

## TWELVE DAYS OF TREATS

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### DAY 1 - CHOCOLATE CARAMEL THUMBPRINTS

From the Book *Christmas Cookies* by Lisa Zwirn

2 cups all-purpose flour  
½ cup cocoa powder  
½ teaspoon salt  
16 tablespoons (2 sticks) unsalted butter, softened  
1 ¾ cups sugar  
1 large egg  
1 large egg yolk  
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

#### Caramel Filling

20 caramels (about 5 ½ ounces) unwrapped  
¼ cup heavy (or whipping) cream

#### Chocolate Drizzle

4 ½ ounces bittersweet chocolate, chopped

Mix together the flour, cocoa and salt in a medium bowl.

Beat the butter in a large bowl until creamy. Add the sugar and beat well until fluffy. Beat in the whole egg and egg yolk. Mix in the vanilla. With the beaters on low speed, mix in the flour mixture until incorporated and the dough comes together. Gather the dough into a ball, then divide it in half. Wrap each half separately in plastic wrap and refrigerate until firm, about 1 hour.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Line 2 cookie sheets with parchment paper.

Working with one half of the dough at a time (leave the other half in the refrigerator), roll it into 1-inch balls, arranging them about 2 inches apart on the prepared sheets. Make an indentation in the center of each ball using the handle end of a wooden spoon, or use your thumb or knuckle, being careful not to go all the way through.

Bake for about 13 minutes or until the cookies feel just slightly firm. Transfer the cookie sheets to a rack and immediately depress the centers of the cookies again using the handle end of a wooden spoon to reinforce and widen the indentation to about ¾ inch. Transfer the cookies to the rack to cool completely.

For the caramel filling, heat the caramels and cream in a medium saucepan stirring often, until the caramels are melted and the mixture is smooth, about 5 minutes. Using a small spoon, spoon the

caramel into the indentations, filling just up to the rim. If the caramel becomes too thick, place over low heat for a few seconds. Let the caramel set before drizzling the cookies with chocolate.

For the chocolate drizzle, melt the chocolate in a microwave safe bowl in the microwave or over a double boiler, until melted and smooth. Let it cool to room temperature for a few minutes. Place the cookies close together but not touching. Pour the chocolate into a small plastic bag or squeeze bottle. Seal the bag and make a small cut in the corner. Drizzle the chocolate in a zigzag pattern over the cookies. Let the chocolate set completely before storing the cookies.

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## DAY 2 - WHITE RITZ COOKIES

### INGREDIENTS

- Ritz crackers (or other favorite buttery crackers)
- White-chocolate melts, or other melting chocolate of your choice
- Peanut butter or peanut butter alternative
- Optional: Sprinkles for decorating

### INSTRUCTIONS

Begin making the “sandwiches” by spreading a small dab of peanut butter (or peanut butter alternative) atop the flat side of a cracker, and then attaching the flat side of another cracker on top. Repeat with the remainder of the crackers and peanut butter.

Then melt your vanilla or white chocolate candy melts (or other melting chocolate) in the microwave or a double boiler. If the chocolate is too thick, feel free to add in a few teaspoons of shortening to thin it out.

Then carefully drop each “sandwich” in the chocolate and submerge so that it’s fully-coated. Remove with a fork and set on wax paper, parchment paper, aluminum foil, or a Silpat to dry. Decorate with sprinkles if you wish!

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## DAY 3 - PEANUT BLOSSOM COOKIES

Makes 4 dozen cookies

Preheat oven to 375.

1  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup all-purpose flour  
½ teaspoon salt  
1 teaspoon baking soda  
½ cup brown sugar, packed  
½ cup white sugar, plus additional for rolling dough balls in

½ cup shortening  
½ cup peanut butter  
1 egg  
2 tablespoons milk  
1 teaspoon vanilla  
48 candy kisses, unwrapped

Combine all ingredients except candy in mixing bowl and mix until well combined. Roll generous teaspoons of dough into balls and then roll the balls into white sugar to coat. Place on cookie sheets lined with parchment paper or silicone sheets. Bake 10 – 12 minutes until slightly spread and bottoms are lightly browned. Press kisses into cookies immediately. Cool.

Tip: You can pull out the tray about a minute before it's done baking, press the kisses in, then return to the tray to the oven to finish the minute to help keep the kisses from falling out when the cookies cool. This melts the chocolate to the cookie slightly better than adding them after removing them from the oven. Take care to not leave them in the oven too long though!

This is a great recipe for kids to help with. They can unwrap the candy, roll the dough balls in the sugar, and, depending on their age, help with putting the kisses into the cookies at the end. Always my favorite part of the holiday baking day!

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## DAY 4 - AUNT ROBIN'S THUMBPRINT COOKIES

Yield: 30-32  
Oven: 350\*

Baking Time: 10-12 minutes

Ingredients:  
2 sticks softened butter  
2/3 C. Sugar

Mix these together until soft and creamy.

Add: ½ tsp. Almond extract

Mix again.

Add: 2C. Flour- slowly and a little at a time.

Dough will be dry, mix with hands into a ball or log.  
Pinch off pieces to make small quarter size balls of dough. Use thumb or back of spoon to make dent for jam to sit in. Use jam or preserves to spoon a small amount into cookie. Let cool on cookie sheet, then transfer to wire rack. Enjoy!

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## DAY 5 - OATMEAL CRAISIN WHITE CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES

(Reduced Sugar Craisins)

2/3 cup butter or margarine softened

2/3 cup brown sugar

2 large eggs

1-1/2 cups old-fashioned oats

1-1/2 cups flour

1 teaspoon baking soda

½ teaspoon salt

1 5-ounce package Reduced Sugar Craisins

Dried Cranberries (about 1 cup)

2/3 cup white chocolate chips or chunks

Preheat oven to 375 degrees.

Using an electric mixer, beat butter or margarine and sugar together in a medium mixing bowl until light and fluffy. Add eggs, mixing well. Combine oats, flour, baking soda and salt in a separate mixing bowl. Add to butter mixture in several additions, mixing well after each addition. Stir in dried cranberries and white chocolate chips/chunks. Drop by rounded teaspoons onto ungreased cookie sheets. Bake for 10-12 minutes or until golden brown. Cool on wire rack. Makes approximately 2-1/2 dozen cookies.

\*\*\*Craisins are dried Cranberries. I use the 50% less Sugar. Found in the grocery aisle with the raisins.

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## DAY 6 - MARY'S SUGAR COOKIES (CUT OUTS)

Nothing really says Christmas as much as cut out cookies decorated with frosting and sprinkles, the kind we always leave out for Santa. While Community Librarian Jodi has no ties to the "Mary" named in the recipe, it's the recipe her family has always used. They're light and crispy. Originally from a Betty Crocker cookbook.

1 ½ cups powdered sugar

1 cup butter

1 egg

1 teaspoon vanilla

½ teaspoon almond extract

2 ½ cups flour

1 teaspoon baking soda

1 teaspoon cream of tartar

Cream together sugar and butter. Mix in eggs and flavorings. Mix dry ingredients together and add to the butter mixture. Mix until smooth and thoroughly combined. Refrigerate 2 – 3 hours. Roll out on a

lightly floured surface to  $\frac{1}{4}$  -  $\frac{1}{2}$ ". Cut with decorative cookie cutters or simply a floured glass rim. Bake at 375 degrees for 7 – 8 minutes, until lightly golden. Cool completely then frost and decorate as desired.

**Creamy White Frosting:**

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup shortening  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup butter, softened  
1 teaspoon vanilla  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon almond extract  
4  $\frac{1}{2}$  cups powdered sugar, sifted  
3 – 4 tablespoons milk

Beat shortening, butter, and flavorings with an electric mixer on medium speed for 30 seconds. Slowly add half of the powdered sugar, beating well. Add 2 tablespoons of milk. Gradually beat in remaining powdered sugar and enough remaining milk to make a spreading consistency.

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**DAY 7 - CHOCOLATE CARAMEL PECAN PRETZEL BITES**  
*(Taken from Ree Drummond via Food Network)*

Makes 24 bites

Ingredients:

24 pecan halves  
24 mini pretzels  
24 individually wrapped caramel squares  
8 oz. (1 cup) chocolate (any kind), melted

Directions:

Preheat oven to 325 degrees F.

Put the pecan halves on a baking sheet in a single layer and bake, shaking the sheet once halfway through, until lightly toasted, 5-6 minutes. Transfer the nuts to a plate to cool.

Line the baking sheet with parchment paper or silicone baking sheet, then top each pretzel with an unwrapped caramel. Bake until the caramels are soften (but are definitely not melting), 4-5 minutes. Remove the baking sheet from the oven and gently press a pecan half onto each caramel, just enough for the caramel to fill the pretzel. Set aside to cool completely.

Remove the cooled pretzel/caramels from the baking sheet. Spoon 24 small dollops (1-1/2 teaspoon helpings) of the melted chocolate all over the baking sheet, then lightly drop a pretzel onto the middle of each dollop, making sure the pretzel is centered. Allow them to cool completely before serving (you can hasten this along in the fridge)

## DAY 8 – PUPPY CHOW

Servings: 18

Time: 15 minutes

### Ingredients

- 9 cups Rice Chex™, Corn Chex™ or Chocolate Chex™ cereal (or combination)
- 1 cup semisweet chocolate chips
- 1/2 cup peanut butter
- 1/4 cup butter or margarine
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 1/2 cups powdered sugar

### Preparation

1. Into large bowl, measure cereal; set aside.
  2. In 1-quart microwavable bowl, microwave chocolate chips, peanut butter and butter uncovered on High 1 minute; stir. Microwave about 30 seconds longer or until mixture can be stirred smooth. Stir in vanilla. Pour mixture over cereal, stirring until evenly coated. Pour into 2-gallon resealable food-storage plastic bag.
  3. Add powdered sugar. Seal bag; shake until well coated. Spread on waxed paper to cool. Store in airtight container in refrigerator.
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## DAY 9 – ROSETTES

### Ingredients:

2 eggs

1 tbsp. white sugar

1 cup sifted white flour

1 cup milk

1 tsp vanilla extract

1/4 tsp salt

Vegetable oil for frying

Sifted confectioners' sugar for topping

### Directions:

#### Step 1

Combine eggs, sugar and salt. Beat well. Add remaining ingredients and beat until smooth.

#### Step 2

Heat a rosette iron in dep, hot oil (375 degrees) for 2 minutes

#### Step 3

Drain excess oil from iron. Dip in batter to 1/4 inch from the top of the iron, then dip iron immediately into the hot oil

#### Step 4

Fry rosette until golden, about 30 seconds. Lift out, tipping upside down to drain. With fork, push rosette off iron onto a rack placed over paper towels.

Step 5

Reheat iron for 1 minute, make next rosette.

Step 6

Sprinkle rosettes with confectioners' sugar.

Makes 5 dozen

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## DAY 10 - NUTELLA CHIP COOKIES (REINDEER PATTIES)

½ cup unsalted butter, softened

¾ cup light brown sugar

¼ cup granulated sugar

½ cup Nutella

2 eggs

1 additional egg yolk

¼ cup cocoa powder

2 cups all-purpose flour

1 tsp baking soda

½ tsp salt

1 tsp vanilla

1 cup mini chocolate chips

Sprinkles or powdered sugar optional

Preheat oven to 350F. Line cookie sheet with parchment paper and set aside.

Cream butter, sugars and Nutella together until smooth.

Add in the eggs, additional egg yolk, cocoa powder and vanilla. Beat for about one minute on medium speed.

In a separate bowl, combine flour, baking soda and salt. Add Dry ingredients to the wet ingredients a ½ cup at a time and mix until combined, scraping down the sides as needed.

Fold in chocolate chips.

Roll into tbsp. sized balls and place on prepared cookie sheet about two inches apart. If you want to, you can roll cookie dough in sprinkles before placing on pan.

Bake for 10-12 minutes. Cool on pan for a couple of minutes before transferring to a cooling rack. If using, sprinkle powdered sugar on cookies.

Store in an air tight container with a piece of bread to keep them soft.

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## DAY 11 - ROLLED BUTTER NUT COOKIES

6 tablespoons butter, cut into small cubes  
2 tablespoons heavy whipping cream  
½ cup sugar  
½ cup ground almonds, pecans, or walnuts  
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour

Preheat oven to 350o. In a small saucepan melt butter with cream. Combine sugar, ground nuts and flour, stir into butter mixture until smooth. Cook and stir over low heat 1 minute, remove from heat. Working in batches of 4, drop batter by teaspoonful 4 inches apart on parchment-lined baking sheets. Bake until light golden brown, 5 – 6 minutes. Cool on pan 1 minute before quickly rolling into a cylinder, using handle of wooden spoon. Remove to wire racks to cool completely.

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## DAY 12 - PEANUT BUTTER BALLS

1 Cup Chocolate Chips  
1 Cup Peanut Butter  
1 Cup Powdered Sugar  
½ Cup Powdered Milk mixed with 3 Tbsp. water  
Crushed Graham Crackers

1. Mix powdered milk and water in bowl
2. Add other ingredients and mix well
3. Crush graham crackers in a bag and put them on sheet.
4. Roll dough in balls the size you desire and roll in graham crackers.

Note: You can use creamy or crunchy peanut butter for this recipe.

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## DAY 13 – CHOCOLATE TOFFEE BARS

*(Baker's Dozen Bonus Recipe, taken from 5 Ingredient Recipes by Philia Kelnhofer)*

### Ingredients:

1.5 cups of semi-sweet chocolate chips  
1 cup unsalted butter (2 sticks)  
1 cup light brown sugar  
8 graham cracker cookies

### Directions:

Butter 9x13- inch baking pan and line the bottom with graham crackers (note: do this step first and before making the toffee mixture)



In a medium sauce pan over medium- high heat, melt the butter and brown sugar together. Bring the mixture to a boil while whisking constantly. Once it reaches a boil, let it remain at a boil while still stirring constantly.

Carefully pour the mixture over the graham crackers and let sit for 5-10 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Put the baking pan in the oven and then bake for 10 minutes.

Remove from oven and sprinkle chocolate chips over the top of the toffee. Put the baking pan back into the oven for 1 minute to melt the chips. Remove from the oven and smooth the chocolate chips over the toffee by running a spatula over them, moving back and forth. Let cool completely and cut into little bars (or crack into shapes after refrigerating!) and enjoy.

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## SUGAR DUSTED LEMON BARS

*(Bonus Recipe!)*

This recipe is from Family Fun magazine from at least 10 years ago. They included a series of recipes that were recommended for bake sales. The crust on these lemon bars is what makes them perfect because they're much sturdier due to the crust. They won't fall apart on you when you bite into them and the lemon flavor? Mmmm.

### Crust ingredients

¾ cup (1 ½ sticks) unsalted butter, softened but cool  
1/3 cup sugar  
½ teaspoon salt  
½ cup oats, quick or old-fashioned (Will be a bit crispier with quick, a bit chewier with old-fashioned)  
1 ¾ cups flour  
1 tablespoon cold water

### Filling ingredients

1 ½ cups sugar  
1/3 cup flour  
¼ teaspoon salt  
3 large eggs at room temperature  
1 egg yolk  
4 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted  
½ cup milk  
¼ cup freshly strained lemon juice, about one lemon  
Finely grated zest of one lemon  
½ teaspoon vanilla extract  
Powdered sugar for dusting

Make the crust: Heat oven to 350. Butter a 13x9" pan.

Cream the softened butter, sugar, and salt in a large bowl with a wooden spoon. Stir in the oats, then stir in the flour, a third at a time, rubbing in the last bit of it by hand to make coarse crumbs. Sprinkle on the water and rub briefly.

Press the dough into the prepared pan, spreading it evenly into the bottom and very slightly up the sides. Chill the pan for 15 minutes. Bake the pastry on the center oven rack for 15 minutes. Transfer pan to a wire rack to cool completely.

Make the filling:

Tip for lemon juice: First zest the lemon by rubbing it over a fine shredder, just through the outside skin. Don't get into the white part as that will degrade the flavor. Then cut the lemon in half and squeeze out the juice.

Keep oven at 350. Combine the sugar, flour, salt, eggs, and yolk in a large mixing bowl. Whisk until smooth. Whisk in the melted butter, then the milk. Stir in the lemon juice, lemon zest, and vanilla extract until evenly blended.

Pour the filling over the cooled crust and tilt the pan gently, side to side, to spread the filling evenly. Bake the bars on the center oven rack until the filling is set and just barely beginning to turn golden, 22 – 25 minutes. Do not overbake.

Move the pan to a wire rack to cool. When the bars are barely warm, dust them lightly with powdered sugar using a sifter or fine sieve. Chill for at least 1 hour, then lightly dust them again with powdered sugar before cutting. Makes up to 24 bars.