

Activities at Home

Pecan Balls

By: Marie Hammer

Ingredients:

½ cup butter
3 tablespoons sugar
¼ teaspoon salt
1 ½ teaspoons vanilla
1 cup sifted flour
1 cup finely chopped pecans
½ cup sifted powdered sugar

Steps:

1. Pre-heat oven to 325°
2. Cream butter with sugar and salt.
3. Mix in vanilla, and then the sifted flour and pecans.
4. Form into small balls about 1 inch in diameter.
5. Place on slightly greased cookie sheet and bake for 20 to 25 minutes.
6. Roll in sifted powdered sugar while hot.

Activities at Home

Thumbprints

By: Shelley Holley

Ingredients:

2 cups all-purpose flour
½ cup firmly packed brown sugar
1 cup butter, softened
2 eggs, separated
1/8 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 ½ cups finely chopped pecans
Red Plum Jam or Apricot Jam

Steps:

1. Pre-heat oven to 350°
2. In large mixer bowl, combine flour, sugar, butter, egg yolks, salt, and vanilla. Mix in vanilla, and then the sifted flour and pecans.
3. Beat at low speed, scraping bowl often, until well mixed, 2 to 3 minutes.
4. Shape rounded teaspoonfuls of dough into 1-inch balls.
5. In a small bowl, beat eggs whites with fork until foamy.
6. Dip each ball in egg whites and roll in nuts.
7. Place 1" apart on greased cookie sheets.
8. Make a depression in the center of each cookie with the back of a teaspoon.
9. Bake for 8 minutes; remove from oven.
10. Fill centers with plum or apricot jam.
11. Continue baking for 6 to 8 minutes, or until lightly browned.

Makes about 3 dozen cookies.

These cookies are Swedish, in Sweden they are known as hallongrotta, which means raspberry cave. In Sweden they aren't rolled in nuts and the jam is raspberry. We've added a Texas twist by using chopped pecans and switching the raspberry jam to red plum jam.

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Molasses Crinkles

By: Shelley Holley

Ingredients:

¾ cup soft shortening
1 cup brown sugar
1 egg
¼ cup molasses
2 ¼ cup all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons baking soda
¼ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon ground cloves
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1 teaspoon ginger
Granulated sugar

Steps:

1. Pre-heat oven to 375 °
2. Cream soft shortening with brown sugar.
3. Mix in egg and molasses.
4. In a separate bowl sift dry ingredients together and stir to combine.
5. Add dry ingredients to wet ingredients in batches; stir until well combined.
6. Roll dough into 1" balls, roll balls in granulated sugar.
7. Place on lightly greased cookie sheet.
8. Bake for 10-12 minutes.

Makes 4 dozen

Molasses and gingerbread cookies were common in early New England where most households kept molasses as their primary sweetener. Both types of cookies include molasses and ginger for flavoring. Gingerbread dates to the 11th century when crusaders brought ginger to Europe from the middle east.

Activities at Home

Christmas Cream Cheese Cookies

By: Kendall Newton

Ingredients:

½ cup or one stick unsalted butter, softened
3 oz. cream cheese, softened
1½ cups powdered sugar
½ tsp baking powder
1 egg
½ tsp vanilla extract
1¾ cups flour
Christmas sprinkles
1 cup powdered sugar
2 tablespoons water

Steps:

1. Preheat oven to 375°
2. Line cookie sheets with parchment paper.
3. Cream butter and cream cheese in mixer bowl.
4. Slowly add sugar and beat until fluffy.
5. Beat in egg.
6. Slowly add flour, baking powder, 2 tablespoons sprinkles and vanilla. Mix well.
7. Chill dough for at least 1 hour.
8. Shape into 1 inch or so balls.
9. Place on cookie sheet, 1½ inches apart.
10. Bake for 8-10 minutes, just until the edges are slightly golden, you want them almost under baked for the perfect texture.
11. Cool for just a minute on cookie sheet before transferring to cooling racks.
12. Mix your powdered sugar with 2 tablespoons water and spoon over cookies immediately adding sprinkles before the glaze hardens.