

Chocolate Chubbies **Coconut Macaroons** **Oatmeal-Raisin Cookies** **Monster Cookies**



It's that time of year again! It's time to bake Christmas treats. I'm so excited about my Christmas baking this year that I'm using Christmas Cookies as the theme for our Christmas tree at the Friends of Caroline Hospice Festival of Trees. Don't you just love the way your house smells at Christmastime? I remember coming home from school on cold December afternoons. Mama always had something freshly baked waiting on the kitchen table for my brother and me. The aroma was so welcoming and the goodies were always tasty! These are some of my favorite cookie recipes. Baking can be a bit trickier than cooking. Be sure to measure your ingredients exactly and always bake cookies in a preheated oven. For best results, bake only one pan of cookies at a time, placing the pan in the center of the oven. Never bake cookies with one pan directly over another pan. One batch will invariably have tops that are too dark, while the other batch will have the opposite problem. Cookies are often difficult to test for doneness. That's why most recipes give a range in baking times. If you prefer soft and chewy cookies, take them out of the oven at the lower end of the time. Leave cookies in 1 or 2 minutes longer if you like them crispy. Always remove cookies from baking sheets after removal from the oven. If you leave them on the baking sheets the residual heat will cause them to continue to cook. Place cookies on wire racks, with a spatula, to cool. Let cookies cool completely before storing in an airtight container. Merry baking!

p.s. Please support Friends of Caroline Hospice Festival of Trees. Trees may be viewed from Tuesday, December 9 through Saturday, December 13. I'll be there Tuesday through Friday serving lunch a la carte from 11:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. Bring a friend and join us!

Chocolate Chubbies

6 (1-ounce) semisweet chocolate baking squares, chopped
2 (1-ounce) unsweetened chocolate baking squares, chopped
1/3 cup butter
3 large eggs
1 cup sugar
1/4 cup all-purpose flour
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
1/8 teaspoon salt
1 (12-ounce) package semisweet chocolate morsels
2 cups coarsely chopped pecans

2 cups coarsely chopped walnuts

Combine first three ingredients in a heavy saucepan; cook, stirring often, over low heat until chocolate melts. Remove from heat; cool slightly. Beat eggs and sugar at medium speed with an electric mixer until smooth; add chocolate, beating well. Combine flour, baking powder and salt; add to chocolate mixture, stirring just until dry ingredients are moistened. Fold in chocolate morsels, pecans and walnuts. Drop batter by tablespoonfuls 2 inches apart onto lightly greased baking sheets. Bake at 325 degrees for 12 to 15 minutes. Cool cookies on baking sheets for 1 minute. Remove to wire racks; cool. Yield: 3-1/2 dozen.

Coconut Macaroons

1-1/3 cups flaked coconut
1/3 cup sugar
2 egg whites
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/8 teaspoon salt

Combine ingredients; stir well. Drop by level teaspoon onto a greased baking sheet. Bake in a preheated 350 degree oven for 20 minutes; cool on wire racks. Yield: 1 dozen.

Oatmeal-Raisin Cookies

1 cup butter, softened
1-1/2 cups sugar
1 egg
1/4 cup water
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1-1/2 cups all-purpose flour
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg
3 cups quick-cooking oats, uncooked
1 cup chopped pecans
1 cup raisins

Cream butter; gradually add sugar, beating at medium speed of an electric mixer until light and fluffy. Add egg and beat well; add water and vanilla, mixing well. Combine flour, baking soda, salt, cinnamon and nutmeg; add to creamed mixture, mixing well. Stir in oats, pecans and raisins. Drop by rounded teaspoonfuls onto greased baking sheets. Bake at 350 degrees for 10 to 12 minutes or until lightly browned. Cool slightly

on baking sheets; remove to wire racks to cool completely. Yield: about 8 dozen.

Monster Cookies

1/2 cup butter, softened
1 cup sugar
1 cup plus 2 tablespoons firmly packed brown sugar
3 eggs
2 cups peanut butter
3/4 teaspoon light corn syrup
1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract
4-1/2 cups regular oats, uncooked
2 teaspoons baking soda
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 cup plain M&Ms
1 (6-ounce) package semisweet chocolate morsels

Cream butter; gradually add sugars. Beat well at medium speed of an electric mixer. Add eggs, peanut butter, syrup and vanilla; beat well. Add oats, baking soda and salt; stir well. Stir in remaining ingredients. (Mixture will be stiff.) Pack dough into a 1/4-cup measuring cup. Drop dough 4 inches apart onto lightly greased baking sheets. Lightly press each cookie into a 3-1/2-inch circle with fingertips. Bake at 350 degrees for 12 to 15 minutes (center of cookies will be slightly soft). Cool slightly on baking sheets; remove to wire racks and cool completely. Yield: 2-1/2 dozen big cookies. The writer owns Catering by Debbi Covington and is the author of the cookbook, Dining Under the Carolina Moon. Debbi's website address is www.cateringbydebbicovington.com. She may be reached at 525-0350 or by email at covingtoncats@embarqmail.com.