



12 Days of Christmas Cookies



A Free eCookbook from Mr. Food

"OOH IT'S SO GOOD!!®"





12 Days of Christmas Cookies: A Free eCookbook from Mr. Food

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Published December 2011

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Published by Prime Publishing LLC, 3400 Dundee Road, Northbrook, IL 60062 –
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Dear Friends,

What would Christmas be without all of our favorite festive holiday cookies? Well, you won't even have to think about that, because we've gone and hand-picked our very best Christmas cookies for you to enjoy this holiday season!

Our Test Kitchen has gone and selected a perfect mix of every cookie and treat on your wish list, from all-time favorites like our Reindeer Cookies and Edible Tree Ornaments, to brand-new recipes like our Chocolate-Kissed Italian Biscotti and Cranberry-Chocolate Chip Macaroons. There's just no question, there will be something for everyone's taste in this year's Christmas cookie jar!

How about hosting a cookie exchange? We think it's a wonderful way to start a tradition with friends and family – not to mention all the yummy cookies you'll get to sample and give as gifts! Don't miss our bonus article on how-to host your own cookie exchange this year! Or, maybe you've already been invited to one... Our Buckeyes are a cookie exchange favorite, if you're having trouble deciding.

And because there are 12 days of Christmas, you'll have one cookie to make on each of these glorious days, thanks to this collection of outstanding cookie recipes from the Mr. Food Test Kitchen. We hope you enjoy 'em, all easy-as-can-be, and full of homemade flavor the gang'll love.

From our kitchen to yours, may your holiday season be filled with cookies and delights, and plenty of...

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Mr. Food
and the Test Kitchen



P.S. Enjoy this eCookbook packed with 12 holiday-favorite cookie recipes sure to please 'em all. Remember, the 12 Days of Christmas Cookies eCookbook is available FREE with many others also available on www.MrFood.com. Go on, tell your friends to visit MrFood.com, so they too can get their very own FREE copies!



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How to Host a Cookie Exchange



Even though this is a busy time of year, we don't want to give up our traditions. And a favorite one is baking. I bet you'd like some shortcuts to help with your holiday baking, wouldn't you? You know, shortcuts don't have to mean skimping. When it comes to home-baked goodies, the last thing we want to do is skimp on anything.

So, how can you find the time to make all those different homemade goodies that you want to share at holiday time? Have a cookie exchange! The main idea is that it's easier to bake three, four, or five batches of one type of cookie than one or two batches of many different kinds. So here's how to do that and still end up with an interesting assortment: Find a few friends, neighbors, or relatives who'll agree to bake several dozen of one or two batches of many different kinds. Make sure everyone chooses something different, then get baking! Have a get-together to exchange some of your cookies for some of everybody else's and fill your pretty tins and boxes with a variety of baked-especially-for-you holiday cookies. And, what do you know, you'll find out it was half the work it usually is!

Even if you have plenty recipes of your own favorite cookie recipes, why not take a peek at our collection of cookie recipes? There are bound to be a few new ideas you can use – and maybe even a quick version of one of your classics!

When you're doing your exchange, be sure to leave a few cookies out for sampling. Serve the bakers a variety of punches to wash 'em all down with and then everybody can go home and check one more thing off their holiday to-do lists.



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Reindeer Cookies

These are, without a doubt, always the cutest Christmas cookies on the holiday cookie platter! Santa won't be able to resist these on Christmas Eve...and neither will your little (and big) elves!

Ingredients

1 (18-ounce) package refrigerated peanut butter or sugar cookie dough

48 small pretzel twists

48 brown M&M's candies

24 red M&M's candies

Makes: 24 cookies **Cooking Time:** 10 minutes



Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Place cookie dough in freezer for 15 minutes, or until firm.
2. Cut dough into 24 slices and place slices 2 inches apart on large ungreased cookie sheets. Pinch in each side to form an hourglass shape.
3. Position 2 pretzels at top of each slice to form antlers then create eyes with brown candies and noses with red candies.
4. Bake 8 to 10 minutes, or until golden. Remove to a wire rack to cool completely.



Holiday Cherry Nut Logs

These make edible holiday gift treats that “yule” love...and so will your gang, but they’re so versatile they’re welcome any time of year at all!

Ingredients

1 (12-ounce) package vanilla wafer cookies, crushed
2 cups chopped pecans
2 cups raisins
1 1/2 cups mini marshmallows
1 (6-ounce) jar maraschino cherries, drained and chopped
1 (14-ounce) can sweetened condensed milk
1/4 cup confectioners’ sugar

Makes: 4 dozen slices **Chilling Time:** 4 hours



Directions

1. In a bowl, combine all ingredients except confectioners’ sugar; mix well.
2. Form mixture into 4 equal-size logs.
3. Place confectioners’ sugar in a shallow dish and roll logs in sugar, coating completely.
4. Wrap each log in plastic wrap and chill for at least 4 hours, or until firm.
5. Slice just before serving.

Notes

Make colorful holiday gifts by wrapping these logs in colored plastic wrap or cellophane and tying with ribbons.

Macadamia Nut Balls

You can't go wrong with this cookie, whether you use it to fill your everyday cookie jar or to highlight your holiday cookie platter. The Old World taste and buttery nutty goodness come through in every bite.

Ingredients

2 cups all-purpose flour
1 cup (2 sticks) butter, softened
3/4 cup quick-cooking or old-fashioned rolled oats
1/2 cup granulated sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 cup macadamia nuts, coarsely chopped
3/4 cup confectioners' sugar

Makes: 4 dozen cookies **Cooking Time:** 15 minutes



Directions

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees F.
2. In a large bowl, beat flour, butter, oats, granulated sugar, and vanilla until a dough forms. Stir in nuts; mix well then roll into 1-inch balls and place 1 inch apart on ungreased baking sheets.
3. Bake 12 to 15 minutes, or until bottoms are light golden.
4. Transfer to wire racks and allow to cool 10 minutes before rolling in confectioners' sugar, coating completely.



Chocolate-Kissed Italian Biscotti

If you've never made your own Italian-style biscotti, now's the time to try these trendy cookies. Our Test Kitchen created this recipe just for you, so that they'll come out with that perfect crunch every time.

Ingredients

3 cups all-purpose flour
2 cups sugar
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon baking powder
4 eggs
1 teaspoon anise extract
1 cup chopped walnuts
1 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips
1/2 teaspoon vegetable shortening

Makes: 3-1/2 dozen Cooking Time: 1 hour



Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Coat two large baking sheets with cooking spray.
2. In a bowl, combine flour, sugar, salt, baking powder, eggs, and anise; mix well and, using your hands, work dough until it forms a ball. Work in walnuts until well combined then place half dough on one baking sheet and form into a 2- x 12-inch loaf about 1-inch high. Repeat with remaining dough on second baking sheet.
3. Bake 25 to 30 minutes, or until firm and light golden. Remove from oven and reduce heat to 325 degrees F.
4. Allow loaves to cool 5 minutes. Cut into 1/2-inch slices and place cut-side down on baking sheets.
5. Bake 15 minutes then turn cookies over and bake an additional 15 minutes, or until very crisp. When cookies are cool, in a microwavable bowl, melt chocolate chips and vegetable shortening in microwave 1 to 1-1/2 minutes, stirring occasionally until smooth. Drizzle over biscotti and allow chocolate to harden.



Holly Crackles

Need a star entry for your holiday cookie platter? Add some holiday cookie cheer with our Holly Crackles. They're bite-sized wreath-shaped cookies that look as good as they taste – and they always disappear in a flash.

Ingredients

1/2 cup (1 stick) butter
30 large marshmallows (a 10-ounce bag contains 38 to 40)
1 to 1-1/2 teaspoons green food color
1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract
4 cups cornflakes cereal
Red-hot cinnamon candies, for decorating

Makes: 36 cookies **Preparation Time:** 20 minutes



Directions

1. In a medium saucepan, melt butter and marshmallows over medium-low heat, stirring constantly.
2. When melted, remove from heat and stir in 1 teaspoon food color and the vanilla. Add more food color, if desired. Stir in cornflakes.
3. Drop mixture, 1 tablespoon at a time, onto wax paper. Decorate with candies. Let stand 30 minutes, or until cool.

Notes

You can make these an Easter or springtime treat, too. Use pastel food color and jelly beans and call them Birds' Nests!

Butterscotch People

Gingerbread people are a Christmas favorite, but why not try this easy variation? We all love to decorate them, right? With this recipe we save baking time so there's more time to decorate. Then we can really get creative!

Ingredients

1 (11-ounce) package butterscotch-flavored chips
1 cup (2 sticks) butter
5 cups all-purpose flour, plus extra
1 1/3 cups firmly packed light brown sugar
2 teaspoons baking soda
1 egg
3 tablespoons miniature semisweet chocolate chips

Makes: 36 cookies **Preparation Time:** 20 minutes



Directions

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees F.
2. Melt butterscotch chips and butter in a medium saucepan over low heat until smooth, stirring continuously. Set aside and allow to cool slightly.
3. In a bowl, combine flour, brown sugar, baking soda, and egg; mix well. Add slightly cooled butterscotch mixture and beat until well blended (dough will be crumbly).
4. Shape into a ball and on a lightly floured cutting board with a floured rolling pin, roll dough out to a 1/4-inch thickness. Using boy and girl cookie cutters, cut out cookies and place on ungreased rimmed baking sheets. Decorate with chocolate chips for eyes and mouths, and use three chocolate chips for buttons on boys.
5. For soft cookies, bake 6 minutes; for crisp cookies, bake 8 minutes.

Notes If you want to hang these as Christmas ornaments, make a hole at the top of each cookie with a straw before baking. Bake them crisp and then thread ribbon or string through holes so they'll be ready for hanging.

Chocolate Snow Drops

Satisfy your sweet tooth with these heavenly chocolately cookie balls that are like a winter wonderland for your taste buds!

Ingredients

- 1 (18-ounce) package cream-filled chocolate sandwich cookies
- 1 (8-ounce) package cream cheese, softened
- 1 (1-1/2-pound) package vanilla-flavored almond bark (see Note)

Makes: 60 cookies **Chilling Time:** 30 minutes



Directions

1. Coat baking sheets with wax paper.
2. In a food processor, finely crush sandwich cookies. Add cream cheese and process until thoroughly mixed. Roll into 1/2-inch balls and place on prepared baking sheets. Freeze 30 minutes.
3. Place almond bark in a large microwave-safe bowl and microwave 1 minute. Stir almond bark and continue to microwave at 15-second intervals until candy is melted and smooth. Do not overheat.
4. Using a toothpick to hold onto the chocolate balls, dip each ball into melted candy until evenly coated. Shake off excess coating and return to prepared baking sheets. Keep refrigerated.

Notes

You may substitute almond bark with 4 (6-ounce) packages of white baking bars. Also, if you want to decorate these with sprinkles or colored sugar, be sure to do so before the candy coating hardens, or the decorations won't stick.

Edible Tree Ornaments

No Christmas party is complete without a tray of cutout cookies shaped like Christmas trees, gingerbread people, stars, angels, and bells. And the best part about these cookies is that they can be used as ornaments, too.

Ingredients

1 cup (2 sticks) butter, softened
3/4 cup sugar
2 eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
3 1/2 cups all-purpose flour

Makes: 3 dozen cookies Cooking Time: 10 minutes



Directions

1. In a large bowl, cream the butter and sugar. Add eggs and vanilla; beat 1 to 2 minutes, until light and fluffy. Gradually add flour and beat 2 minutes, or until well blended. Form dough into a ball; cover and chill at least 2 hours.
2. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Divide dough into two pieces and return one to the refrigerator.
3. On a lightly floured work surface, using a rolling pin, roll the dough to 1/4-inch thickness. Using cookie cutters, cut out assorted Christmas shapes and place on ungreased cookie sheets. Repeat with remaining dough.
4. Bake 10 to 12 minutes, or until golden around the edges. Remove to a wire rack and cool completely.

Notes

Before baking, use a straw to make a hole at the top of each cookie that you plan to hang up. (That's where you'll thread them with ribbon for hanging on the tree.) Then sprinkle them with colored sugar or sprinkles.

If you'd like, frost the cooled cookies with a glaze made of 2 cups confectioners' sugar, 2 tablespoons milk, and red or green food color.

Buckeyes

It seems like someone brings Buckeyes to every cookie exchange party. What are Buckeye cookies? They have a smooth peanut butter filling and are coated with rich semisweet chocolate. No wonder they're so popular!

Ingredients

2 cups smooth peanut butter
1 cup (2 sticks) butter, softened
1 1/2 pounds confectioners' sugar
1 (12-ounce) package semisweet chocolate chips
1/3 cake paraffin wax (see Note)

Makes: 5 dozen Chilling Time: 1 hour



Directions

1. In a large bowl, combine peanut butter and butter; mix until smooth. Gradually add confectioners' sugar, stirring until thoroughly mixed. Form mixture into 1-inch balls, place on a waxed paper-lined rimmed baking sheet, and chill for 1 hour.
2. In a double boiler over medium heat, or in a saucepan over low heat, melt chocolate chips and paraffin wax, stirring until smooth. Stick a toothpick in the center of each peanut butter ball and dip each three-quarters of the way into the chocolate mixture, coating all sides except the top quarter. Place on the prepared baking sheet and remove toothpick. Using your finger, fill in the hole left by the toothpick.
3. After dipping all the peanut butter balls, cover, and chill, or freeze until ready to serve.

Notes

Cake paraffin wax is commonly used in chocolate to assist in the process of melting and keep it solid at room temperature. You should be able to find paraffin wax at your grocery store in the aisle where canning supplies and jars are sold. You may also find it in the aisle where baking supplies are sold.



Fruitcake Cookies

Holiday fruitcake that you can't get rid of wouldn't be a problem if it existed in cookie form — this is why we invented Fruitcake Cookies! Why didn't anybody think of bite-sized fruitcake before?

Ingredients

1 pound candied mixed fruit, diced (see Note)
2 cups chopped pecans
2 cups all-purpose flour, divided
1/4 cup (1/2-stick) butter, softened
1 cup packed light brown sugar
2 eggs
1/4 cup milk
1 tablespoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg

Makes: 4 dozen Cooking Time: 15 minutes



Directions

1. Preheat oven to 325 degrees F. Coat cookie sheets with cooking spray.
2. In a large bowl, combine candied fruit, pecans, and 1/2 cup flour; toss until fruit and pecans are evenly coated then set aside.
3. In another large bowl, cream butter and brown sugar until fluffy. Beat in eggs and milk. Add the remaining 1-1/2 cups flour, baking powder, cinnamon, and nutmeg, and beat until well blended.
4. Stir in fruit mixture; mix well and drop by rounded teaspoonfuls 1 inch apart onto cookie sheets. Bake 15 to 18 minutes, or until golden. Remove to a wire rack to cool completely.

Notes

Candied mixed fruit can include a combination of pineapple, red and green cherries, and citron. If you prefer, use just one particular favorite.

Mistletoe Cookie Bars

They're sure to kiss the cook when you pass out these melt-in-your-mouth mistletoe cookie bars, whether or not you're standing under the mistletoe.

Ingredients

1 (18.5-ounce) package white cake mix
1/3 cup butter, melted
2 tablespoons water
2 eggs
1 1/2 cups dried cranberries
1 cup (6 ounces) white baking chips
1/2 cup cashews, coarsely chopped

Makes: 24 bars Cooking Time: 20 minutes



Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Spray bottom only of a 9- x 13-inch baking dish with cooking spray, and lightly flour.
2. In a large bowl, using a spoon, combine cake mix, butter, water, and eggs until dough forms (some dry mix will remain). Stir in cranberries, baking chips, and cashews. Spread evenly in pan.
3. Bake 20 to 25 minutes, or until a wooden toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool completely, about 1 hour, then cut into bars.



Cranberry-Chocolate Chip Macaroons

Our recipe for homemade Cranberry-Chocolate Chip Macaroons is so awesome, a double batch is practically a requirement. Whip up a batch of these heavenly goodies with just four simple ingredients.

Ingredients

14 ounces sweetened shredded coconut
1 (14-ounce) can sweetened condensed milk
1 cup dried cranberries
1 (12-ounce) package mini chocolate chips

Makes: 3 dozen cookies **Cooking Time:** 15 minutes



Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Line baking sheets with parchment paper.
2. In a large bowl, mix all ingredients together. Spoon heaping tablespoons of mixture onto prepared baking sheets.
3. Bake 15 to 18 minutes, or until light golden.

