

HOLIDAY COOKIES



bon appétit

'TIS THE SEASON TO BAKE (AND EAT) COOKIES!
HERE ARE 31 ALL-TIME HOLIDAY FAVORITES—
ONE FOR EVERY DAY IN DECEMBER

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GRAPHIC DESIGN: CINDY JACKSON

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK THOMAS



GINGERBREAD TREES WITH JUNIPER BERRY GLAZE

MAKES ABOUT 64 COOKIES

INGREDIENTS:

COOKIES

- 2 1/4 cups unbleached all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1 teaspoon ground allspice
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, room temperature
- 1/2 cup (packed) golden brown sugar
- 1/4 cup mild-flavored (light) molasses

GLAZE AND DECORATION

- 3/4 cup half and half
- 1/3 cup (1 ounce) juniper berries, lightly crushed
- 1 pound powdered sugar
- Assorted decorations (colored sugars, nonpareils, and dragées)

PREPARATION

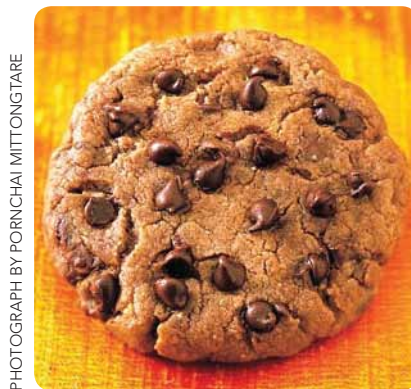
FOR COOKIES: Whisk first 6 ingredients in medium bowl. Beat butter and sugar in large bowl until fluffy. Beat in molasses. Beat in dry ingredients. Gather dough; divide into 4 pieces. Shape into disks. Wrap; chill at least 2 hours and up to 2 days.

Preheat oven to 350°F. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment. Roll out 1 dough disk to 1/8-inch thickness. Using 3 1/2-inch cutter, cut out cookies. Transfer to sheet. Gather scraps; chill.

Bake cookies until almost firm in center, 12 minutes. Cool on sheets 2 minutes, then cool on racks. Repeat, using all dough. **DO AHEAD** Store airtight at room temperature up to 3 days or freeze up to 2 weeks.

FOR GLAZE AND DECORATION: Bring first 2 ingredients to simmer. Cover; chill 5 hours. Strain. Place powdered sugar in bowl. Whisk in half and half by spoonfuls

until glaze is spreadable. Frost cookies; decorate. Let stand until glaze sets. **DO AHEAD** Store between sheets of waxed paper in airtight container at room temperature up to 3 days.



PHOTOGRAPH BY PORNCHEI MITTONGTARE

HAZELNUT-BUTTER COOKIES WITH MINI CHOCOLATE CHIPS

Hazelnut butter gives the cookies a deep, rich flavor. Look for it in natural foods stores. Before measuring the hazelnut butter, stir gently with a fork to mix in any oil that has separated from the butter.

MAKES ABOUT 4 DOZEN COOKIES

INGREDIENTS:

COOKIES

- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 3/4 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, room temperature
- 1 cup creamy unsalted hazelnut butter
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup (packed) golden brown sugar
- 1 large egg
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 12-ounce package semisweet mini chocolate chips (2 cups)

PREPARATION

Sift first 4 ingredients into medium bowl. Using electric mixer, beat butter, hazelnut butter, and both sugars in large bowl until light and fluffy. Beat in egg and vanilla. Beat in flour mixture. Stir in chocolate chips. Cover and refrigerate at least 2 hours. **DO AHEAD** Can be prepared 1 day ahead. Keep refrigerated. Soften dough slightly at room temperature before shaping.

Preheat oven to 350°F. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper. Using 1 level tablespoon for each cookie, roll dough between palms of hands into 1-inch balls. Arrange 1 inch apart on prepared sheets.

Bake 1 sheet at a time until cookies are golden brown, about 12 minutes. Let cool on sheets on racks 5 minutes. Transfer cookies to racks and cool. **DO AHEAD** Can be made 5 days ahead. Store airtight between sheets of waxed paper at room temperature.

ROYAL ICING

This easy icing recipe will work on many holiday cookies and cakes.

MAKES ABOUT 2 CUPS

INGREDIENTS

- 3 1/4 cups (or more) powdered sugar, sifted
- 2 large egg whites
- 1 teaspoon strained fresh lemon juice
- Assorted food colorings (optional)

PREPARATION

Using electric mixer, beat 3 1/4 cups powdered sugar and egg whites until thick and shiny, adding more powdered sugar by tablespoonfuls if mixture is too thin to spread, about 3 minutes. Add lemon juice. Divide icing into portions, if desired, and add different food coloring to each. Cover until ready to use.



PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFF SARPA

CHOCOLATE-GLAZED MOCHA FANS

Tender chocolate shortbread topped with a rich chocolate ganache just might be the perfect gift for the chocoholics on your list. For an elegant accent, decorate the shortbread with gold leaf, place the cookies on a tray or round platter lined with gold-colored tissue paper, and wrap it all up with cellophane and gold ribbon.

MAKES 16 COOKIES

INGREDIENTS:

- Nonstick vegetable oil spray
- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 2 teaspoons instant espresso powder or coffee powder

- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, room temperature
- 1 cup (packed) golden brown sugar
- 3/4 cup whipping cream
- 8 ounces bittersweet (not unsweetened) or semisweet chocolate, chopped
- 2 (3 3/4-inch) square sheets edible gold leaf (optional)*

*Gold leaf sheets can be found at some cookware stores and at specialty art-supply stores. Or they can be ordered from Easy-Leaf; 800-569-5323

PREPARATION

Preheat oven to 325°F. Spray 10-inch-diameter tart pan with removable bottom with nonstick spray. Sift flour, unsweetened cocoa powder, espresso powder and salt into medium bowl. Using electric mixer, beat butter and brown sugar in large bowl until well blended. Add dry ingredients and beat just until dough clumps together. Using fingertips, press dough evenly onto bottom of prepared tart pan.

Bake shortbread until firm around edges and baked through but slightly soft in center, about 35 minutes. Cool 10 minutes. Gently remove pan sides. Using large sharp knife, cut warm shortbread into 16 wedges. Cool completely on pan bottom on rack.

Bring cream to simmer in medium saucepan. Remove from heat. Add chocolate; stir until melted and smooth. Let stand until glaze begins to thicken but is still pourable, about 10 minutes. Place shortbread wedges on rack set over large baking sheet. Spoon glaze over shortbread, allowing some of glaze to run down sides and spreading over sides with small spatula. Chill just until chocolate is firm, about 45 minutes.

If desired, press tip of small sharp knife into gold leaf; gently peel off 1/2-inch free-form pieces. Using knife as aid, carefully press gold leaf pieces onto cookies. **DO AHEAD** Can be prepared 5 days ahead. Store in single layer in airtight container at room temperature.



PHOTOGRAPH BY BRIAN LEATART

PECAN LACE SANDWICH COOKIES WITH ORANGE BUTTERCREAM

The orange juice and grated peel in the icing between these gorgeous crispy pecan lace sandwich cookies makes them an ideal accompaniment to any holiday dessert spread.

MAKES ABOUT 18 COOKIES

INGREDIENTS

COOKIES

- 1/4 cup (1/2 stick) unsalted butter, room temperature
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 2 tablespoons light corn syrup
- 1/3 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 cup coarsely ground pecans (about 4 ounces)
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

FILLING

- 1 cup powdered sugar
- 1/4 cup (1/2 stick) unsalted butter, room temperature
- 1 tablespoon orange juice
- 3/4 teaspoon grated orange peel

PREPARATION

FOR COOKIES: Position rack in center of oven and preheat to 350°F. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper. Stir butter, sugar, and corn syrup in heavy medium saucepan over low heat until melted and smooth. Bring to boil over medium-high heat, stirring constantly. Remove from heat. Stir in flour. Add nuts and vanilla; stir to combine.

Drop dough by teaspoonfuls onto prepared baking sheets, spacing 2 inches apart. Bake cookies, 1 sheet at a time, until bubbling and lightly browned, about 11 minutes. Cool on sheets 10 minutes. Transfer to rack; cool completely.

FOR FILLING: Whisk all ingredients in medium bowl until smooth. Spread 1 teaspoon filling onto bottom of 1 cookie. Top with second cookie, bottom side down, pressing lightly to adhere. Repeat with remaining cookies. **DO AHEAD** Can be made 2 days ahead. Store between sheets of waxed paper in airtight container at room temperature.



PHOTOGRAPH BY SCOTT PETERSON

HAZELNUT SHORTBREAD STICKS

These easy-to-make holiday cookies are coated with milk chocolate and chopped hazelnuts.

MAKES ABOUT 20 COOKIES

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, room temperature
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup finely ground husked toasted hazelnuts (about 2 ounces)
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 4 ounces high-quality milk chocolate (such as Lindt or Perugina), chopped
- 1/3 cup coarsely chopped husked toasted hazelnuts

PREPARATION

Position rack in center of oven and preheat to 325°F. Line large baking sheet with parchment paper. Whisk flour, baking powder, and salt in medium bowl to blend. Using electric mixer, beat butter and sugar in large bowl until smooth. Beat in 1/2 cup finely ground hazelnuts and vanilla. Beat in flour mixture until just combined.

Shape dough by tablespoonfuls into 3-inch-long logs. Place on prepared baking sheet, spacing 1 inch apart. Bake cookies until light golden brown around edges, about 20 minutes. Cool on baking sheet 5 minutes. Transfer to rack; cool cookies completely.

Stir milk chocolate in top of double boiler over barely simmering water until melted and smooth. Remove from over water. Place 1/3 cup coarsely chopped hazelnuts in small bowl. Dip 1 end of cookie into melted chocolate, then into coarsely chopped hazelnuts. Return to rack. Repeat with remaining cookies. Let stand until chocolate is set, about 1 hour. **DO AHEAD** Cookies can be made 2 days ahead. Store in airtight container at room temperature.

PHOTOGRAPH BY SCOTT PETERSON



CHOCOLATE-COVERED GINGERBREAD KIDS

These soft ginger cookies are dipped in dark chocolate for sophisticated fun.

MAKES ABOUT 48 TWO-INCH COOKIES
OR ABOUT 10 FIVE-INCH COOKIES

INGREDIENTS

- 1 3/4 cups plus 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons ground ginger
- 3/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cloves
- 6 tablespoons (packed) golden brown sugar
- 1/4 cup (1/2 stick) unsalted butter, room temperature
- 3 tablespoons mild-flavored (light) molasses
- 1 large egg
- 6 ounces semisweet chocolate, chopped
- 2 teaspoons vegetable oil
- Cinnamon decorating candies or chopped crystallized ginger

PREPARATION

Position rack in center of oven and preheat to 325°F. Line 2 large baking sheets with parchment paper. Whisk first 7 ingredients in large bowl to blend. Stir brown sugar, butter, and molasses in medium saucepan over low heat until melted. Increase heat to medium-high and bring to boil, stirring constantly. Remove from heat. Let cool 10 minutes. Whisk egg in medium bowl to blend. Gradually whisk molasses mixture into egg. Using electric mixer, gradually beat molasses mixture into flour mixture until just blended.

Roll dough out on lightly floured surface to 12x10-inch rectangle. Cut out gingerbread with cookie cutters. Transfer to baking sheets, spacing 1 inch apart. Gather scraps and roll out on lightly floured surface; cut out additional cookies. Repeat until all dough is used.

Bake cookies, 1 sheet at a time, until puffed and tops are firm, about 10 minutes. Cool on sheets 5 minutes. Transfer to rack; cool completely.

Place rack over rimmed baking sheet. Stir chocolate and oil in top of double boiler set over barely simmering water until melted. Holding bottom of 1 cookie, dip top into chocolate, allowing excess to drip off. Transfer cookies, chocolate-side up, to prepared rack. Repeat with remaining cookies and chocolate. Decorate cookies with candies or ginger. Chill cookies until chocolate is set, about 30 minutes. **DO AHEAD** Cookies can be made 3 days ahead. Store in single layer in airtight container in refrigerator. Let cookies stand at room temperature 15 minutes before serving.



PHOTOGRAPH BY SCOTT PETERSON

TRIPLE-CHOCOLATE CRANBERRY OATMEAL COOKIES

Chunks of fresh cranberries and dark, milk, and white chocolate chips dress up oatmeal cookies for the holidays.

MAKES ABOUT 30 COOKIES

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 10 tablespoons (1 1/4 sticks) unsalted butter, room temperature
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup (packed) golden brown sugar
- 1 large egg
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup old-fashioned oats
- 1/2 cup semisweet chocolate chips
- 1/2 cup milk chocolate chips
- 1/2 cup white chocolate chips
- 1/2 cup coarsely chopped fresh or frozen cranberries
- 2 ounces milk chocolate or white chocolate, chopped (for drizzling)

PREPARATION

Position rack in center of oven and preheat to 350°F. Line 2 large rimmed baking sheets

with parchment paper. Whisk flour, baking soda, cinnamon, and salt in medium bowl to blend. Using electric mixer, beat butter and both sugars in large bowl until smooth. Beat in egg and vanilla. Add flour mixture and oats and stir until blended. Stir in all chocolate chips and cranberries.

Drop batter by rounded tablespoonfuls onto prepared sheets, 2 inches apart. Bake cookies, 1 sheet at a time, until edges are light brown, about 16 minutes. Cool on sheets 5 minutes. Transfer to rack; cool completely.

Stir chopped milk chocolate in top of double boiler until melted and smooth. Using small spoon, drizzle melted chocolate over cookies in zigzag pattern. Let stand until milk chocolate sets, about 1 hour. **DO AHEAD** Can be made 2 days ahead. Store in airtight container at room temperature.



PHOTOGRAPH BY SCOTT PETERSON

WHITE CHOCOLATE AND PEPPERMINT COOKIE BRITTLE

A giant cookie is topped with coarsely crushed peppermint candies and melted white chocolate, then broken into irregular pieces.

MAKES ABOUT 24 PIECES

INGREDIENTS

- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 3/4 cup (1 1/2 sticks) unsalted butter, melted, cooled slightly
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/3 cup (packed) golden brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 10 ounces high-quality white chocolate (such as Lindt or Perugina), chopped into 1/3-inch pieces, divided
- 3/4 cup coarsely crushed red-and-white-striped hard peppermint candies (about 6 ounces), divided

PREPARATION

Preheat oven to 350°F. Line baking sheet with parchment paper. Whisk flour, baking soda, and salt in medium bowl. Whisk melted butter, both sugars, and vanilla in

large bowl until smooth. Stir in flour mixture until just blended. Stir in 1 cup chopped white chocolate and 1/2 cup crushed peppermint candy.

Transfer dough to prepared sheet. Press dough into 14x8-inch rectangle, about 3/8 inch thick. Bake cookie until top is firm and dark golden, about 30 minutes. Cool on sheet 10 minutes. Transfer to rack; cool completely.

Stir remaining white chocolate in top of double boiler over barely simmering water until melted and smooth. Using small spoon, drizzle about half of melted chocolate in thin lines over cooled cookie. Sprinkle remaining crushed peppermint candies over chocolate. Drizzle remaining white chocolate over top. Let stand until white chocolate sets, about 1 hour. Break cookie into irregular 2- to 3-inch pieces. **DO AHEAD** Can be made 2 days ahead. Store in airtight container at room temperature.



PHOTOGRAPH BY PORNCHEI MITTONGTARE

PISTACHIO, RASPBERRY, AND WHITE CHOCOLATE BISCOTTI

For variety, dip half of the biscotti in melted white chocolate and the other half in dark chocolate. Or, drizzle the melted chocolate over the biscotti instead.

MAKES ABOUT 3 DOZEN BISCOTTI

INGREDIENTS

- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup sugar
- 3 large eggs
- 2 tablespoons canola oil
- 2 1/2 teaspoons almond extract
- 3/4 cup shelled raw unsalted natural pistachios
- 1 cup dried raspberries or chopped dried strawberries (about 5 ounces)
- 1/2 cup chopped high-quality white chocolate (such as Lindt or Perugina)
- 8 ounces high-quality white chocolate (such as Lindt or Perugina) and/or 8 ounces bittersweet or semisweet chocolate, chopped

PREPARATION

Preheat oven to 350°F. Line large baking sheet with parchment paper. Whisk flour, baking powder, and salt in medium bowl to blend. Using electric mixer, beat sugar, eggs, oil, and almond extract in large bowl until well blended. Add flour mixture and beat until smooth. Stir in pistachios, dried berries, and 1/2 cup chopped white chocolate. Drop dough by heaping tablespoons in two 12-inch-long strips on prepared baking sheet, spacing strips 3 inches apart. Using wet fingertips, shape each strip into 3-inch-wide log, pressing evenly (logs may look slightly lumpy).

Bake logs until lightly browned and almost firm to touch, about 30 minutes. Cool logs on sheet 30 minutes. Reduce oven temperature to 325°F.

Carefully transfer logs to cutting board. Line same baking sheet with parchment paper. Cut each log crosswise into generous 1/2-inch-thick slices. Stand biscotti upright, spacing about 1/4 inch apart, in 3 rows on prepared baking sheet. Bake until pale golden (biscotti may be soft but will firm as they cool), about 20 minutes. Cool completely on baking sheet.

Line another large baking sheet with parchment paper. Place 8 ounces chopped white chocolate in medium glass bowl. Place 8 ounces chopped bittersweet chocolate in another medium glass bowl, if desired. Microwave separately on medium in 20-second intervals just until chocolate is soft to touch, about 40 seconds total (do not overheat or chocolate will burn or seize). Stir chocolate until smooth.

Dip 1 end or 1 side of each biscotti in chocolate; place on baking sheet. Chill until chocolate is set, about 30 minutes. **DO AHEAD** Can be made ahead. Arrange in single layer in airtight container and chill up to 5 days or freeze up to 2 weeks.



PHOTOGRAPH BY PORNCHEI MITTONGTARE

LIME SNOWBALLS

A big dose of lime (from lime juice, zest, and oil) really makes these sing.

MAKES ABOUT 30 COOKIES

INGREDIENTS

- 1 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup cornstarch
- 1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, room temperature
- 1/2 cup powdered sugar
- 2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
- 1 teaspoon (packed) finely grated lime peel
- 1/2 teaspoon lime oil*
- Additional powdered sugar

PREPARATION

Preheat oven to 350°F. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper. Whisk flour and cornstarch in medium bowl to blend. Using electric mixer, beat butter and 1/2 cup powdered sugar in large bowl until light and fluffy. Mix in lime juice, lime peel, and lime oil. Beat in flour mixture until smooth. Refrigerate dough until just firm, about 45 minutes.

Using scant 1 tablespoon for each, form dough into balls and place on prepared sheets, spacing 1 inch apart.

Bake cookies until pale golden on top and browned on bottom, about 23 minutes. Transfer baking sheets to racks; immediately sift generous amount of powdered sugar over cookies. Cool cookies completely on baking sheets. **DO AHEAD** Can be made ahead. Store airtight at room temperature up to 5 days or freeze up to 2 weeks. Dust with more powdered sugar before serving.

*Available at chefshop.com (800-596-0885) and at Sur La Table stores (call 800-243-0852 for locations).



PHOTOGRAPH BY PORNCHEI MITTONGTARE

CHOCOLATE CANDY CANE COOKIES

Peppermint buttercream is sandwiched between homemade chocolate cookies; then the sandwiches are rolled in crushed candy canes.

MAKES ABOUT 18 SANDWICH COOKIES

INGREDIENTS

COOKIES

- 1³/₄ cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup unsweetened cocoa powder (preferably Dutch-process)
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup sugar
- 3/4 cup (1¹/₂ sticks) unsalted butter, room temperature
- 1 large egg

FILLING

- 1 cup plus 2 tablespoons powdered sugar
- 3/4 cup (1¹/₂ sticks) unsalted butter, room temperature
- 3/4 teaspoon peppermint extract
- 2 drops (or more) red food coloring
- 1/2 cup crushed red-and-white-striped candy canes or hard peppermint candies (about 4 ounces)

PREPARATION

FOR COOKIES: Whisk flour, cocoa, and salt in medium bowl to blend. Using electric mixer, beat sugar and butter in large bowl until well blended. Beat in egg. Add dry ingredients; beat until blended. Refrigerate dough 1 hour.

Preheat oven to 350°F. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper. Scoop out dough by level tablespoonfuls, then roll into smooth balls. Place balls on prepared baking sheets, spacing about 2 inches apart. Using bottom of glass or hands, flatten each ball to 2-inch round (edges will crack). Bake until cookies no longer look wet and small indentation appears when tops of cookies are lightly touched with fingers, about 11 minutes (do not overbake or cookies will become too crisp). Cool on sheet 5 minutes. Transfer chocolate cookies to racks and cool completely.

FOR FILLING: Using electric mixer, beat powdered sugar and butter in medium bowl until well blended. Add peppermint extract and 2 drops food coloring. Beat until light pink and well blended, adding more food coloring by dropfuls if darker pink color is desired. Spread 2 generous teaspoons filling evenly over flat side of 1 cookie to edges; top with another cookie, flat side down, pressing gently to adhere. Repeat with remaining cookies and peppermint filling.

Place crushed candy canes on plate. Roll edges of cookie sandwiches in crushed candies (candies will adhere to filling). **DO AHEAD** Cookie sandwiches can be made ahead. Store in single layer in airtight container at room temperature up to 3 days or freeze up to 2 weeks.



PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK THOMAS

HAZELNUT LINZER COOKIES WITH BLACKBERRY JAM

MAKES ABOUT 36 SANDWICHES

INGREDIENTS

- 1¹/₄ cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 3/4 cup (1¹/₂ sticks) unsalted butter, room temperature
- 1 cup powdered sugar plus more for decorating
- 5 teaspoons (packed) finely grated orange peel
- 2 teaspoons grated lemon peel
- 3 large egg yolks
- 1¹/₄ cups hazelnuts, finely ground in processor (about 1¹/₂ cups ground)
- Blackberry jam

PREPARATION

Whisk first 5 ingredients in medium bowl to blend. Beat butter, 1 cup powdered sugar, and citrus peels in large bowl until fluffy. Beat in egg yolks. Beat in dry ingredients in 4 additions; beat in nuts. Gather dough into ball; flatten into disk. Wrap; chill at least 1 hour and up to 1 day.

Preheat oven to 325°F. Line 2 large rimmed baking sheets with parchment paper. Roll out half of dough on lightly floured surface to 1/8-inch thickness. Using 2-inch round cutter, cut out rounds. Using 3/4-inch round cutter, cut out center of half of rounds to make rings. Transfer rounds and rings to prepared sheets. Gather dough scraps; chill.

Bake cookies until golden, reversing sheets after 10 minutes, about 22 minutes total. Cool completely on sheets. Repeat until all dough is used. **DO AHEAD** Store airtight at room temperature up to 2 days or freeze up to 2 weeks.

Arrange cookie rings on work surface. Sift powdered sugar over. Spread 1 teaspoon jam on each cookie round. Press rings onto jam on rounds. **DO AHEAD** Can be assembled 1 day ahead. Store between

sheets of waxed paper in airtight container at room temperature.



PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK THOMAS

CHOCOLATE PEPPERMINT STARS

The fun shape and chocolate and candy cane toppings on these cookies make baking them a great holiday activity for the entire family.

MAKES 36 (LARGE) OR 72 (SMALL) COOKIES

INGREDIENTS

- 1¹/₄ cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, room temperature
- 1 cup powdered sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 6 ounces bittersweet (not unsweetened) or semisweet chocolate, chopped
- 1/2 cup (about 3¹/₂ ounces) finely crushed red-and-white-striped hard peppermint candies

PREPARATION

Sift flour, cocoa, and salt into medium bowl. Beat butter and sugar in large bowl until smooth. Beat in vanilla. Add dry ingredients; beat until dough holds together. Divide dough in half. Shape each piece into disk. Wrap in plastic; chill until firm enough to roll, at least 45 minutes and up to 1 day.

Set rack in center of oven and preheat to 300°F. Line 2 rimmed baking sheets with parchment. Roll out 1 dough disk on floured surface to 1/4-inch thickness. Using 3-inch star-shaped cutter, cut out cookies. Transfer to sheets, spacing 1 inch apart. Gather scraps into ball. Wrap; chill until firm, about 30 minutes.

Bake cookies, 1 sheet at a time, until tops feel firm to touch, about 25 minutes. Cool on sheets 10 minutes. Transfer to racks and cool completely. Repeat rolling, cutting, and baking until all dough is used. **DO AHEAD** Can be made ahead. Store airtight at room temperature up to 3 days or freeze up to 2 weeks.

Stir chocolate in small metal bowl set over saucepan of barely simmering water until smooth. Using small spoon, drizzle chocolate over cookies in zigzag lines. Sprinkle with crushed candies. Drizzle remaining chocolate over. Let stand until chocolate is set, at least 1 hour. **DO AHEAD** Can be made 3 days ahead. Store cookies between sheets of waxed paper in airtight container at room temperature.

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK THOMAS



PISTACHIO AND CHERRY MEXICAN WEDDING CAKES

These butter cookies rolled in powdered sugar complete a Mexican dessert buffet.

MAKES ABOUT 80 COOKIES

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups (4 sticks) unsalted butter, room temperature
- 1 cup powdered sugar plus more for coating
- 2 tablespoons vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup shelled unsalted natural pistachios (about 4 ounces), chopped
- 1 cup dried tart cherries or dried cranberries
- 3 1/3 cups sifted cake flour
- 1 2/3 cups sifted all-purpose flour

PREPARATION

Preheat oven to 350°F. Butter 3 heavy large baking sheets. Using electric mixer, beat 2 cups butter and 1 cup powdered sugar in large bowl until light and fluffy. Beat in vanilla and salt, then pistachios and cherries. Using spatula, stir in all flour (do not overmix dough).

Shape dough by generous tablespoonfuls into football-shaped ovals. Place on prepared sheets, spacing 1 inch apart. Bake cookies, 1 sheet at a time, until bottoms just begin to color, about 16 minutes. Cool cookies on sheets 10 minutes before coating.

Pour generous amount of powdered sugar into medium bowl. Working with 5 or 6 warm cookies at a time, add cookies to bowl of sugar; gently turn to coat thickly. Transfer

cookies to sheet of waxed paper. Repeat to coat cookies with sugar again; cool completely. **DO AHEAD** Can be made 4 days ahead. Store airtight at room temperature.

PHOTOGRAPH BY NOEL BARNHURST



SPICE ROLL-OUT COOKIES

Dry mustard in a cookie? Absolutely. It amps up the spiciness, adding just the perfect amount of heat.

MAKES ABOUT 60 SMALL OR 20 LARGE COOKIES

INGREDIENTS

- 3 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons ground ginger
- 1 1/2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon ground allspice
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/4 teaspoon dry mustard
- 1/8 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, room temperature
- 3/4 cup (packed) golden brown sugar
- 1/2 cup mild-flavored (light) molasses
- 1 large egg
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- Sprinkles or other sugar decorations (optional)
- Royal Icing (optional), recipe on page 3

PREPARATION

Sift flour, ginger, cinnamon, baking soda, salt, allspice, nutmeg, mustard, and cloves into large bowl. Using electric mixer, beat butter in another large bowl at medium speed until smooth and creamy, about 2 minutes. Add brown sugar; beat 1 minute. Add molasses; beat until fluffy, about 2 minutes. Add egg; beat until well blended, about 1 minute. Reduce speed to low; beat in vanilla. Add flour mixture; beat on low speed just to blend. Gather dough into ball; divide in half. Form each half into ball; flatten into disk. Wrap disks separately in plastic; chill until firm, at least 4 hours. **DO AHEAD** Can be made 2 days ahead. Keep chilled.

Position rack in center of oven; preheat to 350°F. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper. Working with 1 disk at a time,

roll out dough between 2 sheets of waxed paper to 1/8-inch thickness for smaller (2-inch) cookies and 1/4-inch thickness for larger (3- to 4-inch) cookies. Using decorative cookie cutters, cut out cookies and transfer to prepared sheets, spacing 1 inch apart. If cookies become too soft to transfer to baking sheets, place in freezer on waxed paper for 5 minutes before continuing. Gather scraps, roll out dough, and cut more cookies, repeating until all dough is used. If not icing cookies, decorate with sprinkles or other sugar toppings, if desired. Bake 1 sheet at a time until cookies are firm on top and slightly darker around edges, about 8 minutes for smaller cookies and up to 12 minutes for larger cookies. Cool completely on rack. Line baking sheets with fresh parchment as needed. Decorate cookies with Royal Icing, then sprinkles or other sugar toppings, if desired. Let stand until icing sets. **DO AHEAD** Cookies can be made 4 days ahead. Store between sheets of waxed paper in airtight containers at room temperature.

INGREDIENT TIP: These cookies are all about the spicing, so use spices that are less than 6 months old. Even better: Grate your own nutmeg; you'll need just a scant 1/4 teaspoon.

PHOTOGRAPH BY KANA OKADA



BROWNIE THINS

These thin chocolate cookies taste just like the very top layer of a brownie.

MAKES 24 COOKIES

SERVING SUGGESTION: WITH MILK
MAKE THESE IN 30 MINUTES

INGREDIENTS

- 6 tablespoons (3/4 stick) unsalted butter, cut into pieces
- 2 ounces unsweetened chocolate, chopped
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 large egg
- 3 tablespoons plus 1 teaspoon all-purpose flour
- 1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/4 teaspoon almond extract
- Pinch of coarse kosher salt
- Nonstick vegetable oil spray
- 1/4 cup chopped pistachios

PREPARATION

Position rack in lowest third of oven; preheat to 350°F. Butter 2 baking sheets. Place butter and chocolate in medium microwave-safe bowl. Microwave on medium-high power until almost completely melted, about 1 minute. Whisk until smooth. Add sugar and egg; whisk until smooth, about 1 minute. Add flour, both extracts, and salt; stir just to blend. Let batter stand 10 minutes.

Scoop rounded teaspoonfuls batter onto prepared baking sheets, spacing apart (12 per sheet). Spray sheet of plastic wrap lightly with nonstick spray. Place, sprayed side down, over cookies. Using fingers, press each mound into 2½- to 2¾-inch round. Remove plastic wrap. Sprinkle pistachios over rounds. Bake cookies, 1 sheet at a time, until slightly darker at edges and firm in center, about 7 minutes. Cool on sheet 2 minutes. Transfer cookies to rack; cool completely. **DO AHEAD** Can be made 5 days ahead. Store airtight at room temperature.



PHOTOGRAPH BY BRIAN LEATART

GINGER-ORANGE STARS

American spice: Powdered-sugar icing decorates these crisp gingerbread-like treats.

MAKES ABOUT 3½ DOZEN COOKIES

INGREDIENTS

COOKIES

- 1½ cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons ground ginger
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- ¼ teaspoon ground cloves
- ¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, room temperature
- ½ cup (packed) golden brown sugar
- ¼ cup robust-flavored (dark) molasses
- 1 large egg yolk
- 1 tablespoon grated orange peel
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract

ICING

- 1½ cups (or more) powdered sugar
- 5 teaspoons water
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract

PREPARATION

FOR COOKIES: Sift first 7 ingredients into medium bowl. Using electric mixer, beat butter in large bowl until fluffy. Add sugar and beat until well blended. Beat in molasses, egg yolk, orange peel, and vanilla. Add flour mixture and beat just until blended. Gather dough into ball. Divide into 4 pieces. Flatten each into disk. Wrap each in plastic and chill until cold and firm, at least 4 hours.

Position racks in top third and bottom third of oven and preheat to 350°F. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper. Roll out 1 piece of dough on lightly floured surface to ¼-inch thickness. Using 2½- to 3-inch star-shaped cutter, cut out cookies. Transfer cookies to prepared sheets, spacing ½ inch apart (cookies spread very little). Gather scraps and reroll dough, cutting out more cookies. Bake cookies 5 minutes. Reverse baking sheets; bake until cookies are puffed and look slightly darker around edges, about 5 minutes longer. Cool cookies on sheets 2 minutes. Using thin metal spatula, transfer cookies to racks; cool. Repeat with remaining dough pieces.

FOR ICING: Sift 1½ cups sugar into medium bowl. Add 5 teaspoons water and vanilla; whisk until smooth. Whisk in more sugar by tablespoonfuls, if necessary, until icing falls thickly off whisk. Spoon icing into pastry bag fitted with ⅛-inch plain round tip or resealable plastic bag (cut tip off bag). Pipe icing onto cookies. Let stand until icing is hard, at least 3 hours. **DO AHEAD** Can be made 2 days ahead. Store airtight between sheets of waxed paper.



TEA CAKE SANDWICH COOKIES

Essentially, these are old-fashioned sugar cookies all dressed up for the holidays. If you want to use icing for decoration, follow the directions for the icing in the **NEW ENGLAND MOLASSES GINGERBREAD COOKIES** recipe on page 11.

MAKES ABOUT 32 COOKIES

INGREDIENTS

- 3 cups all-purpose flour

- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1¼ cups (2½ sticks) unsalted butter, room temperature
- ⅔ cup sugar
- 2½ tablespoons whole milk
- 1 tablespoon grated lemon peel
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract

Nonstick vegetable oil spray
Assorted decorations (such as powdered sugar, icing, colored sugar crystals, and edible glitter)

- ⅔ cup preserves (such as apricot, seedless raspberry, or seedless blackberry)

PREPARATION

Whisk flour and salt in medium bowl to blend well. Using electric mixer, beat butter and ⅔ cup sugar in large bowl until fluffy. Beat in milk, lemon peel, and vanilla extract. Add flour mixture and beat until blended. Gather dough into ball; divide in half. Flatten into disks. Wrap in plastic and chill at least 2 hours. **DO AHEAD** Can be made 2 days ahead. Keep chilled. Let soften slightly before rolling out.

Roll out each dough disk between sheets of waxed paper to 14x11-inch rectangle, occasionally lifting waxed paper to smooth out wrinkles. Refrigerate dough on baking sheets, still between sheets of waxed paper, until cold and firm, about 30 minutes. Place 1 dough piece on work surface. Peel off top sheet of waxed paper. Press same waxed paper gently back onto dough. Turn dough over (still between waxed paper sheets). Peel off top sheet of waxed paper and discard. Using 2¼-inch scalloped round cutter and with dough still on waxed paper bottom, cut out cookies. Using 1- to 1¼-inch scalloped round cutter, cut out center from half of cookies. Gather dough centers and excess dough around cutouts; shape excess dough into disk and chill. Slide waxed paper with cutouts onto baking sheet and chill. Repeat with remaining dough disk, cutting out rounds, cutting centers from half of rounds to make top rings, and gathering and chilling excess dough. Roll out excess dough between sheets of waxed paper, making more cookie bottoms and top rings. Repeat rolling and cutting until all of dough is used.

Position rack in center of oven and preheat to 350°F. Spray 2 large baking sheets with nonstick spray. Using metal spatula to lift cutouts from waxed paper, transfer cookie bottoms to 1 prepared sheet and top rings to second sheet, spacing slightly apart (cookies spread very little). Sprinkle some top rings with colored sugar crystals (or leave plain to decorate later). Bake cookies, 1 sheet at a time, until pale golden, about 8 minutes. Cool cookies on baking sheets 5 minutes. Transfer cookies to racks; cool completely.

Arrange cookie bottoms on work surface. Spread each with 1 teaspoon preserves. Sift powdered sugar over plain cookie rings or decorate with icing and sugar crystals or edible glitter as desired. Press 1 top ring onto each prepared cookie bottom. **DO AHEAD** Cookies can be made 3 days ahead. Store airtight between sheets of waxed paper in refrigerator.



HOLIDAY SUGAR COOKIES

Use any cookie-cutter shapes you like; to purchase ornament-shape cutters, call Jane's Cakes and Chocolates at 818-957-2511.

The frosting recipe yields enough frosting to make four colors, plus about a cup of extra white base for adjusting the shades, if necessary. If you'd like to make additional colors, increase ingredient amounts accordingly.

MAKES ABOUT 36 COOKIES

INGREDIENTS

COOKIES

- 1 cup unsalted butter, room temperature
- 1 cup (packed) golden brown sugar
- 1 large egg
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 ²/₃ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ¹/₂ teaspoon salt
- ¹/₂ teaspoon ground nutmeg

FROSTING

- 9 cups (or more) powdered sugar (about 2 ¹/₄ pounds)
- 4 ¹/₂ tablespoons Just Whites (pasteurized powdered egg whites)*
- 12 tablespoons (or more) water
- Assorted food colorings, preferably Wilton concentrated gel pastes in Golden Yellow, Violet, Moss Green, Red (No Taste) and Sky Blue**
- 4 (or more) small disposable pastry bags**
- Plain round metal tips (¹/₁₆ to ¹/₈ inch in diameter; optional)**

PREPARATION

FOR COOKIES: Using electric mixer, beat butter and sugar in large bowl until fluffy. Beat in egg and vanilla. Sift flour, baking powder, salt and nutmeg over; stir to blend well. Turn dough out onto lightly floured surface and knead gently 1 minute. Shape dough into ¹/₂-inch-thick rectangle. Cut into 4 equal pieces; wrap in plastic and refrigerate at least 3 hours and up to 1 day.

Let dough soften slightly at room temperature before rolling out.

Position rack in center of oven and preheat to 350°F. Butter large baking sheet. Working with 1 dough piece at a time, roll out dough on lightly floured surface to ¹/₈-inch thickness, lifting and turning dough often and dusting surface very lightly with flour to prevent sticking. Using floured 3- to 4-inch cutters, cut out cookies. Pull away excess dough from around cookies. Transfer cookies to prepared baking sheet, spacing 1 inch apart (cookies will not spread). If using cookies as hanging ornaments, push 1 end of drinking straw through dough near top of each cookie; lift straw, then remove small dough round from straw. Gently re-roll dough scraps; cut out more cookies. Transfer to same sheet.

Bake cookies until light brown, about 11 minutes. Let cool 5 minutes on sheet. Transfer cookies to rack; cool.

Repeat with remaining dough pieces, baking 1 sheet of cookies at a time. Cool baking sheet completely and butter sheet lightly between batches.

FOR FROSTING: Whisk 9 cups sugar and powdered egg whites in large bowl to blend. Whisk in 12 tablespoons water. If necessary, whisk in more water by teaspoonfuls or more sugar by tablespoonfuls until frosting is medium-thick and very smooth. Place ¹/₂ cup frosting into each of 4 small bowls; mix colors using instructions in box on previous page. **DO AHEAD** Can be prepared 1 day ahead. Cover bowls and remaining frosting with plastic wrap to keep frosting from drying out. Store at room temperature. Thin frosting in each bowl as needed by mixing in ¹/₄ teaspoon water at a time.

Using pastry brush or small metal offset spatula, spread frosting on cookies; set cookies aside and let frosting dry, about 30 minutes. Cut off small tip from end of 1 disposable pastry bag (cut off slightly more if planning to insert metal tip). Fold down top 2 inches of bag, forming collar. Holding bag under collar and using small rubber spatula, fill bag with 1 color of frosting. Repeat with remaining pastry bags, filling each with 1 color of frosting. Pipe decorations onto frosted cookies in desired patterns and colors. Let cookies stand until decorations are firm and dry, at least 4 hours. **DO AHEAD** Can be prepared 3 days ahead. Place cookies in single layer between sheets of waxed paper in airtight container; store at room temperature.

*Can be found in the baking-products section of most supermarkets

**Wilton food colorings, disposable pastry bags and metal tips are available by mail from Jane's Cakes and Chocolates; call 818-957-2511.



PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFF SARPA

ORANGE-ALMOND LACE COOKIES

The egg makes these a little less delicate (and less likely to break) than traditional lace cookies. Arrange them in a decorative box or tin lined with festive tissue paper, then secure the package with a fancy bow

MAKES ABOUT 24 COOKIES

INGREDIENTS

- ³/₄ cup (1 ¹/₂ sticks) unsalted butter
- 1 ¹/₂ cups finely chopped almonds
- ³/₄ cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons grated orange peel
- ¹/₂ teaspoon salt
- 1 large egg, beaten to blend

PREPARATION

Preheat oven to 325°F. Line large baking sheet with parchment paper. Stir ³/₄ cup butter in heavy medium saucepan over medium-low heat until melted. Remove from heat. Stir in nuts, sugar, flour, orange peel and salt; then stir in egg. Drop some batter by generous tablespoonfuls onto prepared baking sheet, spacing 3 inches apart (cookies will spread).

Bake cookies until lacy and golden brown, about 15 minutes. Gently slide parchment paper with cookies onto rack; cool completely. Transfer cookies to paper towels. Repeat with remaining batter, lining cooled baking sheet with clean parchment for each batch. **DO AHEAD** Can be made ahead. Store between sheets of waxed paper in airtight container at room temperature up to 1 week or freeze up to 1 month.



CHOCOLATE- AND ALMOND-DIPPED SANDWICH COOKIES

Swiss butter cookies with rich ganache filling.

MAKES ABOUT 28 COOKIES

INGREDIENTS

COOKIES

- 1/4 cup slivered almonds
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, room temperature
- 1 large egg yolk
- 1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour

FILLING

- 1 cup whipping cream
- 12 ounces bittersweet (not unsweetened) or semisweet chocolate, chopped garnish
- 6 ounces bittersweet (not unsweetened) or semisweet chocolate, chopped
- 1 1/4 cups slivered almonds (about 5 ounces), toasted, chopped

PREPARATION

FOR COOKIES: Place slivered almonds in processor and add 1/4 cup sugar. Grind almonds finely. Using electric mixer, beat butter and remaining 3/4 cup sugar in large bowl until well blended. Beat in egg yolk, vanilla extract, and 1/4 teaspoon salt. Add ground-nut mixture and flour and beat until moist clumps form. Gather dough into 2 balls; flatten each ball into disk. Wrap in plastic and refrigerate at least 1 hour and up to 2 days.

Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper. Roll out half of dough between sheets of waxed paper or parchment paper to scant 1/4-inch thickness, sprinkling dough lightly with flour as needed to keep from sticking and occasionally peeling off top paper to remove wrinkles. Peel off top sheet. Using 2 1/2 x 1 1/2-inch oval cookie cutter (or cardboard template), cut out cookies. If dough is soft, slide rimless baking sheet under

paper and chill 10 minutes to firm. Transfer cookies to prepared sheets, spacing 1/2 inch apart. Gather scraps and reroll dough, cutting out more cookies. Chill cookies on sheets 15 minutes before baking.

Position racks in top third and bottom third of oven; preheat to 325°F. Bake cookies 5 minutes. Reverse sheets and bake until cookies begin to color, about 6 minutes. Cool cookies on sheets 5 minutes. Transfer to racks; cool completely. Repeat with remaining dough.

FOR FILLING: Bring cream to simmer in heavy medium saucepan. Remove from heat; add chocolate and whisk until melted and smooth. Let cool until thick but still spreadable, about 2 hours.

Place half of cookies, bottom side up, on work surface. Spoon ganache filling into pastry bag fitted with 1/4-inch plain tip. Leaving 1/4-inch plain border, pipe (or spread) ganache on cookies. Top each with second cookie, bottom side down, pressing to adhere.

FOR GARNISH: Stir chocolate in top of double boiler over simmering water until smooth. Place almonds in small bowl. Dip end of 1 cookie in chocolate, then in almonds. Transfer to sheet of foil. Repeat with remaining cookies. Let stand until garnish is set. **DO AHEAD** Can be made 2 days ahead. Store airtight in refrigerator in single layers between sheets of waxed paper.



NEW ENGLAND MOLASSES GINGERBREAD COOKIES

Rather than being crisp, these heirloom cookies are tender and cake-like

MAKES ABOUT 50 COOKIES

INGREDIENTS

DOUGH

- 6 cups (about) all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon ground cinnamon
- 2 teaspoons ground ginger
- 1 1/2 teaspoons ground cloves
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 11 tablespoons (1 stick plus

- 3 tablespoons) unsalted butter, room temperature
- 2/3 cup solid vegetable shortening
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup mild-flavored (light) molasses
- 1 1/2 teaspoons grated lemon peel
- 1 large egg
- 1/4 cup buttermilk
- 2 teaspoons water
- 1 teaspoon baking soda

ICING

- 3 cups powdered sugar
- 1 1/2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 1 1/2 teaspoons light corn syrup
- Water

Food coloring (optional)

Decorations (such as colored sugar crystals)

PREPARATION

FOR DOUGH: Combine 5 1/4 cups flour, cinnamon, ginger, cloves, and salt in medium bowl; whisk to blend well. Using electric mixer, beat butter and shortening in large bowl to blend. Add 1 cup sugar, molasses, and lemon peel and beat until smooth. Beat in egg and buttermilk. Stir 2 teaspoons water and baking soda in small cup to blend; beat into butter mixture. Beat in flour mixture in 2 additions. Stir in more flour, 1/4 cup at a time, until slightly firm dough forms. Divide dough into 3 equal parts. Shape each into disk. Wrap disks and chill until firm enough to roll, at least 2 hours. **DO AHEAD** Can be made 2 days ahead. Keep refrigerated. Soften slightly before rolling out.

Working with 1 disk at a time, roll out dough between sheets of waxed paper to 16 x 12-inch rectangle, occasionally lifting paper to smooth out wrinkles. Using 4- to 5-inch cutters, cut out boy and girl gingerbread people. Pull away excess dough around cutouts; flatten, wrap, and chill excess dough. Slide rimless baking sheet or inverted baking sheet under waxed paper with cutouts and chill until firm. Repeat with remaining dough disks, refrigerating cutouts on waxed paper on baking sheets. Roll out excess dough and make more cookies, using all of dough. **DO AHEAD** Cutout cookies can be made 1 day ahead. Cover; keep chilled.

Position rack in center of oven and preheat to 350°F. Using thin metal spatula, lift chilled cookies off waxed paper and transfer to baking sheet, spacing 1 inch apart. Bake until darker at edges and just firm to touch in center, about 12 minutes. Cool on sheet 5 minutes. Transfer to rack; cool completely. Bake remaining cookies, 1 sheet at a time.

FOR ICING: Sift powdered sugar into medium bowl. Mix in lemon juice and corn syrup. Mix in enough water by teaspoonfuls to form smooth icing soft enough to pipe but firm enough to hold shape. Divide into 3 or 4 portions and tint with food coloring, if desired.

Spoon icing into pastry bag (or bags if using more than 1 color) fitted with small (1/16- to 1/8-inch) plain tip. Arrange cookies on work surface. Pipe icing onto cookies in desired patterns. Apply decorations as desired. Let cookies stand until icing is dry. **DO AHEAD** Can be made 3 days ahead. Store cookies airtight between sheets of waxed paper at room temperature.

PHOTOGRAPH BY NOEL BARNHURST



CHOCOLATE MINT COOKIES

Girl Scout Thin Mints from your kitchen: If you love those cookies, you'll love these. Make an extra batch to give as gifts.

MAKES ABOUT 3 1/2 DOZEN COOKIES

INGREDIENTS

- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 3/4 cup unsweetened cocoa powder (preferably Dutch-process)
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 3/4 cup (1 1/2 sticks) unsalted butter, room temperature
- 3/4 teaspoon peppermint extract
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 large egg
- 6 ounces bittersweet (not unsweetened) or semisweet chocolate, chopped

PREPARATION

Whisk flour, cocoa powder, and salt in medium bowl to blend. Using electric mixer, beat butter in large bowl until smooth. Beat in peppermint extract and vanilla extract. Beat in sugar in 3 additions. Add egg and beat until blended. Add dry ingredients and beat just until blended (dough will be sticky).

Divide dough between 2 sheets of plastic wrap. Using plastic wrap as aid, form dough on each into 2-inch-diameter log. Wrap with plastic and refrigerate dough until well chilled, at least 2 hours. **DO AHEAD** Dough can be prepared 1 day ahead. Keep refrigerated.

Position 1 rack in center and 1 rack in top third of oven; preheat to 350°F. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper. Unwrap cookie dough logs; roll briefly on work surface to form smooth round logs. Cut logs crosswise into 1/4-inch-thick rounds. Place rounds on prepared baking sheets, spacing 1 inch apart. Bake cookies until tops and edges are dry to touch, about 15 minutes. Transfer baking sheets with cookies to racks; cool completely. Stir chocolate in top of double boiler set over simmering water until melted and smooth. Remove from over water. Cool melted chocolate until slightly thickened but still pourable, about 10 minutes. Dip fork into melted chocolate, then wave fork back and forth over cookies, drizzling melted chocolate thickly over cookies in zigzag pattern. Refrigerate cookies on baking sheets until chocolate is set, about 10 minutes. **DO AHEAD** Cookies can be made 1 week ahead. Refrigerate in airtight container between sheets of parchment paper or waxed paper.



PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFF SARPA

STAINED-GLASS LEMON COOKIES

Any holiday-motif cookie cutter can be used to make these. If you don't have small cookie cutters (about one inch in diameter) to cut out the centers, use the wide end of a small pastry-bag tip instead. The cookies look striking in a glass canister dressed up with a bright red ribbon.

MAKES ABOUT 30 COOKIES

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, room temperature
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1 large egg yolk
- 2 teaspoons grated lemon peel
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 6 ounces (about) red and/or green hard candies
- Additional sugar

PREPARATION

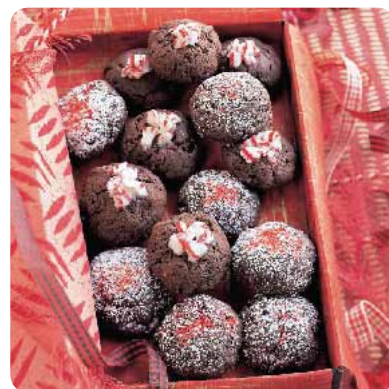
Using electric mixer, beat butter and 3/4 cup sugar in large bowl until well blended. Beat in egg yolk, lemon peel and vanilla extract. Add all-purpose flour and salt and beat until mixture begins to clump together. Divide dough into 3 equal pieces. Flatten each piece into disk; wrap each in plastic and refrigerate 2 hours. **DO AHEAD** Can be prepared 2 days ahead. Soften dough slightly at room temperature before rolling out.

Finely grind red and/or green hard candies separately in processor. Transfer each color of candy to separate small bowl; cover candies and set aside.

Position 1 rack in center and 1 rack in top third of oven and preheat oven to 375°F. Line 2 large baking sheets with parchment paper. Roll out 1 dough disk on lightly floured surface to 1/4-inch thickness. Using 2 1/2- to 2 3/4-inch-diameter cookie cutter or biscuit cutter, cut out cookies. Using small (about 1 inch in diameter) cookie cutter, make cutouts in center of each cookie.

Transfer cookies to prepared baking sheets. Spoon ground hard candies into cookie cutouts, filling cutouts completely to same thickness as cookies. Sprinkle cookies lightly with additional sugar. Repeat with remaining dough disks, ground hard candies and additional sugar. Reroll dough scraps and cut out additional cookies. Place on baking sheets; fill with hard candies and sprinkle with additional sugar.

Bake cookies until firm and light golden and ground candies look translucent, about 8 minutes. Cool cookies completely on baking sheets. **DO AHEAD** Can be prepared ahead. Store in airtight container at room temperature up to 1 week or freeze up to 1 month.



PHOTOGRAPH BY BRIAN LEATART

CHOCOLATE CHIP AND PEPPERMINT CRUNCH CRACKLES

These fudgy treats, also known as crinkles, get their name from the small wrinkles that develop on top as they bake.

MAKES ABOUT 36 COOKIES

INGREDIENTS

- 8 ounces bittersweet (not unsweetened) or semisweet chocolate, chopped
- 1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, cut into 1/2-inch pieces
- 1 1/2 ounces unsweetened chocolate, chopped
- 1/2 cup finely crushed red-and-white-striped hard peppermint candies
- 6 1/2 tablespoons sugar
- 3 large eggs
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon peppermint extract
- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 3/4 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup (about 3 ounces) semisweet chocolate chips
- Coarsely crushed peppermints
- Powdered sugar

PREPARATION

Combine first 3 ingredients in heavy large saucepan. Stir over low heat until chocolates melt and mixture is smooth. Remove pan from heat. Mix in finely crushed mints and 6 1/2 tablespoons sugar. Cool mixture to lukewarm, stirring occasionally, about 30 minutes. Whisk eggs into chocolate mixture, 1 at a time, then whisk in vanilla extract and peppermint extract. Whisk flour, baking powder, and salt in small bowl to blend. Whisk flour mixture, then chocolate chips into chocolate mixture. Cover batter and chill until firm enough to shape, at least 3 hours and up to 1 day.

Position rack in center of oven and preheat to 325°F. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper. Using 1 generous tablespoonful for each cookie, roll dough between moistened palms into 1 1/4-inch-diameter balls, then arrange on prepared baking sheets, spacing 1 inch apart. Bake cookies, 1 sheet at a time, until puffed and cracked on top but still soft to touch in center, about 11 minutes. Let stand on sheets 5 minutes. Press coarsely crushed mints onto tops of cookies or sprinkle with powdered sugar. Transfer to racks; cool completely. **DO AHEAD** Can be made 1 week ahead. Store airtight between sheets of waxed paper in refrigerator.

PHOTOGRAPH BY PORNCHEI MITTONGTARE



CHRISTMAS CUTOUTS WITH VANILLA ICING

MAKES ABOUT 5 DOZEN COOKIES

INGREDIENTS

COOKIES

- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, room temperature
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 large egg
- 2 tablespoons sour cream
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- Additional sugar

ICING

- 4 cups (or more) sifted powdered sugar (sifted, then measured)
- 3 tablespoons (or more) whole milk
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- Colored sugar crystals, sprinkles, and/or decors
- Food-safe colored markers (such as FooDoodler pens; see note*)

PREPARATION

FOR COOKIES: Sift first 3 ingredients into medium bowl. Using electric mixer, beat butter and 1 cup sugar in large bowl to blend well. Add egg, sour cream, and vanilla; beat 1 minute. Beat in dry ingredients in 2 additions until just blended. Gather dough together; divide in half. Flatten each half into disk; wrap in plastic and chill 1 hour. **DO AHEAD** Can be made 1 day ahead. Keep chilled. Soften dough slightly at room temperature before rolling out.

Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper. Sprinkle work surface and top of dough disks with additional sugar. Working with 1 disk at a time, roll out dough to 1/4-inch thickness (dough will be very soft). Using assorted 2- to 3-inch cookie cutters, cut out cookies. Transfer to prepared sheets, spacing 1 inch apart. Gather scraps and roll out on sugared surface; cut out more cookies. Repeat until all dough is used. Chill all cookies on baking sheets at least 15 minutes and up to 1 hour.

Preheat oven to 350°F. Bake cookies, 1 sheet at a time, until light golden at edges, about 12 minutes. Transfer cookies to racks and cool completely.

FOR ICING: Combine 4 cups powdered sugar, 3 tablespoons milk, and vanilla in medium bowl. Stir until icing is well blended, smooth, and spreadable, adding more milk by teaspoonfuls if too thick or more sugar by tablespoonfuls if too thin. Using small icing spatula or table knife, spread thin layer of icing atop each cookie. If using colored sugar crystals, sprinkle over cookies before icing sets. If using food-safe colored markers, let icing dry about 30 minutes; decorate cookies as desired. **DO AHEAD** Can be made 3 days ahead. Store airtight between sheets of waxed paper at room temperature.

*The *Bon Appétit* test-kitchen staff used food-safe colored markers, called FooDoodler pens, to decorate these cookies. The markers are available at Sur La Table stores or can be ordered from King Arthur Flour (800-827-6836) or bakerscatalogue.com.



PHOTOGRAPH BY PORNCHEI MITTONGTARE

CINNAMON, BROWN SUGAR, AND WALNUT SHORTBREAD CRESCENTS

MAKES ABOUT 4 1/2 DOZEN COOKIES

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon (generous) salt
- 1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, room temperature
- 2/3 cup (packed) golden brown sugar
- 1/2 cup walnuts, toasted, finely chopped
- 4 ounces bittersweet (not unsweetened) or semisweet chocolate, chopped

PREPARATION

Whisk first 3 ingredients in medium bowl to blend. Using electric mixer, beat butter and brown sugar in large bowl to blend well. Add dry ingredients; beat just until dough forms clumps. Stir in nuts. Gather dough into ball; flatten into disk. Wrap in plastic;

chill at least 2 hours and up to 1 day. Soften slightly at room temperature before rolling out, if necessary.

Line 3 large baking sheets with parchment paper. Roll out dough on floured surface to 1/8-inch thickness. Dip 3-inch-long crescent-shaped cookie cutter in flour to coat; cut out cookies. Arrange cookies 1 inch apart on prepared baking sheets. Gather dough scraps and reroll. Cut out additional cookies. Refrigerate cookies on sheets 20 minutes.

Meanwhile, preheat oven to 300°F. Bake cookies 1 sheet at a time until pale golden and firm to touch, about 25 minutes. Transfer cookies to racks and cool.

Stir chocolate in top of double boiler over barely simmering water until smooth. Remove from over water. Cool chocolate 10 minutes. Place racks with cookies over rimmed baking sheets. Dip spoon into melted chocolate; wave back and forth over cookies to decorate with zigzag pattern. Chill cookies until chocolate is firm, about 20 minutes. **DO AHEAD** Can be made 5 days ahead. Store airtight between sheets of waxed paper at room temperature.



PHOTOGRAPH BY BRIAN LEATART

CRANBERRY-ORANGE DROP COOKIES

Colorful bits of cranberries, walnuts, and pistachios make these simple cookies sparkle for the holidays.

MAKES ABOUT 48 COOKIES

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups (packed) dried sweetened cranberries (about 10 ounces)
- 1/3 cup orange juice
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 3/4 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/4 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, room temperature
- 1 cup (packed) golden brown sugar
- 1 large egg

- 1 tablespoon minced peeled fresh ginger
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1 1/2 teaspoons grated orange peel
- 3/4 cup chopped walnuts
- 3/4 cup chopped unsalted natural pistachios
- 1/2 cup coarsely chopped fresh or frozen cranberries

PREPARATION

Butter 3 baking sheets. Combine dried sweetened cranberries and orange juice in small bowl. Let stand until dried cranberries soften slightly, stirring occasionally, about 30 minutes.

Whisk all-purpose flour, ground cinnamon, baking powder, ground ginger, baking soda, and salt in medium bowl until just blended.

Position rack in center of oven and preheat to 350°F. Using electric mixer, beat room-temperature butter and golden brown sugar in large bowl until smooth. Add 1 egg, minced ginger, vanilla extract, and grated orange peel and beat until well blended, about 2 minutes. Beat in flour-spice mixture. Stir in chopped walnuts, chopped pistachios, coarsely chopped fresh or frozen cranberries, and dried cranberries with any juices that have accumulated.

Drop cookie dough by rounded tablespoonfuls onto prepared baking sheets, spacing tablespoonfuls about 1 1/2 inches apart. Bake cookies, 1 baking sheet at a time, until golden and almost firm to touch in center, about 18 minutes. Cool cookies on baking sheets 5 minutes. Transfer to racks; cool cookies completely. **DO AHEAD** Cookies can be made 2 days ahead. Store cookies in airtight container at room temperature.



PHOTOGRAPH BY PORNCHEI MITTINGTARE

COCONUT-ORANGE SNOWBALLS

These cookies owe their whimsical moniker to a generous dusting of powdered sugar.

MAKES ABOUT 3 DOZEN COOKIES

INGREDIENTS

- 1 1/4 cups sweetened flaked coconut
- 1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, room temperature
- 2 1/4 cups sifted powdered sugar (sifted, then measured)
- 1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 3/4 teaspoon coconut extract
- 2 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 1/2 tablespoons grated orange peel
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

PREPARATION

Preheat oven to 350°F. Bake coconut on rimmed baking sheet until light golden, stirring occasionally, about 12 minutes.

Using electric mixer, beat butter, 1/2 cup powdered sugar, and both extracts in bowl to blend well. Beat in flour, orange peel, and salt. Stir in coconut. Cover and chill at least 1 hour and up to 1 day. Soften dough slightly before shaping.

Preheat oven to 350°F. Line 2 large baking sheets with parchment paper. Using 1 level tablespoon dough for each cookie, roll dough between palms of hands into balls. Place on prepared sheets, spacing 1 inch apart. Bake until golden on bottom but pale on top, about 18 minutes. Transfer cookies to racks; cool 5 minutes. Place remaining 1 3/4 cups powdered sugar in bowl. Roll hot cookies in powdered sugar, covering completely. Cool cookies on rack. Roll cookies in powdered sugar again, coating generously. **DO AHEAD** Can be made 5 days ahead. Store airtight between sheets of waxed paper at room temperature.



PHOTOGRAPH BY PORNCHEI MITTINGTARE

VANILLA ROLL-OUT COOKIES

For a lemony twist, reduce the vanilla extract to 3/4 teaspoon and add 1 1/4 teaspoons finely grated lemon peel.

MAKES ABOUT 40 SMALL OR
15 LARGE COOKIES

INGREDIENTS

- 10 tablespoons (1 1/4 sticks) unsalted butter, room temperature
- 1/2 cup sugar

- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 large egg
- 1 1/4 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- Sprinkles or other sugar decorations (optional)
- Royal Icing (optional), *recipe on page 3*

PREPARATION

Using electric mixer, beat butter in large bowl at medium speed until smooth and creamy, about 2 minutes. Add sugar and salt and beat until pale and fluffy, about 2 minutes. Add egg; beat until well blended, about 1 minute. Reduce speed to low and beat in vanilla. Add flour and beat on low speed just to blend. Gather dough into ball; divide in half. Form each half into ball and flatten into disk. Wrap disks separately in plastic and chill until firm, at least 4 hours. **DO AHEAD** Can be made 2 days ahead. Keep chilled.

Position rack in center of oven; preheat to 350°F. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper. Working with 1 disk at a time, roll out dough between 2 sheets of waxed paper to 1/8-inch thickness for smaller (2-inch) cookies and 1/4-inch thickness for larger (3- to 4-inch) cookies. Using decorative cookie cutters, cut out cookies and transfer to prepared sheets, spacing 1 inch apart. If cookies become too soft to transfer to baking sheets, place in freezer on waxed paper for 5 minutes before continuing. Gather scraps, roll out dough, and cut more cookies, repeating until all dough is used. If not icing cookies, decorate with sprinkles or other sugar toppings, if desired.

Bake 1 sheet at a time until cookies are firm on top and golden around edges, about 10 minutes for smaller cookies and up to 14 minutes for larger cookies. Cool completely on rack. Decorate with Royal Icing, then sprinkles or other sugar toppings, if desired. Let stand until icing sets. **DO AHEAD** Can be made 4 days ahead. Store between sheets of waxed paper in airtight containers.



PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK THOMAS

WHITE CHOCOLATE, CRANBERRY, AND MACADAMIA NUT COOKIES

Red and white ingredients make these cookies both festive and delicious.

MAKES 36 (LARGE) OR 72 (SMALL) COOKIES

INGREDIENTS

- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, room temperature
- 1 cup (packed) golden brown sugar
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- 1 1/2 cups dried cranberries (about 6 ounces)
- 1 1/2 cups white chocolate chips (about 8 1/2 ounces)
- 1 cup coarsely chopped roasted salted macadamia nuts (about 4 1/2 ounces)

PREPARATION

Preheat oven to 350°F. Line 2 large rimmed baking sheets with parchment paper. Sift first 3 ingredients into medium bowl. Using electric mixer, beat butter in large bowl until fluffy. Add both sugars and beat until blended. Beat in eggs, 1 at a time, then vanilla. Add dry ingredients and beat just until blended. Using spatula, stir in cranberries, white chocolate chips, and nuts.

For large cookies, drop dough by heaping tablespoonfuls onto prepared sheets, spacing 2 1/2 inches apart. For small cookies, drop dough by level tablespoonfuls onto sheets, spacing 1 1/2 inches apart.

Bake cookies until just golden, about 18 minutes for large cookies and about 15 minutes for small cookies. Cool on sheets. **DO AHEAD** Can be made ahead. Store airtight at room temperature up to 2 days or freeze up to 2 weeks.

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CAROLE BLOOME:
Chocolate- and Almond-Dipped Sandwich Cookies
Ginger-Orange Stars

BON APPÉTIT:
Chocolate Chip and Peppermint Crunch Crackles
Chocolate-Glazed Mocha Fans
Chocolate Mint Cookies
Christmas Cutouts with Vanilla Icing
Cinnamon, Brown Sugar, and Walnut Shortbread Crescents
Coconut-Orange Snowballs
Cranberry-Orange Drop Cookies
Holiday Sugar Cookies
New England Molasses Gingerbread Cookies
Orange-Almond Lace Cookies
Stained-Glass Lemon Cookies
Tea Cake Sandwich Cookies

KAREN DEMASCO:
Hazelnut Linzer Cookies with Blackberry Jam

SUSAN FENIGER AND MARY SUE MILLIKEN:
Pistachio and Cherry Mexican Wedding Cakes

TYLER FLORENCE:
White Chocolate, Cranberry, and Macadamia Nut Cookies

DORIE GREENSPAN:
Royal Icing
Spice Roll-Out Cookies
Vanilla Roll-Out Cookies

JULIE HASSON:
Pistachio, Raspberry, and White Chocolate Biscotti
Lime Snowballs
Chocolate Candy Cane Cookies

ELINOR KLIVANS:
Chocolate-Covered Gingerbread Kids
Chocolate Peppermint Stars
Hazelnut Shortbread Sticks
Pecan Lace Sandwich Cookies with Orange Buttercream
Triple-Chocolate Cranberry Oatmeal Cookies
White Chocolate and Peppermint Cookie Brittle

DIANE MORGAN:
Hazelnut-Butter Cookies with Mini Chocolate Chips

SARA PERRY:
Gingerbread Trees with Juniper Berry Glaze

ANDREW SCHLOSS:
Brownie Thins