



10 Best

Christmas Cookie Recipes



Nothing smells better than holiday cookies baking on a cold winter's night. A fire going in the fireplace, some hot chocolate or even a cold glass of milk, and warm cookies straight from the oven are enough to bring back all the fond memories of childhood.

Thankfully, making cookies is not very difficult, even for the beginner baker. In addition, it's something you can usually do with your children or grandchildren. It's tasty fun for the whole family. The following ten cookie recipes are sure to bring you and your family much joy and many new memories.

Holiday Fig Fruitcake Cookies

Yield: About 5 dozen small cookies

You've heard of the holiday fruitcake - you know the one that's been passed around for generations and no one ever eats? Or so the story goes. Well, the same cannot be said for these delicious cookies that are full to the brim of delightful candied and dry fruit. You will love these. They make a great gift, wrapped in a nice holiday-themed tin.



Ingredients

1/2 pound dried figs
1/4 pound raisins
2 ounces candied cherries, coarsely chopped
2 ounces dried apricots, coarsely chopped
1 tablespoon honey
2 tablespoons dry sherry
1 tablespoon freshly squeezed lemon juice
6 ounces chopped pecans
1 pinch table salt
1/2 pound unsalted butter, at room temperature
1/2 teaspoon ground cloves
1/2 cup superfine sugar
1/3 cup light brown sugar, firmly packed
1 extra large egg
2 2/3 cups all-purpose flour
1/8 teaspoon table salt

Instructions

Begin by preparing the fruit and nuts. Cut off the hard stems of the figs and discard. Then, using your favorite tool, coarsely chop the figs as well as the cherries, apricots, and pecans. Set each aside after chopping.

In a large bowl with a lid, add the figs, raisins, cherries, apricots, honey, sherry, lemon juice, pecans, and a pinch of salt. Mix gently but well.

Place the lid on the bowl and let the fruit mixture sit overnight, at room temperature. This allows the fruit to marinate.

In a large bowl, add the butter, cloves, superfine sugar, and brown sugar. Cream the ingredients together using a mixer set on medium speed.

Change the speed to low and add the egg. Mix well. Slowly add the flour and 1/8 teaspoon salt until well combined. Add the fruit and nut mixture that marinated overnight as well as the liquid. Mix thoroughly, until the liquid has been absorbed and firm dough has formed. Set aside.

Tear off or cut two pieces of wax paper that are 12x20 inches in size. Place these on a large surface like a kitchen table, where you will have room to roll the dough.

Divide the dough in half, placing each half on the long edge of the waxed paper. Roll each half into a log that is 1 1/2 to 1 3/4 inches thick. This should make the log approximately 16-18 inches long. Wrap the paper around the finished log, twisting the excess paper on the ends of the log to close.

Refrigerate or freeze the dough for several hours. The log should be very firm but not frozen through, making it easier to cut and bake. You may opt to freeze the first dough log that you will bake, leaving the remaining log in the refrigerator while you slice and bake the first log. This works well if you plan to bake both logs in one day.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit.

With a small, sharp knife, cut the log into 1/2 inch thick slices. Place the slices 1/2 inch apart on an ungreased cookie sheet and bake for 15 minutes, or until they are a light golden brown. It is important to keep the dough log you are working with firm while baking the first batch of cookies. Pop the partial log in the freezer for a few minutes any time it starts to soften or becomes too difficult to slice.

Recipe adapted from: <http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/ina-garten/fruitcake-cookies-recipe.html>

Nutty Lemon Peel Shortbread Cookies

Yield: About 2 dozen cookies

Shortbread brings back memories of holidays of old, but the nutty lemon flavor of these will bring something new. For everyone on your list and in your family who loves shortbread, these will be a winner that they'll beg for year after year.

Ingredients

1 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
2 tablespoons finely chopped pecans
3 tablespoons sugar
2 teaspoons finely shredded lemon peel
1/2 cup butter
Lemon sugar (optional – ingredient and instructions below)



Instructions

Preheat the oven to 325 degrees Fahrenheit.

Chop the pecans and shred the lemon peel. Place in a medium mixing bowl. To this bowl, add the flour, 3 tablespoons sugar, and the lemon peel. Add the butter, cutting it in until the fine crumbs begin to cling together.

Knead the crumbly dough until it is smooth. Form into a ball.

Lightly flour the surface where you plan to work. Roll out the dough into a single layer that is about 1/2 inch thick.

Using cookie cutters that are about 1 1/2 inches but no larger than 3 inches wide, cut out your desired shapes.

On an ungreased cookie sheet, place your cookies 1 inch apart.

Sprinkle lemon sugar on cookie tops to decorate and to add an extra lemony flavor (optional). Bake for about 18 minutes for small cookies or about 22 minutes for large cookies. Watch the cookies closely. When the edges of the cookies start to brown and the centers are set, the cookies should be ready.

Once out of the oven, transfer the hot cookies from the cookie sheet to a wire cooling rack.

Note: Although you can purchase lemon sugar, you may prefer to make your own so that you always have a supply on hand when it's needed.

Lemon Sugar Ingredients

2 cups granulated sugar
1-2 fresh lemons

Lemon Sugar Instructions

In a medium mixing bowl, add 2 cups of sugar. Set aside.

Using a fine grater or zester, grate the yellow peel from the lemon into the mixing bowl with the sugar. Make sure that you only grate the yellow peel, not the white part or pith. For a stronger lemon flavor, add the zest of an additional lemon to the sugar and mix well.

Place the lemon sugar mixture in an airtight container. Allow the sugar to sit for several days, stirring occasionally to break up any lumps. As a rule of thumb, the longer you allow the mixture to sit before using it, the more lemony it tastes.

After using the lemon sugar for the first time, make any adjustments needed just by adding more sugar or more lemon zest according to your taste.

Recipe adapted from: <http://www.bhg.com/recipe/cookies/lemon-pecan-shortbread-cookies/>

Cinnamon Swirl Cookies

Yield: About 2 dozen cookies

Nothing says holidays like smelling cinnamon in the air. These cookies are like a cinnamon roll only better, because you can eat them with your hands without getting sticky. This recipe dough can be frozen and then baked any time you want the house to smell delicious while preparing hot chocolate.

Ingredients

2 cups all-purpose flour
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 cup tiny cinnamon flavored hard candy
3/4 cup butter, softened
3/4 cup sugar
1 large egg
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
Red food coloring paste
Wax paper, 12 inches wide

Instructions

In a small bowl, combine flour, baking powder, and salt. Set aside.

Using a grinder or a food processor with a knife blade, finely grind the cinnamon candy and set aside.

In a large bowl, add the butter and sugar. Use a mixer, set on medium speed, to combine and cream the ingredients.

When the butter and sugar reach a smooth consistency, change the mixer's speed to low. Add the egg and vanilla extract into the bowl and mix well.

Gradually add the flour mixture and blend until everything is well combined. Be sure to scrape the side of the bowl with a rubber spatula as you blend the ingredients. This helps to ensure that your dough is uniform throughout.

Divide the dough into two portions. Move half of the dough to a small bowl. This will be your cinnamon dough. Set the other half aside. This will be the plain dough.

Over the dough you moved to the bowl, evenly sprinkle the ground cinnamon candy. With your hands, thoroughly knead the dough to mix in the cinnamon candy.

Add the red food coloring paste, mixing the dough well. Add more paste, if needed, to tint the dough to a shade of your liking.



Tear off two 12x18 inch sheets of wax paper and place them side by side on your work surface. Place the cinnamon dough in the middle of one sheet. Flatten the dough a bit by pressing or patting it down. Cover the dough with the other sheet of waxed paper.

Using a rolling pin on the outside of the wax paper, roll the cinnamon dough into a 10x15 inch rectangle. If the paper wrinkles, remove the sheet and replace it with a new one. Roll over the new sheet to remove any indentations in the dough.

Repeat the process with the plain dough which was set aside earlier.

Refrigerate the dough rectangles, still between the sheets of wax paper, until they are chilled yet still pliable, approximately 10-15 minutes.

Take the dough out of the refrigerator. Remove the top sheet of paper from each rectangle. Place the sheet with the plain dough in front of you on your work surface. The long sides of the sheet should be at the top and bottom as you look at the rectangle.

Move the cinnamon rectangle from the wax paper to rest atop the plain layer of dough. The edges of the two layers should line up evenly.

Starting at the bottom, roll the layered rectangles together tightly, as you would roll a jellyroll. Wrap the log in plastic wrap and freeze at least 2 hours. The dough should be firm enough to slice without flattening the roll as you slice the dough into cookies.

Preheat the oven to 325 degrees Fahrenheit and lightly grease a large cookie sheet.

Remove the firm log of dough from the freezer and place on your work area or large cutting board.

Use a sharp knife to cut the dough into slices, approximately 1/4 inch thick. Place the cookie slices on your baking sheet. Space them about 1 inch apart.

Bake the cookies about 15 minutes or until the edges are a light golden brown in color. When the cookies are done, remove them from the oven and place the cookies on a wire rack to cool.

Adapted from: <http://www.goodhousekeeping.com/recipefinder/cinnamon-pinwheels-2531>

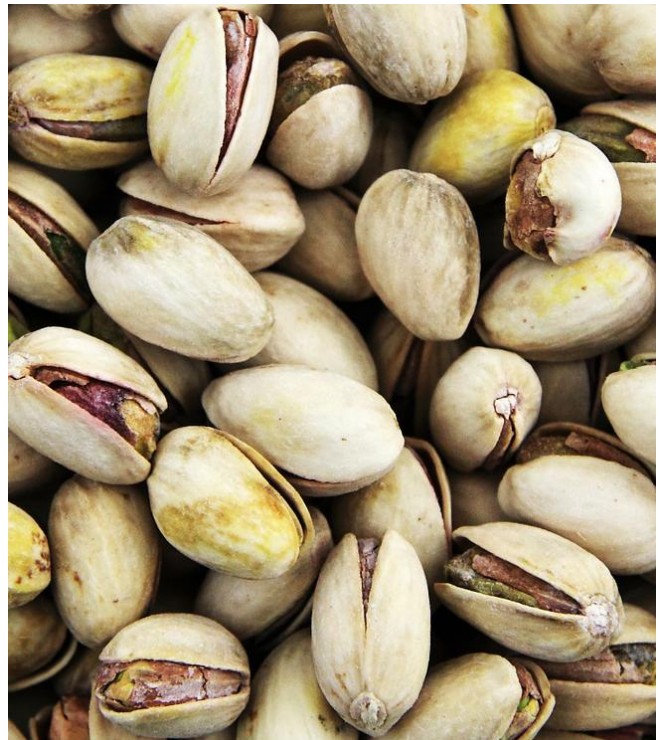
Holiday Lights Icebox Cookies

Yield: About 6 dozen cookies

These cookies look like Christmas decorations with the green pistachio layer and red candied cherry layer. They also taste delicious. If you have a pistachio lover in the family, they will really appreciate these decadent cookies. These cookies store well after being cooked, and freeze well, too – either prepared or in dough form.

Ingredients

2 3/4 cups all-purpose flour
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/8 teaspoon salt
1 cup butter, softened
1 cup sugar
1 large egg
1 teaspoon almond extract
1/3 cup pistachios, finely chopped
Green food coloring paste
1/3 cup red candied cherries, finely chopped
Red food coloring paste



Instructions

Line a 9x5 inch metal loaf pan with plastic wrap, tearing enough wrap to allow it to extend over the edges of the pan.

In a medium bowl, combine the flour, baking soda, and salt. Set aside.

In a large bowl, use a mixer set on medium speed to cream together the butter and sugar. Scrape the side of the bowl several times. The mixture should be light and fluffy, taking approximately 4 minutes.

To the sugar mixture, add the egg and almond extract, mixing until well blended.

Reduce the mixer speed to low. Gradually add in the flour mixture just until blended.

In a medium bowl, add 1 rounded cup of the completed plain dough. Add the chopped pistachios and green food coloring, mixing well to combine.

In a second medium bowl, add 1 rounded cup of plain dough. Into this dough, add in the cherries and red food coloring, mixing well to combine.

In the bottom of the loaf pan, pat the pistachio dough into a layer. Place the pan into the freezer for about 10 minutes. Remove from freezer.

Create a plain dough layer on top of the pistachio layer. Freeze for 10 minutes. Remove from freezer.

Add a layer of cherry dough on top. Cover pan with plastic wrap. Refrigerate until the dough is firm and easy to slice, about 3 hours.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit.

Remove the dough from the loaf pan and discard the plastic wrap.

Starting at one end of the dough, cut slices 1/4 inch thick, just as you would a cake. Then, cut each slice into 3 cookies, using the layer line as a guide.

On a large, ungreased baking sheet, place the cookies 2 inches apart.

Bake the cookies about 10 minutes. The cookie centers should be firm and the edges should be golden brown.

Allow the cookies to cool on the baking sheet for about 3 minutes. Using a spatula, carefully move the cookies to a wire rack to finish cooling.

Adapted from: <http://www.goodhousekeeping.com/recipefinder/spumoni-icebox-cookies-2526>

Coconut Almond Macaroon Cookies

Yield: About 2 dozen cookies

Not much goes as well together as coconut and almonds. These light and airy concoctions are no exception. These delicate cookies should be made right before eating as storing them is harder than some other tougher cookies.

However, the flavor is so delicious that they will disappear in no time. They are so easy to put together as well, and you will know it's all worth it when you see the pleasure that comes across your family's face as they take a bite.



Ingredients

- 1 1/4 cups flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1/3 cup butter, softened
- 4 ounces cream cheese, softened
- 1 egg yolk
- 1 tablespoon milk
- 2 teaspoons almond extract
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 14 ounces flaked coconut, 1 1/4 cups reserved in a bowl
- 2 ounces whole almonds
- Parchment paper liner

Note: Most cookies may be baked on a lightly greased baking sheet; however, delicate cookies such as these macaroons (not to be confused with the one-oh-one cookie), tend to break or crumble when you try to move them. For this reason, it is highly recommended that you use parchment paper or a baking mat to line the baking sheet. Keep in mind that a single sheet of parchment can be used multiple times during a baking session.

Instructions

Preheat oven to 375 degrees Fahrenheit.

Line each of two baking sheets with a piece of parchment paper and set the baking sheets aside.

In a small bowl, add the flour, baking powder, and salt. Whisk to combine these dry ingredients and set the bowl aside.

In a large mixing bowl, add the sugar, butter, and cream cheese. Use an electric mixer to cream the ingredients together until the mixture is light and fluffy. This should only take about 2 minutes.

In the same bowl, add the egg yolk and milk as well as the almond and the vanilla extract. Mix well on medium speed.

Turn the mixer speed to low as you gradually add the flour mixture which was set aside earlier. Mix until well blended.

Before you add the coconut to the dough, measure out 1 1/4 cups of the coconut, placing it into a small bowl and setting it aside for later use.

Add the bulk of the coconut to the dough, scraping the side of the bowl and blending well as you go.

Use a tablespoon to scoop up a rounded spoonful of dough. Shape the spoonful of dough into a ball. Roll the ball in the small bowl of coconut you set aside earlier. Place the cookie ball on the parchment lined baking sheet. Repeat the process spacing the cookies about 2 inches apart.

When your baking sheet is filled, bake the cookies for about 13 minutes or until light brown.

Pour your almonds into a bowl to have them ready for the next step.

When the cookies are done, remove them from the oven. While they are still hot, press an almond into the center of each cookie. Grasp the edges of the parchment paper and slide it onto a wire rack. Allow the cookies to cool completely.

These macaroon cookies are decorated using a single almond; however, you may also decorate them by drizzling melted chocolate over the top of the cookies. Another option would be to substitute a piece of your favorite sugared or candied fruit for the almond in the center of the cookie. You may want to try a pineapple tidbit or cherry half.

Adapted from: <http://www.cooks.com/recipe/673f11bn/almond-macaroon-cookies.html>

Sneak a Peek Cookies with Spiced Jam

Yield: About 3 dozen cookies

Everyone loves filled cookies. These light and delicious cookies will delight and surprise at how difficult they look, but they are really not that hard to make. It's just two layers of cookies put together like a sandwich with jam. This dough freezes well for later preparation and you can keep it in the fridge for a day or two if you want to make the dough ahead and the cookies the following day.



Cookie Ingredients

2 sticks unsalted butter, softened
3/4 cup granulated sugar
3 large egg yolks
1 teaspoon lemon zest, finely grated
1 1/4 cups hazelnuts with skin
1 1/2 cups bread flour
2 teaspoons cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon ground cloves
Confectioners' sugar, for dusting

Spiced Jam Filling Ingredients

3/4 cup seedless raspberry preserve
1/4 teaspoon anise seeds, ground in a spice grinder
1/4 teaspoon ground coriander

Cookie Instructions

In large bowl, add the butter and granulated sugar. Using a hand mixer set on medium speed, cream the butter and sugar together until the mixture is smooth.

Add the egg yolks and lemon zest, mixing the ingredients until the yolks and zest are well incorporated.

In a blender, add the hazelnuts and chop until the nuts are finely ground. Add the bread flour, cinnamon, and cloves. Mix well.

In the large bowl, add the flour mixture to the sugar mixture. Mix on low speed until the nuts have been incorporated throughout the dough and the dough is smooth.

Divide the dough into two portions and pat each portion into a circle.

Cover each circle in plastic wrap and refrigerate until the dough has chilled for about 1 hour.

Once the dough has chilled sufficiently, preheat the oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit. Then lightly grease two cookie sheets, setting them aside.

Lightly flour a large work surface and place the chilled dough on it.

If you have room, roll out both chilled dough circles until they are each 1/4 inch thick. If not, work in batches.

Using a cookie cutter that is about 2 inches wide, gently mark where the first row of cookies will go, making sure to place the cookies as close together as you can. Cut out the first row of cookies. Continue cutting out the remainder of cookies following the spacing of the first row. Remember that a finished cookie will consist of a top and a bottom cookie so think and work in pairs when possible.

Use a small decorative cookie cutter to cut out the center of half the cookies. These will be the top cookies.

Move all of the solid cookie bottoms to one prepared baking sheet, and move all of the cut-out cookie tops to a different baking sheet. Make sure the cookies are divided in this way because you will decorate the tops only and this will make it much easier. Refrigerate any unused dough. Place the cookie sheets on the upper and middle racks of the oven to bake for about 15 minutes, or until the edges are lightly browned. Allow the cookies to cool on the cookie sheet.

Once the cookies are cool, dust the cut-out top cookies with confectioners' sugar.

Spiced Jam Filling Instructions

In a small bowl, combine the raspberry preserves, ground anise, and coriander. Mix well. Spoon the fruit filling onto the solid bottom cookies.

Cover the bottom cookies with the sugar-dusted top cookies to create the final product. Repeat the process until you have used all of your dough and made as many cookies as possible.

Adapted from: <http://www.foodandwine.com/recipes/linzer-cookies-with-spiced-jam>

German Chocolate Cake Nibbles

Yield: About 3 dozen cookies

If you like German chocolate cake, you will absolutely love these cookies because their taste is reminiscent of the famous coconut and chocolate cake popular during the holidays. These are really easy to make, but the results look like you've been slaving all day long. Since these are drop cookies, you need to prepare the batter and the cookie in the same day, although it is super-fast and smells so good you won't mind.



Ingredients

- 2 sticks butter, softened
- 1 cup light brown sugar
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 2 large eggs, beaten
- 2 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup cocoa, unsweetened
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- Pinch salt
- 1 cup semisweet chocolate chips
- 1 cup shredded coconut, sweetened
- 1 cup chopped pecans

Instructions

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees Fahrenheit and lightly grease three baking sheets, setting them aside for later use.

In a medium bowl, combine the flour, cocoa, baking soda, and salt, mixing thoroughly.

In a large bowl, use a hand mixer to blend the butter, brown sugar, granulated sugar, vanilla, and eggs. Set aside.

Little by little, add the flour mixture into the larger bowl with the butter mixture, blending until the mixtures have combined completely. Sprinkle the chocolate chips, coconut, and pecans evenly over the top of the batter. Mix well.

Using a tablespoon, drop a rounded spoonful of batter onto the prepared baking sheet, one for each cookie. You should have at least 1 dozen cookies on a baking sheet, depending on the size of your sheet.

Bake about 8 minutes or until cookies are cooked in the center. Since you can't use the "golden brown" method to judge when chocolate cookies are done, insert a wooden toothpick into the middle of several cookies to check. If the toothpick comes out clean with no batter or wet crumbs sticking to it, the cookies are done.

When the cookies are ready, remove them from the oven and place them on a baking rack to cool.

Repeat the process for each batch of cookies.

Adapted from: <http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/sunny-anderson/sunnys-german-chocolate-cake-cookies-recipe.html>

Chocolate Peppermint Thumbprint Cookies

Yield: About 3 dozen cookies

Ah, decadent chocolate and aromatic peppermint – the flavors of the holidays, in a cookie bite so perfect that you won't even believe you made them yourself. These are also very attractive and store well after cooling. These are amazing as gifts since they look so special and difficult, but the secret will be ours.



Cookie Ingredients

1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
1/2 cup unsweetened Dutch-processed cocoa
3/4 teaspoon salt
2 ounces bittersweet chocolate, chopped
2 ounces mint chocolate, chopped
2 sticks unsalted butter, softened
1/3 cup granulated sugar
2 tablespoons dark brown sugar
2 large egg yolks
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
1 cup coarse sugar (optional)

Peppermint Ganache Filling Ingredients

3 ounces white chocolate, chopped
3 tablespoons heavy cream
1/2 teaspoon pure peppermint extract

Cookie Instructions

In a medium bowl, add the flour, cocoa, and salt. Blend the dry ingredients together and set aside.

Partially melt the bittersweet and mint chocolate in a microwave safe bowl, 30 seconds at a time until the chocolate is almost melted. The chocolate will continue to melt after it is removed from the microwave. Be careful not to overheat the chocolate. Stir the chocolate until it is smooth. If there are still solid chunks, return the bowl to the microwave and heat for an additional 30 seconds. Stir again and set aside to cool.

In a large bowl, whip the butter until it is smooth. Add the granulated and the brown sugar. Cream the butter and sugar by mixing on medium-high speed for about 3 minutes or until the mixture is light and fluffy. Add the egg yolks and vanilla. Mix well.

Take the now cool, melted chocolate and add into the sugar mixture, blending just enough to incorporate.

Now, into the large bowl add the flour and dry ingredients mixture which was set aside earlier.

Mix on low speed until smooth. Be sure to scrape the side of the bowl as you go.

Place the dough on a sheet of plastic wrap that is about 16 inches wide. Pat the dough into a circle that is about 7 inches wide. Fold the plastic wrap around the dough and refrigerate for at least 1 hour, until it is chilled and firm.

Adjust the position of the oven racks to the upper and lower third of the oven and preheat the oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit.

Lightly grease two cookie sheets.

In a shallow bowl, add the coarse sugar and set aside.

Use a tablespoon to scoop up some of the dough and then roll the dough into a ball.

Roll each ball in the coarse sugar and place it on a baking sheet.

Press the back of a melon baller or use your thumb to make an indentation in the center of each cookie.

Bake the cookies for about 10 minutes, until they are only slightly firm.

Remove the cookies from the oven and press the melon baller into the cookies again.

Return the cookies to the oven to bake for an additional 5 minutes, switching the rack placement. You want the cookies to be a bit dry but not hard.

When done, gently move the cookies to wire racks and allow them to cool completely.

Peppermint Ganache Filling Instructions

In a small microwave safe bowl, add the cream and microwave it on high power for about 30 seconds, until it begins to boil.

Drop the white chocolate into the hot cream and allow the chocolate to melt.

After a few minutes, stir the warm chocolate cream until it is smooth.

Add the peppermint extract to the small bowl and stir to incorporate it with the chocolate.

Using a tablespoon, fill the thumbprints in the cookies with the peppermint ganache filling. Top with sprinkles, if you'd like.

Refrigerate the cookies for about 30 minutes or until the filling sets in the cookies.

Adapted from: <http://www.foodandwine.com/recipes/chocolate-mint-thumbprints>

Festive Sugar Cookies

Yield: About 4 dozen cookies

No holiday is complete without sugar cookies. This is an easy, no-roll-out version, and you can decorate them and make them special with many options that might surprise you. If you've previously resisted making sugar cookies, try this recipe. You won't be sorry.

Ingredients

2 3/4 cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
1 cup softened butter
1 1/2 cups white sugar
1 egg
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
3 tablespoons buttermilk



Instructions

In a small bowl, add the flour, baking soda, and baking powder. Blend the mixture to combine well. Set aside.

In a large bowl, add the butter and sugar. Use a hand mixer, set on medium speed, to cream the butter and sugar together until it is smooth.

Add in the egg and vanilla. Mix thoroughly.

Gradually blend in the flour mixture, adding a small amount at a time and mixing well between additions.

Add the buttermilk one tablespoonful at a time. You just want to add enough buttermilk to moisten the dough and make it soft.

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees Fahrenheit.

Use a teaspoon to scoop up a rounded spoonful of dough. Roll the dough into a ball and place it on an ungreased cookie sheet, flattening the cookie slightly.

Using a pastry brush dipped in the remaining buttermilk, moisten the top of each cookie. Then sprinkle with raw sugar or colored sprinkles.

Bake the cookies for about 8 minutes or until the centers are firm and they begin to turn golden. Remove the cookies from the oven and let them cool for 2 minutes before moving them to a wire rack to cool completely.

Decoration Ideas

There are many ways to add some fun, flavor, and visual appeal to your holiday cookies. Here are a few ideas you may want to try.

- Use a variety of holiday-related cookie cutters. From reindeer to mittens and snowmen to candy canes and even snowflakes, there are many cookie cutters shapes available today you are sure to find just what you're looking for.
- Enhance the cookie's taste by using flavored sugars to decorate.
- Mix a little powdered drink mix with granulated sugar and sprinkle on the cookies.
- Draw or paint on the cookies using [this simple icing recipe](#).
- Use a small stencil and colored sugar or food coloring to add a design or symbol quickly.
- Personalize or add fine details to cookies using food decorator pens.
- Fruit leather and miniature candies can be used to create clothing for snowmen. Large grain sugar makes snowflake cookies sparkle. Taffy can be stretched to just about any shape and size.

Recipe adapted from: <http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/chewy-sugar-cookies-recipe.html>

Gingerbread Cookies

Yield: About 2 dozen cookies

Gingerbread is the stuff holidays are made of. The smell just screams holidays. Plus, you can do so much with the forgiving dough from these gingerbread cookies. You can make them any shape you want; you can use them to make a gingerbread house, or even as edible decorations for your tree. You can, of course, make this dough ahead and freeze for later use, or keep in the fridge for up to three days before use.



Ingredients

1/2 cup butter, softened
3/4 cup packed dark brown sugar
1/3 cup molasses
1 egg
2 tablespoons water
2-2/3 cups all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons ground ginger
1 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
1/2 teaspoon allspice

Instructions

In a large bowl, add the butter and brown sugar. Use a mixer, set on medium speed, to cream the ingredients into a light, fluffy mixture.

Add the molasses, egg, and water. Mix until combined thoroughly.

In a small bowl, add the flour, ginger, baking soda, salt, cinnamon, nutmeg, and allspice.

Gradually add the flour mixture to the butter and brown sugar mixture. Blend until all ingredients are well combined and the dough is uniform throughout.

Divide the dough in half, placing each half into a small bowl. Cover each bowl with plastic wrap and refrigerate for about 30 minutes. When it is ready, the dough should be firm and easy to handle.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit and lightly grease two baking sheets, setting these aside for later use.

Lightly flour your work surface and add some flour into a shallow dish. The dish should be big enough to hold several cookie cutters that are about 4 inches on the longest side.

Place your cookie cutters in the dish and set the dish aside.

On your floured work surface, roll out each half of the chilled dough to be about 1/8 inch thick. Use the floured cookie cutters to cut out the gingerbread shapes and place the shapes 2 inches apart on the baking sheets.

Bake the cookies about 10 minutes or until the centers are done and the edges are firm.

Remove the cookies from the oven and place them on wire racks to cool completely.

Reroll the dough scraps, continuing to cut out and bake the cookies until all of your dough is used.

Decoration Ideas

When people hear gingerbread cookies around the holidays, they tend to think gingerbread men. However, many other cookie shapes will bring holiday cheer to the table. Check your local baking and/or craft store to see what cookie cutter shapes are available. You should see snowflakes, hearts, stars, snowmen, trees, houses, candy cane, stockings, reindeer, Santa hats, mittens, sleighs, bells and even doves.

Once you choose your shapes, decorating them comes easy. You can flood your cookie top with royal icing. You can use a squirt bottle or Ziploc bag with the corner cut out to make more details and decorative designs. Cookie sprinkles, miniature candies, colored sugar, melted chocolate and even fruit leather are great to use when decorating cookies.

Many people expect to see some sort of icing decorating gingerbread men as well as other holiday-shaped gingerbread cookies. If you like the look of gingerbread icing but aren't up to dealing with royal icing, [here's an easy substitute icing](#).

Recipe adapted from: <http://www.tasteofhome.com/recipes/gingerbread-men-cookies>

Happy Baking!

Even if you just choose one or two of these delightful holiday cookie recipes to try this year, you won't be disappointed. One good idea is to have a holiday cookie party with 11 of your friends. Put each recipe in a jar, let people pick, and have them bring 13 dozen to the party. The first dozen is to enjoy, then the others are divided among the 11 guests and of course you. Then everyone goes home and has 12 dozen cookies of different varieties to share with family and friends throughout the rest of the holiday season.

And, of course...have fun with your recipes. Decorate them in new ways and get creative!



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