

COOKING CORNER

Easy Mix Cookies

Basic Dough:

2 cups butter, softened
1 cup sugar
4 cups flour
Mix butter and sugar until well blended. Stir in flour. Roll, shape or cut dough as desired into about 2-in. pieces. Place on an ungreased cookie sheet. Bake at 350°F for 10-14 minutes or until lightly browned. Cool on cookie sheet 5 minutes. Remove cookies and cool on wire racks.

Yield: About 3 dozen cookies (recipe can be halved or doubled)

Flavor Variations

Jam Thumbprints:

Shape basic dough into 1-in. balls and flatten slightly. Indent centers and bake. Fill baked cookies with your favorite jam or jelly.

Almond Crescents:

Stir in a few spoonfuls of ground almonds. Form rounded tsp. of dough into 2-inch crescent shapes and bake. Cool. Dip one end of each crescent into melted Baker's Semi-Sweet Chocolate. Place on wax paper to dry.

Jell-O Flowers:

Use 2 packets (3 oz. each) of Jell-O Gelatin Dessert instead of sugar. For two different flavors, divide recipe in half and use 1 packet strawberry for half and 1 packet lime for the other half. Roll out dough and cut into flowers or other shapes.

Peanut Butter:

Add 1/3 cup smooth peanut butter to butter and use brown sugar instead of sugar. Stir in a handful of chopped nuts. Pat dough into four 8-in. circles on cookie sheet and cut into 16 wedges. Leave wedges in the circle and bake for 15 min. To decorate, drizzle each wedge with melted Baker's Semi-Sweet Chocolate.

Party Tips

- Mix up at least one batch of dough a day in advance to give the party a head start.
- About 30 minutes before guests arrive, slip a DiGiorno Rising Crust pizza in the oven. While you're eating, read over recipes and decide how baking duties will be divided.
- Play festive music to get everyone in the holiday spirit.
- Plan on doing a little taste testing during the evening. Be ready with a pot of Maxwell House coffee ready to brew. For extra holiday spice, sprinkle cinnamon over the coffee in the filter before brewing.
- Remember to have everyone bring cookie tins or freezer containers to take the sweets home. And give each guest a copy of the recipe.

For more holiday entertaining ideas, see the current issue of food&family magazine. To receive a free copy of food&family magazine, visit kraftfoods.com/magazine.

Snickers Surprises

2 sticks butter (softened)
1 cup creamy peanut butter
1 cup light brown sugar

1 cup sugar
2 eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla
3 1/2 cups all-purpose flour (sifted)
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 bag Snickers Miniatures Powdered Sugar
1 bag Dove Milk or Dark Chocolate Promises, optional

Combine butter, peanut butter and sugars using a mixer on a medium to low speed until light and fluffy.

Slowly add eggs and vanilla until thoroughly combined. Then mix in flour, salt and baking soda.

Cover and chill dough for 2 to 3 hours.

Unwrap each Miniature. Remove dough from refrigerator. Divide into 1-tablespoon pieces and flatten. Place one Miniature in the center of each piece of dough.

Form dough into a ball around each Miniature. Place on a greased cookie sheet and bake at 325° F for 10 to 12 minutes. (Baking time and temperature may need to be adjusted if using more than 1 tablespoon of dough per cookie.) Let cookies cool on baking rack or waxed paper. Sift powdered sugar on top of cookies.

(Hint: Spruce up Snickers Surprises by drizzling melted Milk or Dark Chocolate Promises over top of each cookie. Recipe can also be made with 1 batch of prepared peanut butter cookie dough.)

This recipe and others can be found on www.mars-brightideas.com/cookies. Makes 2 dozen cookies.

Alton Brown's Yogurt Pumpkin Pie

Ingredients

1 1/2 cups of Dannon Plain Yogurt
15 oz can of Pumpkin puree
3/4 cup dark brown sugar
1/2 teaspoon of cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon of ground cloves
1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
5 egg yolks
1/8 teaspoon salt
One 9" frozen pie shell
Heat oven to 350°F.

In a large mixing bowl, combine all ingredients and whisk until smooth. Pour this batter into the pie shell and place on a sheet pan. Bake for 50 to 55 minutes. Remove and cool for one hour.

Cover and refrigerate 2 hours before cutting. Serving size, 143g; Calories, 230; Calories from fat, 90; Total Fat, 10g; Saturated Fat, 3g; Cholesterol, 140mg; Sodium, 310 mg; Carbohydrates, 29g; Dietary Fiber, 2g; Protein, 5g; Calcium, 10 percent DV

Original Chex® Party Mix

6 tablespoons butter or margarine
2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
1-1/2 teaspoons seasoned salt
3/4 teaspoon garlic powder
1/2 teaspoon onion powder
3 cups Corn Chex® cereal

3 cups Rice Chex® cereal
3 cups Wheat Chex® cereal
1 cup mixed nuts
1 cup pretzels
1 cup garlic-flavor bite-sized bagel chips or regular-sized bagel chips, broken into 1-inch pieces

Heat oven to 250°F. Melt butter in large roasting pan in oven. Stir in seasonings. Gradually stir in remaining ingredients until evenly coated. Bake 1 hour, stirring every 15 minutes. Spread on paper towels to cool. Store in airtight container. Makes 12 cups snack mix. For more holiday ideas visit www.chex.com.

Cream Cheese Ginger Muffins

by Julie Stutzman
Makes one dozen

2 1/4 cups cake flour
1 1/4 teaspoons baking soda
1 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon ground cloves
1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
1/3 cup shortening
1/3 cup sugar
3/4 cup molasses
3/4 cup hot water, divided
1 egg, lightly beaten

For the Filling:
8 ounces cream cheese
1/4 cup sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 egg
Heat oven to 350 degrees. In a small bowl, combine flour, baking soda, salt, and spices. Set aside. In mixer, cream sugar and shortening; add molasses. Alternately add 1/2 of the flour mixture and 1/2 of hot water, mixing well after each addition and ending with the flour. With mixer running, gradually add the egg, mixing until it is combined; continue to mix for 2 minutes.

Make filling: In a small mixing bowl, combine cream cheese, sugar, vanilla and egg. Beat until smooth. Set aside. Pour batter into a T-Fal Patisserie 12-cup non-stick muffin pan, filling cups to half full. Add a heaping tablespoon of the cream cheese mixture to each. Bake at 350 degrees for 20 to 30 minutes, until done.

Sesame Almond Thumbprints

by Mindee Perdue
Makes 3 dozen cookies

1 1/2 cups all purpose flour
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
3/4 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup unsalted butter
1/4 cup unsalted crunchy almond butter
1/4 cup tahini (sesame seed paste)
1/2 teaspoon almond extract
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/2 cup light brown sugar
1/2 cup sugar

2 tablespoons sesame seeds
1 egg
2 cups sliced raw almonds
Granulated sugar, for rolling cookies
1 cup raspberry preserves
Preheat oven to 350° F. Line baking sheets with parchment paper.

In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder and salt and set aside.

In a large mixing bowl, cream together butter, almond butter, tahini, extracts, and sugars. Stir in sesame seeds and 1/2 of the dry ingredients. Add the egg; mix well. Add the rest of the dry ingredients and stir just until mixed. Form the dough into 1" round balls and roll in the sliced almonds, pressing to adhere. Then, roll in the granulated sugar and place on two T-Fal Patisserie non-stick baking sheets. Make a thumbprint in the center of each cookie and fill with 1/4 teaspoon raspberry preserves. Bake for 13-15 minutes or until edges are lightly browned. Transfer to a cooling rack.

For more great baking recipes, visit www.t-fal.com.

Cook

- Defrost food in the refrigerator, in the microwave or in cold water. Cook food thawed in the microwave or in cold water immediately after defrosting.
- Avoid eating foods that include raw or partially cooked eggs, unless eggs are pasteurized. When making eggnog, be sure to only use pasteurized eggs.
- Whole poultry should be cooked until it reaches an internal temperature of 180 degrees F on a food thermometer. Never eat rare or undercooked poultry.
- Ground meat should be cooked thoroughly to 160 degrees F on a food thermometer, while roasts and steaks should be cooked to at least 145 degrees F, and fish should be cooked until it is opaque or white and flakes easily with a fork.

Chill

- Place hot foods in chafing dishes, crock pots and warming trays to keep at 140 degrees F or warmer, and keep cold foods at 40 degrees F or cooler by placing in bowls of ice.
- The refrigerator should be set at or below 40 degrees F and the freezer should be set at or below 0 degrees F. Occasionally check these temperatures with an appliance thermometer.
- With poultry and other stuffed meats, remove the stuffing and refrigerate in a separate container.

For more information on practicing safe food handling, visit www.fightbac.org or www.wal.martstores.com, click on Tip Sheet and Fight Bac!®

Safety tips

Clean

- Always wash hands with soapy warm water. For best results, rub hands together for 20 seconds before rinsing thoroughly.
- After preparing raw foods on a cutting board, wash with hot soapy water, run through the dishwasher or use a solution of 1 tsp. bleach and 1 quart water to sanitize board. Rinse well after sanitizing.
- Use paper towels to clean up kitchen surfaces. Or, if using cloth towels, wash often in a hot cycle of the washing machine.
- Place raw foods in sealed containers to prevent cross-contamination with other foods or kitchen surfaces.
- Store raw meat, poultry and seafood on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator so juices don't drip onto other foods.
- If possible, use two cutting boards, one for fresh produce and a separate one for raw meat, poultry and seafood.
- Never place cooked food back onto the plate or cutting board that previously held raw food.

Kings Mountain Weather Report

(Compiled by Kenneth Kitzmiller)

	Dec. 23-29	Year Ago
Total precipitation	2.07	.17
Maximum 1 day	1.99 (24th)	.17 (23rd)
Month to date	6.06	2.80
Year to date	47.27	38.84
Low temp.	24 (25th, 26th)	24 (24th)
High temp.	66 (29th)	60 (29th)
Avg. temp.	38.6	41.1

CAROLINA FAMILY CARE, P.A.

"Family Practice Dedicated to Quality Personalized Care"

Comprehensive Care for Infants, Children and Adults.

Two Convenient Locations to Serve You
Kings Mountain and Boiling Springs

Accepting New Patients and their families.
Accepting Most Insurance, including
BCBS Costwise, Medcost, Cigna,
Healthcare Savings, Medicare
and Primary Physician Care PPO

707 West King Street
Kings Mountain, NC 28086
(704) 734-0001

327-A West College Avenue
Boiling Springs, NC 28017
(704) 434-0101

DEEPAK R. GELOT, M.D.



SPECIAL DELIVERY
GROUP OB TOURS

WHAT TO EXPECT AND WHEN TO EXPECT IT.

Register now for Cleveland Regional Medical Center's next
"Special Delivery" OB Tour.

See the Birthing rooms, visit the nursery, ask questions
and gain information.

What: Group OB Tour

When: January 12, 2-4 p.m.

Where: Women's Life Center
Cleveland Regional Medical Center
704-487-3983 to register



Cleveland Regional Medical Center
Carolinas HealthCare System

Women's Life Center
Health and Education

www.clevelandregional.org

STOP CLEANING GUTTERS!

SAVE \$300 off our already low off-season rates!

Someday you'll decide to make gutters off your list of worries. And when you compare all the no-clog gutters — the awkward add-ons, the flimsy systems — chances are you'll choose GutterGuard™. Most people do.

Because it's good enough to offer the strongest guarantee in the business: If it ever clogs, we'll clean it. Period.

Buy GutterGuard™ now and you'll save \$300 off our already low off-season rates. Just present this ad after your free quote.

To schedule a free consultation, call
704-869-0454 or **1-877-637-1790**
or visit www.gutterguardnc.com

Our patented system offers the most durable and effective gutter you can buy.
You'll never have to clean your gutters again.

Guaranteed. If your GutterGuard™ system EVER clogs, WE'LL clean it.

GutterGuard™
America's Choice for Clog-free Gutters

Serving All Counties Surrounding Charlotte