

# *The Great Holiday Cookie Exchange 2024!*





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# *The Great Holiday Cookie Exchange 2024!*

## Apricot or Strawberry Bars - Darshana Gandhi

### Ingredients:

- 2 1/3 Stick Butter – Soft butter
- 1/2 Cup Sugar
- 1/2 Teaspoon Vanilla or Almond pure extract
- 2 1/4 to 2 1/2 Cup plus All - purpose unbleached flour -
- 1/2 Teaspoon Sea Salt
- 1 - 15 Oz Apricot or Strawberry preserve jar or
- 1 1/2 cup plus Apricot or strawberry preserve or jam
- 1 Parchment lined Cookie sheet – Well buttered



### Method:

1. Cream Butter, sugar, vanilla or almond extract in a kitchen aid mixer for 5 minutes until light and fluffy. Vanilla essence with strawberry preserve.
2. Almond with Apricot preserve or vanilla. As per your taste.
3. Add Sifted flour and salt, combine just enough. Do not over mix. Combine with hand to fine crumb texture.
4. In a separate bowl keep Apricot or Strawberry preserve at room temperature for 30 minutes or so. Mix well.
5. Preheat oven to 360-degree Fahrenheit. Place wire rack on lower third rack.
6. Leave 1 1/2 cup of mix for final top crumb.
7. Gently spread rest of it on a buttered parchment lined cookie sheet evenly. Spread mixed preserve evenly. Gently.
8. Add 1/4 cup flour to the rest of the crumb. Mix gently. Spread over the preserve.
9. Place the cookie sheet in the oven on lower third rack.
10. Bake for 30 to 33 minutes, until top is light golden brown and look for tiny bubbles.
11. Make squares while it is hot. Enjoy

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## Peanut Butter Blossoms - Christine Gerula

### Ingredients

- 1/2 cup light brown sugar packed
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup unsalted butter softened
- 1/2 cup creamy peanut butter
- 1 large egg
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 3/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar for rolling
- 40 chocolate kisses unwrapped



### Instructions

1. In a large bowl, mix brown sugar, 1/2 cup granulated sugar, softened butter and peanut butter using a hand mixer. Beat on medium speed until light and fluffy, just for a couple of minutes.
2. Add in the egg and vanilla, beat until well mixed. Add flour, baking soda, and salt, and beat on low until fully combined.
3. Cover bowl with plastic wrap and refrigerate for 30 minutes.
4. Preheat oven to 375 F degrees. Line a baking sheet with a cookie mat or parchment paper and set aside.
5. Add the additional 1/2 cup granulated sugar to a small bowl, and set aside.
6. Shape 1 1/2 Tablespoons of cookie dough into a 1 inch ball using your hands. Gently roll balls in the bowl of granulated sugar to coat on all sides. Place approximately 2 inches apart on prepared baking sheet and bake 9-10 minutes, until lightly brown and tops of cookies look a bit cracked.
7. Press a Hershey chocolate kiss into the center of each cookie, then remove to a cooling rack to continue cooling.



# *The Great Holiday Cookie Exchange 2024!*

## Jan Hagels - Audrey Salerno

*A traditional Dutch cookie that is thin and flaky, with cinnamon and sliced almonds.*

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 large egg yolk
- 2 cups sifted all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 egg white
- 1 teaspoon water



### DIRECTIONS

1. Pre-heat oven to 325 F and grease two 11×17-inch baking sheets.
2. Beat together butter, sugar and egg yolk with an electric mixer until light and fluffy.
3. Stir in flour and cinnamon.
4. With your hands, pat dough into a very thin layer over one baking sheet and half of the second. This can be time-consuming to get an evenly thin layer, but it doesn't have to be perfect. Aim for 1/4-inch thickness (this may take up more than half of the second pan).
  - a. For flakier, more delicate cookies, make them thinner....for less flaky but less delicate cookies, make them thicker (you may have to bake them a couple minutes longer if they are thicker).
5. Beat egg white and water in a small bowl until frothy.
6. Spread over dough.
7. Arrange the almonds in a mosaic pattern on top.
8. Bake for 15 to 20 minutes or until golden brown.
9. Remove from oven and slice into rectangle or diamond shapes while hot.

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## Peppermint Kiss Sugar Cookies - Karen Mueller

### Ingredients

- 1 Cup Sugar
- 1 Large Egg
- 1 Stick Softened Unsalted Butter
- 2TSP Vanilla Extract
- 1/4 TSP Baking Soda
- 2 TBS 2% Milk
- 1/4 TSP Salt
- 2 Cups All Purpose Flour
- Hershey Kisses (unwrapped)



### Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees/ 325 for convection ovens
2. Line cookie sheet with parchment paper.
3. In a large mixing bowl, mix together butter, sugar, vanilla extract, egg, salt, and milk.
4. Blend well.
5. Carefully add in flour and baking soda and continue to blend well.
6. Separate cookie dough into 1 inch balls and place on lined cookie sheet.
7. Bake at 350 degrees for 8-10 minutes or 325 degrees for 5-6 minutes until cookies are lightly browned.
8. Remove from oven and let cool for 1-2 minutes.
9. Place Hershey Kiss in the center of each cookie.
10. Move cookies to a wire rack to continue cooling.

### Notes

You can easily freeze these Hershey Kiss Sugar Cookies....just place the cookie dough in an airtight container before freezing. Don't add the Hershey Kisses until you're ready to bake the cookies!



# *The Great Holiday Cookie Exchange 2024!*

## Ghirardelli Classic Chocolate Chip Cookies - Joan Clifford

### Ingredients

- 2 ¼ cups all-purpose flour, unsifted
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup unsalted butter, softened
- ¾ cup granulated sugar
- ¾ cup brown sugar, packed
- 2 large eggs
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 2 cups Ghirardelli® Bittersweet 60% Cacao Baking Chips
- 1 cup walnuts, chopped



### Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F (190 degrees C).
2. Stir flour, baking soda, and salt together in a bowl.
3. Combine butter and both sugars in a large mixing bowl; beat with an electric mixer at medium speed until creamy and light in color. Beat in eggs, one at a time, until combined. Add vanilla and mix on low speed until incorporated.
4. Gradually blend flour mixture into butter mixture. Stir in chocolate chips and walnuts. Drop by tablespoonfuls onto ungreased cookie sheets.
5. Bake in the preheated oven until cookies are golden brown, 9 to 11 minutes, switching racks halfway through.
6. Remove from the oven and transfer to wire racks to cool.

### Recipe Tip

- Use pecans instead of walnuts if preferred.
- Optional: Cover and chill dough for 1 hour to overnight before baking.

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## Italian Ricotta Cheese Cookies - Jeanine Matthews/Jane Bodnar

Recipe yields a large batch. Dough can be frozen for later use (thaw before using) or baked cookies freeze well too.

### Ingredients:

- 2 Cups Sugar
- 1 Cup Butter Softened (2 Sticks)
- 2 Teaspoons Vanilla
- 2 Large Eggs
- 4 Cups All Purpose Flour
- 2 Tablespoons Baking Powder
- 1 Teaspoon Salt
- 1 Container (15 Ounces) Ricotta Cheese Part Skim Or Regular



### Glaze:

- 1 ½ Cups Confectioners Sugar
- 3 Tablespoons Milk

### Directions:

1. PREHEAT OVEN TO 350 DEGREES.
2. In large bowl, with mixer at low speed, beat sugar & margarine or butter until blended. Increase speed to high; beat until light & fluffy, about 5 minutes.
3. At medium speed, beat in ricotta, vanilla and eggs till well combined.
4. Reduce speed to low. Add flour, baking powder and salt, beat until dough forms.
5. Drop by level teaspoons, about 2 inches apart, onto ungreased cookie sheet.
6. Bake about 15 minutes or until cookies are very lightly colored (cookies will be soft).
7. Remove cookies to wire rack to cool.
8. When cookies are cool, prepare icing. In small bowl, stir confectioner's sugar & milk until smooth and consistency of pancake batter.
9. With small spatula drizzle icing on cookies. I usually put icing in Ziploc bag, cut a small slit in the corner of bag and drizzle



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## *Gwen Walz's Ginger Snap Cookies - Alex Asteris*

### **Ingredients**

- 2 cup unbleached all-purpose flour
- ¼ tsp salt
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- 2 teaspoon ground ginger (or more)
- ¼ teaspoon ground cloves
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ¾ cup vegetable shortening
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 large egg
- ¼ cup molasses
- ¼ cup white sugar or colored sugar
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon



### **Directions**

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Line baking sheets with parchment.
3. In a separate bowl, combine flour, salt, baking
4. In a stand mixer, cream shortening and sugar until fluffy. Beat in egg, then molasses.
5. Slowly beat in the flour and spice mixture. Dough will be tacky but stiff.
6. Scoop 1" dough into balls and drop in cinnamon sugar mixture. Roll in the mixture then transfer to the baking sheets. Leave space between to allow for spreading.
7. Bake for about 10-12 minutes, rotating trays halfway. When done, outside edge should be just set and soft in the center.
8. Allow to cool. Store in an airtight container.

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## Southern Living Chocolate Chip Blondies – Mary Braman

### Ingredients

- 2 cups (about 8 1/2 oz.) all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. kosher salt
- 1 1/2 cups packed light brown sugar
- 1 cup (8 oz.) unsalted butter, melted
- 1 large egg
- 1 Tbsp. vanilla extract
- 1 1/2 cups semisweet chocolate chips, divided
- (Plus 1 cup chips for melting on top - Mary addition)



### Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Coat a 9-inch square baking pan with cooking spray, and line pan with parchment paper, letting parchment overhang on 2 sides by at least 1 inch.
3. Whisk together flour, baking powder, and kosher salt in a medium bowl.
4. Place brown sugar, butter, egg, and vanilla in a large bowl; whisk until mostly smooth.
5. Add flour mixture to sugar mixture, and stir until just combined.
6. Fold in 1 cup of the chocolate chips.
7. Pour batter into prepared pan, and spread into an even layer.
8. Sprinkle evenly with remaining 1/2 cup chocolate chips.
9. Bake in preheated oven until lightly browned and edges begin pulling away from sides of pan, about 30 minutes.
10. Take a cup of semisweet chips and spread over blondies. Put back in oven until softened.
11. Remove from oven and spread chocolate evenly with offset spatula.
12. Place pan on a wire rack
13. Let cool completely in pan, about 4 hours. Remove from pan using parchment overhang, and transfer to a cutting board.
14. Cut into 12 pieces.



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## Triple Ginger Snaps - Sibia Mathew

### Ingredients

- 2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 12 tablespoons (1 1/2 sticks) unsalted butter
- 2 tablespoons ground ginger
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 1/4 cups dark brown sugar
- 1/4 cup molasses
- 2 tablespoons finely grated fresh ginger (from 2-3 inch piece)
- 1 large egg plus 1 large egg yolk
- 1/3 cup finely chopped crystallized ginger
- granulated sugar, for rolling



### Directions

1. In a bowl, whisk together flour, baking soda, and salt; set aside.
2. Melt butter in a skillet set over medium heat. Once melted, lower heat and continue to cook, swirling frequently, until foaming subsides and butter is just beginning to turn golden brown, about 2 to 4 minutes.
3. Transfer melted butter to large bowl and whisk in ground ginger and cinnamon. Let cool for about 2 minutes, then whisk in brown sugar, molasses, and fresh ginger. Add egg and yolk and whisk to combine.
4. Add flour mixture and stir until just incorporated. Mix in crystallized ginger. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate until firm, about 1 to 2 hours.
5. Preheat oven to 300 degrees F; position oven racks to upper-middle and lower-middle positions.
6. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper (or use silicone baking mats).
7. Place granulated sugar in shallow dish or bowl.
8. Spoon dough by heaping teaspoonfuls; shape into 1-inch balls, then roll in sugar to coat.
9. Arrange balls on prepared baking sheets, leaving 1 to 2 inches of space between them.
10. Bake for 15 minutes, then rotate baking sheets (top to bottom and front to back) and bake for an additional 9 to 12 minutes, or until cookies on lower tray just begin to darken around edges.
11. Transfer to wire rack and cool completely before serving.
12. Repeat with remaining dough.
13. Cookies will keep, stored at room temperature in an airtight container, up to 2 weeks.

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## Linzer Cookies - Brigitte Marten

*Note: Brigitte only made the bottoms of the cookies*

### Ingredients

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 cup whole almonds or hazelnuts blanchd or unblanchd
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup unsalted butter at room temperature
- 3/4 cup sugar divided
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 large egg yolks
- Zest of one small lemon
- 1/2 cup raspberry jam
- 1/2 cup powdered sugar



### Directions

1. To toast the almonds:
  - a. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F.
  - b. Spread the nuts out on a cookie sheet, place them on the middle rack and toast for about 8-10 minutes, or until lightly browned and fragrant.
  - c. Let the nuts cool completely and grind them in a food processor along with 1/4 cup of the sugar until finely ground.
2. In a separate bowl, sift the flour, salt, and cinnamon. Stir in the ground almonds.
3. In a large mixing bowl, beat the butter until pale in color, add the sugar and beat until fluffy, and then add and beat the egg yolks, vanilla extract and lemon zest.
4. Gradually beat the flour/nut mixture into the butter mixture. Divide the dough into quarters, wrap each piece with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least an hour or up to 2 days.
5. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper.
6. Remove one piece of dough from the refrigerator at a time. Place the dough between two sheets of wax paper and roll it out to 1/4 inch thickness. Use 3-inch cookie cutters (round, stars, heart-shaped are the most traditional) to cut out the cookies and place them on a lined or non-stick cookie sheet. Cut out a top for each cookie, using a smaller cookie cutter to cut out the center so the raspberry preserves will be exposed. Repeat with the remaining pieces of dough.



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7. Gather up any scraps of dough, let them chill a few minutes, and cut out the remaining cookies. Note: It's important that the cookies remain firm so that they retain their shape. If the dough becomes soft, place the cookie sheet in the fridge for a few minutes to chill before baking.
8. Bake the cookies for about 12 minutes or until just starting to turn golden around the edges. Let the cookies cool for a few minutes until transferring them to a wire rack to cool completely.
9. Once cooled, spread the bottom half of each cookie with some raspberry preserves, leaving a thin border around each cookie. Place the top of each cookie on its corresponding bottom half. Use a spoon or piping bag to fill the cut out center with a little more of the preserves.
10. Store in an airtight container for up to several days.
11. This makes about 36 cookies.

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## SnickerDoodles - Janet Moskowitz

### Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup Unsalted Butter (softened not MELTING)
- 1/2 cup of crisco (You can also use instead of Crisco 1 cup of just butter. If you use crisco get the brand name Crisco and buy in bar form not the can. It makes a big difference.)
- 1 1/2 cups Sugar
- 2 large Eggs (room temperature)
- 2 teaspoons Vanilla
- 2 3/4 cup Flour
- 1 teaspoon Cream of Tartar
- 1/2 teaspoon Baking Soda 3/4 teaspoon Salt
- Cinnamon-Sugar Mixture: Reserve to roll cookie balls before baking
  - 1/4 Cup Sugar
  - 1 1/2 Tablespoons of Cinnamon



### Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees
2. In a large mixing bowl, cream butter and sugar for 4-5 minutes until light and fluffy. Scrape the sides of the bowl and add the eggs and vanilla. Cream for 1-2 minutes longer.
3. Stir in flour, cream of tartar, baking soda, and salt, just until combined.
4. In a small bowl, stir together sugar and cinnamon (reserve to roll the cookie balls into before baking)
5. Chill the dough for at least an hour in the refrigerator
6. Roll into small balls until round and smooth.
7. Drop into the cinnamon-sugar mixture and coat well. Using a spoon, coat for a second time, ensuring the cookie balls are completely covered.
8. To make flatter snickerdoodles, press down in the center of the ball before placing in the oven. This helps to keep them from puffing up in the middle. \*Only need to do this if you use all butter. If you use both Crisco and butter they will not puff up.
9. Place on a parchment paper-lined baking sheet. Bake for 9-11 minutes. Do not over bake.
10. Let cool for several minutes on baking sheet before removing from the pan.
11. If they become hard, heat before eating in the microwave for 45 seconds. They will soften and taste like they just came out of the oven!! AMAZING!!



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## **PB&J Cookies - Karen Warus**

Prep time: 10 minutes

Inactive time: 3 hours

Cook time: 15 minutes

### **Ingredients:**

- 8 ounces unsalted butter, softened
- 1 cup light brown sugar
- 1/2 cup white sugar
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 2 cups creamy peanut butter (whole regular sized/16 ounce jar)
- 2 eggs, room temperature
- 2 tsp vanilla
- 2 cups flour
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 1 cup grape jam
- 2 tsp cornstarch



### **Directions:**

1. Beat the butter, brown sugar, white sugar, and salt together until light and fluffy
2. Mix the peanut butter, eggs and vanilla into the batter
3. Sift together the flour and baking powder, and gradually add into the batter
4. Wrap dough in plastic wrap, and refrigerate at least 3 hours
5. Roll dough into 1 ounce balls, and bake at 325 for 10 minutes
6. Mix the grape jam with the cornstarch, and put in a squeeze bottle or piping bag
7. Remove cookies from the oven, and with the back of a wooden spoon, make an indentation in the cookie
8. Fill the indentation with the grape jam mixture, and bake cookies for another 3-5 minutes

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## Seven Layer Bars - Susan Nicoletta

### Ingredients:

- 2.6 oz sweetened shredded coconut, (1 cup)
- 3 oz unsalted butter, (6 TBSP)
- 9 graham crackers, (5 ounces)
- 4 oz walnuts, (1 cup, finely chopped)
- 6 oz semi-sweet chocolate chips, (1 cup)
- 3 oz white chocolate chips, (1/2 cup)
- 3 oz butterscotch chips, (1/2 cup)
- 14 oz sweetened condensed milk, (one 14-ounce can)



### Instructions:

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Line a 9x9-inch pan with foil or parchment, and spray with nonstick cooking spray.
2. Toasting the coconut is an optional step, but I like the crunch and deep flavor it adds. To toast the coconut, spread it out on a baking sheet in an even layer. Bake it for 10-12 minutes, stirring every 3-4 minutes so it cooks evenly. When it is a light golden color all over, remove it from the oven and let it cool completely.
3. Crush the graham crackers into small crumbs. You can either use a food processor, or put them in a zip-top bag and crush them with a rolling pin until they are in fine crumbs.
4. Melt the butter in the microwave. Mix the butter with the graham cracker crumbs, and stir everything together until it is the texture of wet sand.
5. Press the crumbs evenly onto the bottom of the prepared pan.
6. Now it's time to layer! Sprinkle the chopped walnuts all over the graham cracker crust. Next, sprinkle most of the chocolate chips, reserving just a spoonful for later.
7. Add the white chocolate chips and butterscotch chips next, reserving a few of these as well. Add the toasted coconut and spread it all over the top. Next, take those reserved chips and scatter them on top of the coconut--this just makes the bars look a little better, in my opinion.
8. Finally, pour the sweetened condensed milk all over the top of the bars. Try to pour it evenly, but don't worry if there are a few missed spots or it doesn't seem to be seeping in--it will all even out as it bakes.
9. Bake the seven layer bars until the top is golden and you see the milk bubbling along the sides, about 30-35 minutes. Cool the bars in the pan on a wire rack to room temperature, about 2 hours.
10. Remove the bars from the pan using the foil or parchment handles, and transfer to a cutting board. Use a sharp knife to cut them into small squares to serve.

### Measuring Tips:

Our recipes are developed using weight measurements, and we highly recommend using a kitchen scale for baking whenever possible. However, if you prefer to use cups, volume measurements are provided as well. PLEASE NOTE: the adage "8 oz = 1 cup" is NOT true when speaking about weight, so don't be concerned if the measurements don't fit this formula.

# *The Great Holiday Cookie Exchange 2024!*

## Best Pecan Sandies - Janis Bullis

### Ingredients

- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup pecans
- 1 cup butter, softened
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup white sugar
- 1 large egg yolk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon salt
- 1  $\frac{3}{4}$  cups all-purpose flour



### Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F (190 degrees C).
2. Spread pecans evenly onto a baking sheet.
3. Bake in the preheated oven until fragrant and lightly toasted, 5 to 10 minutes. Cool completely, then coarsely chop in a food processor.
4. Beat butter in a large bowl with an electric mixer until creamy. Add sugar; beat until light and fluffy. Beat in egg yolk, vanilla, and salt until well combined. Slowly mix in pecans. Stir in flour until dough begins to come together.
5. Roll dough into a ball and divide it in half. Roll each dough half into a 1 1/2-inch-thick log. Wrap each log in wax paper and refrigerate, 4 hours to overnight.
6. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
7. Unwrap dough logs and cut into slices, about 1/3-inch thick. Place on the prepared baking sheet.
8. Bake in the preheated oven until edges are golden, 12 to 15 minutes. Cool cookies on a wire rack.

# *The Great Holiday Cookie Exchange 2024!*

## **Nestle Toll House Dark Chocolate Chip Cookies - Janis Bullis**

### **Ingredients**

- 2 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup (2 sticks) butter, softened
- 3/4 cup granulated sugar
- 3/4 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 large eggs
- 1 2/3 cups (10-ounce package) NESTLÉ® TOLL HOUSE® Dark Chocolate Morsels
- 1 cup chopped nuts\*
- \* If omitting nuts, add 1 to 2 tablespoons of all-purpose flour



### **Instructions**

1. Preheat oven to 375° F.
2. Combine flour, baking soda and salt in small bowl.
3. Beat butter, granulated sugar, brown sugar and vanilla extract in large mixer bowl until creamy. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition.
4. Gradually beat in flour mixture. Stir in morsels and nuts.
5. Drop by rounded tablespoon onto ungreased baking sheets.
6. Bake for 9 to 11 minutes or until golden brown.
7. Cool on baking sheets for 2 minutes; remove to wire racks to cool completely.

### **Pan Cookie Variation:**

1. Preheat oven to 350° F.
2. Grease 15 x 10-inch jelly-roll pan. Prepare dough as above.
3. Spread into prepared pan.
4. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes or until golden brown.
5. Cool in pan on wire rack. Makes 4 dozen bars.



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## Panera Chocolate Chip Cookies - Margaret Pangert

*Note: Margaret's shortcut is to just buy them!*

### Ingredients

- ½ cup unsalted butter
- ½ cup brown sugar
- ¼ cup granulated sugar
- 1 large egg
- 1 ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- ¼ teaspoon baking soda
- ¼ teaspoon baking powder
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 ¼ cups all-purpose flour (not packed, just scooped and leveled with a knife)
- 1 cup dark chocolate chunks (You'll be chopping ½ cup and adding the remaining ½ cup whole). Kroger brand "Private Selection Dark Chocolate Chunks" is found to be the most authentic to the Panera kind.



### Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (you want the oven ready as soon as you're done scooping!)
2. Use a sharp knife to chop ½ cup of the dark chocolate chunks into small shards and slivers (Note: only chop HALF of the chunks - not the full cup we'll be adding). Set aside.
3. In a small microwave-safe bowl, add the unsalted butter (½ cup, i.e. 1 stick) and cover with a paper towel (will help for splattering). Melt the butter for 30-45 seconds until all is melted (no chunks left). You want it hot; if you hear it "pop" then it's most likely done.
4. Pour butter into a larger bowl then add in granulated sugar (¼ cup) and brown sugar (½ cup) and use a spatula to stir until combined (\* do not use a mixer for this recipe).
5. Add in egg (1 large) and vanilla extract (1 ½ teaspoons), then mix.
6. Next, add in baking soda (¼ teaspoon), baking powder (¼ teaspoon), and salt (¼ teaspoon) and mix again.
7. Add in all-purpose flour (1 ¼ cups) and mix until all the flour disappears into the dough. Note: the dough WILL be wet and sticky, this is normal.
8. Add the ½ cup of chopped chocolate chunks and ½ cup of whole chocolate chunks into the dough and mix. Allow dough to sit for 1-2 minutes to slightly set so it's not as sticky.
9. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Scoop dough into 3-tablespoon sized scoops then gently roll into your hands to create a ball. Flatten the tops so that they're a thick disc vs. a round ball. Without flattening, your cookies will be thicker and more cakey.

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10. Bake at 350°F for 10-12 minutes. You want them to be slightly brown on top and look slightly underbaked.
11. Remove from oven and place entire pan on a cooling rack. Allow the cookies to cool on the hot pan for 10-15 minutes before removing them. This will allow them to finish baking on the hot pan.
12. Once cooled, use a spatula to transfer them to a wire cooling rack.

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## Chocolate-Dipped Almond Cookies - Fran Nuzzi

### CHOCOLATE-DIPPED ALMOND COOKIES

MAKES 6 DOZEN

- 1 cup (2 sticks) *unsalted butter*
- $\frac{2}{3}$  cup *sugar*
- 1 *large egg yolk*
- 1 *teaspoon vanilla extract*
- 2 cups *sifted all-purpose flour*
- $\frac{1}{4}$  *teaspoon salt*
- $1\frac{1}{3}$  cups *finely chopped blanched almonds*

#### FOR DECORATION

- 6 *ounces semisweet chocolate*
- 3 *tablespoons unsalted butter*
- 1 *tablespoon hot water*
- Chopped almonds, for garnish*

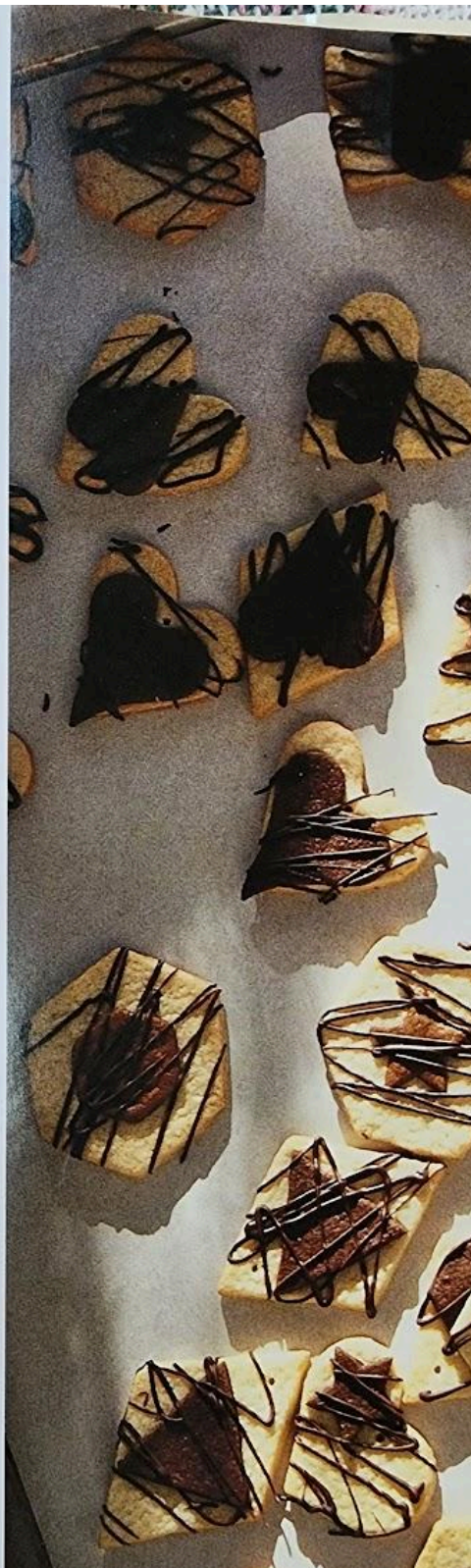
Cream the butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add the egg yolk and vanilla, then the flour, salt, and finely chopped almonds, mixing well.

Shape the dough into 2 rolls, each  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches in diameter. Wrap rolls and refrigerate until firm, about 2 hours.

Preheat the oven to 350° F. and line baking sheets with parchment paper.

With a sharp knife, cut the dough into  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch-thick slices. Place 1 to 2 inches apart on baking sheets and bake for 8 to 10 minutes, just until lightly browned. Cool on a rack.

In the top of a double boiler, melt the chocolate and butter for the topping. Add the hot water and stir until smooth. Dip an edge of each cookie into the chocolate, then sprinkle with the chopped almonds. Cool on a rack until the chocolate hardens.





# The Great Holiday Cookie Exchange 2024!

## The Perfect Cheesecake - Ann Guadango

### THE PERFECT CHEESECAKE

#### Crust:

2pks graham cracker crumbs  
2T sugar  
5T butter  
Pinch of salt

#### Filling: all ingredients must be room temperature

4 Pkgs. Philadelphia cream cheese  
1 1/3 C granulated sugar  
Pinch of salt  
2t Vanilla extract  
4 large eggs  
2/3C sour cream  
2/3C heavy whipping cream



#### Directions:

1. Prepare the springform pan so that no water leaks into it while cooking. Place a large 18 inch by 18 inch square of aluminum foil and place around your 9"x 2 2/3" high spring form pan.
2. Preheat oven 350degrees with rack on lower third of oven.
3. Pulse graham crackers until finely ground. Put in large bowl and stir in sugar salt and melted butter, mix well.  
Put crumbs in bottom of spring form pan. Gently press down on crumbs until even layer at bottom of pan with a slight rise along the inside edges of pan.  
Place in oven for 10 minutes. Remove from oven and let cool. Reduce oven temp to 325degrees.

#### Making the filling:

4. Mix the room temp cream cheese on med. speed until smooth, soft and creamy. Add sugar, beat for 4 more minutes.  
Add salt and vanilla constantly beating mixture. Add eggs one at a time beating each egg for one minute before adding the next.  
Add the sour cream and beautifully incorporate next add the heavy cream, beat until incorporated. REMEMBER to scrape down the sides of the mixer bowl and scrap up and thicker bits of cream cheese that have stuck to the bottom and sides of the mixer.

#### Cooking the cheesecake:

5. Prepare 2 quarts of boiling water. Place the foil-wrapped springform pan in a large, high-sided roasting pan. Pour the cream cheese filling in the graham cracker bottom layer. Smooth the top with rubber spatula.



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Place roasting pan with springform pan in it., in the oven on lower rack. Then carefully pour the hot boiling water into the roasting pan to create a water bath for the cheesecake pouring until the water reaches halfway up the pan, about 1 1/4 inches. Bake at 325 degrees for 1 ½ hours.

6. Turn off the heat of the oven. Crack open the oven door 1- inch. Let the cake cool in the oven, as the oven cools, for an entire hour. This gentle cooking will help prevent the cheesecake surface for cracking.
7. Cover the top of the cheesecake with foil, so that it doesn't actually touch the cheesecake. Chill in the refrigerator for a MINIMUM of 4 hours or overnight.

Prepare the cake to serve:

8. Remove the cake from the refrigerator. Remove the foil from the sides of the pan, and place the cake on your serving dish. Run the side of a blunt knife between the edge of the cake and the pan. You can use a hair dryer to heat the sides of the pan to make it easier to remove. Open the springform latch and gently open the pan and lift up the sides.

You can top the cheesecake with any type of sauces or drizzle it with chocolate, milk, dark and or white.