

# Home on the Range

## Holiday Baking Begins With Christmas Cookies

The home economists staffing the Land O'Lakes Holiday Bakeline say that certain baking questions keep popping up year after year. The top five most commonly asked questions and answers include:

• "Why are my cookies flat and spreading?"

*Answers(s)* • Remember not to over-soften the butter or beat it too long.

• Try refrigerating the dough for 1 to 2 hours until well chilled.

• If dough is still too soft, stir in 1 or 2 tablespoons of flour.

• Be sure to cool cookie sheets completely before placing more cookie dough on them.

• "Can I substitute salted butter for unsalted butter?"

*Answer:* • Yes, you can substitute salted butter for unsalted and vice versa. It isn't necessary to add more salt to the recipe if you're using unsalted butter.

• "How long can I freeze my cookie dough?"

*Answer:* • Most cookie dough freezes well for up to three months. After mixing the dough, can can wrap and freeze it. To have future batches ready in minutes, drop tablespoons full of dough onto cookie sheets and freeze until firm. Then remove them from the cookie sheets and place in a heavy-duty, reclosable plastic food bag and return to the freezer. When you're ready to bake, take the dough out of the freezer and thaw it in the refrigerator until it's just soft enough to use.

• "What are the best methods for shipping cookies and candies to family and friends?"

*Answer(s)* • Line a cookie tin with aluminum foil or plastic

*food wrap* Take four to six cookies of the same size and wrap together in aluminum foil or plastic wrap. Layer cookies with crumbled paper towel around them until container is full. Place tin in a sturdy cardboard box.

• Seal box with adhesive tape and wrap with an outer wrapper. Mark the package "Perishable Food" to ensure rapid transit and careful handling.

• Please see enclosed release on packing and shipping baked goods for more detailed information and tips.

Of course, a quick call to the Holiday Bakeline at 1-800-782-9606 will provide the answers to these questions and any others that come up as consumers bake their way to a happy holiday.

### BUTTERNUT COOKIES

- 3 cups sugar
- 1 1/2 cups butter
- 5 eggs
- 6 tablespoons milk
- 1 1/2 teaspoon cream of tartar
- 1 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 7 cups flour

Mix everything together. Roll out on floured surface to about 1/2-inch thick then cut into stars and bells for Christmas cookies. Bake for about 7 minutes at 350 degrees. Cool. Frost and add candy sprinkles.

### Creamy Vanilla Frosting:

- 1/2 cup shortening
- 1 pound powdered sugar
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla

Mix well. Makes 2 cups.  
Mrs. Warren Zimmerman  
Denver

### MILKY WAY METEOR CRISPS

- 1/2 cup butter
- 10 1/2-ounce bag miniature marshmallows
- 2.15-ounce chocolate covered caramel and nougat candy bars\*, chopped

6 cups crisp rice cereal  
Colored sugars, decorated candies, sprinkles

In 4-quart saucepan, melt butter over medium-low heat. Stir in marshmallows until melted. Remove from heat; stir in candy bars. Stir in cereal.

With buttered hands, shape mixture into 1-inch balls. Roll in colored sugars, decorator candies or sprinkles. Place on waxed paper. Store in airtight containers between sheets of waxed paper.

Tip: Cookies can be formed into different shapes and sizes. For gifts, shape into large popcorn size balls, wrap in colored cellophane and tie with ribbon.

### FIVE-STAR MOLASSES TEA CAKES

- 2 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup firmly packed brown sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup butter, softened
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/3 cup milk
- 3 tablespoons molasses (light or dark)

Powdered sugar  
Heat oven to 350 degrees. In large mixer bowl, stir together flour, sugar, brown sugar, cinnamon, and salt. Add butter; beat at low speed until crumbly (1 to 2 minutes). Reserve 1/3 cup crumb mixture for topping; set aside.

To remaining crumb mixture, stir in baking powder and baking soda. Beat at low speed until well mixed (1 minute). Add milk and molasses; continue beating just until moistened (30 to 60) seconds. Do not overmix.

Divide dough into 16 pieces. Shape into 3/4-inch thick moons, stars, circles, etc: place 2-inches apart on cookie sheets. Sprinkle with reserved crumb mixture.

Bake 11 to 14 minutes or until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Do not overbake.

Sprinkle with powdered sugar. Store in airtight containers. 16 servings.

Tip: If desired, drizzle cakes with melted chocolate.

### TOMMY'S FAVORITE COOKIES

- 1 pound dark brown sugar
- 1/2 pound butter
- 3 eggs
- 1/3 cup buttermilk
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 2 1/2 cups flour
- 1 cup white raisins
- 1 cup coarsely chopped walnuts
- 1 package butterscotch chips

Mix and drop by teaspoonful onto a cookie sheet. Bake at 350 degrees for 12 minutes.  
Kristina Pardoe  
Sullivan Co. Dairy Princess



Ring in the season with these baked treats. When baking blunders occur, call the Land O' Lakes Holiday Bakeline, 1-800-782-9606, which is open from now through Dec. 24, 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. (EST) seven days a week to answer all your baking questions.

## Featured Recipe

Are the bottoms of your cookies too brown? Do your cookie cut-outs spread into one giant cookie when baked?

Call the Land O' Lakes Holiday Bakeline 1-800-782-9606 for help with these problems or any other baking dilemmas. From now through Dec. 24, the bakeline is open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. (CST) seven days a week. That's 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. (EST), which is our readership area.

Last season, a record-breaking 55,000 people called the Bakeline for help. One eager-to-please grandfather called for a pie crust recipe because his grandchildren complained his typical crust tasted like cardboard. The home economist gave him a sure-fire winning recipe and shared tips for a buttery, light, flaky pie crust.

In addition to receiving advice from home economists extensively trained in the Land O' Lakes Test Kitchens, callers will receive a free "Land O'Lakes Bake You A Star" recipe leaflet, filled with dazzling holiday treats and quick baking tips.

Here is the recipe for the Holiday Angels pictured at left.

### FROSTED HOLIDAY ANGELS

#### Frosting:

- 2 cups powdered sugar
- 1/4 cup butter, softened
- 2 to 3 tablespoons milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla

#### Food coloring

- Angel body: sugar ice cream cones
- Wings: small or large pretzel twists
- Head: chocolate or vanilla wafer cookies
- Hair: Toasted coconut
- Halo: Fruit-flavored ring-shaped candies

Decorations: Mini candy coated chocolate pieces, decorator candies or sprinkles, decorator gels and frostings, gum drops, mini chocolate chips, etc.

In small mixer bowl, combine all frosting ingredients. Beat at low speed, scraping bowl often, until fluffy (1 to 2 minutes). Tint frosting as desired in pastel colors. Reserve some white or yellow frosting for attaching heads, hair, and faces.

Place sugar cone upside down and frost. Attach pretzel twist to cone with frosting to make wings. Decorate angel body as desired with decorator gels, frostings, and candies. Let stand 5 to 10 minutes to set frosting.

For angel head decorate wafer cookie with candies using frosting to attach eyes, nose, and mouth. Attach head to cone with frosting.

For hair, attach coconut with frosting. Let stand until frosting is set (5 to 10 minutes). Attach fruit-flavored ring-shaped candy for halo. 8 angels.

To toast coconut: Spread coconut in shallow pan. Bake at 350 degrees, stirring often, for 7 to 10 minutes or until lightly browned.



There's nothing like baking to bring a family together. With a little help from mom and dad, kids will have a blast rolling up Milky Way Meteor Crisps and creating Frosted Angels and Solar Swirls.