine picker-upper for the common vegetables. Try it on cauliflower or beets, Julienne carrots or blended with hot, shredded red or white cabbage.

To make mustard butter, soften one cup butter at room temperature and ½ to ½ cup of prepared brown mustard and if desired, a teaspoon of grated onion. Store in refrigerator until needed for glamorizing practically any hot vegetable at any time.

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Apricot Nectar for Party Punch

Looking for a party punch to serve both young and old? "Frosty Apricot Glacier" is the answer. Similar to an eggnog, it has a base of apricot whole fruit nectar and whipped cream. It's a healthful drink for the children, yet it's colorful and flavorful enough to please one and all. Top each luscious glassful with a bit of whipped cream and a few sprinklings of grated lemon rind and nutmeg.

Frosty Apricot Glacier
4 eggs
¾ cup confectioners' sugar
2 tablespoons lemon juice
1 teaspoon grated lemon rind
1½ cups chilled apricot whole fruit nectar
1½ cups whipping cream
Grated lemon rind for top
Nutmeg
Beat eggs until very thick and lemon-colored. Gradually beat sugar into eggs. Add lemon juice and lemon rind. Stir nectar into egg mixture a small portion at a time. Place 4 tablespoons whipped cream into each of 6 to 8 glasses. Add sufficient nectar mixture to fill glasses three-quarters full. Blend together lightly. Top each glass with remaining cream and sprinkle with a few gratings of lemon rind and nutmeg. Serve very cold.
Serves 6 to 8.

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