

MOM'S LEMON TART

Ingredients

Crust

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/3 cup powdered sugar
- Pinch of salt
- 1/2 cup (1 stick) cold, unsalted butter (cut into smaller pieces)

Filling

- 5 oz. cream cheese
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 3/4 cup fresh lemon juice (about 2 large lemons)
- 2 large eggs
- Zest from one lemon

Directions

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. In a food processor or mixer, combine ingredients for crust. Pulse together until a dough starts to form in clumps. Press into tart pan, making sure to cover bottom and sides evenly. Pierce the bottom of the crust with a fork and place in freezer for 10 to 15 minutes.

Place tart pan on a cookie sheet and bake until crust is a golden-brown color, approximately 12 minutes. Remove from oven and let cool.

Reduce oven temperature to 350 degrees. Mix cream cheese with electric beaters until smooth. Add sugar. Mix until well blended. Add the eggs one at a time mixing thoroughly after each egg. Stop and scrape bowl halfway through. Add the lemon juice and zest and mix until smooth.

Pour filling into tart crust and bake on cookie sheet for 10 to 30 minutes or until filling is set. Let tart cool on wire cooling rack. Cover and refrigerate until well chilled.

DESPERATION COOKIES

Ingredients

- 2 cups melted butter
- 3 cups white sugar
- 1 1/2 cups brown sugar
- 4 teaspoons vanilla
- 4 teaspoons baking soda
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 4 beaten eggs
- 5 cups flour (doesn't need to be sifted)
- 3 cups baking chips (whatever you have on hand)
- 4 cups chopped nuts (optional, and whatever's on hand)

Directions

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Melt the butter. Mix in the white and brown sugar.

Add the vanilla, baking soda, salt and then mix. Add the eggs and stir it all up.

Then add half the flour, and all the chips and nuts. Stir well. Add the other half of the flour and mix.

Drop by teaspoons onto cookie sheets. Bake for 10-12 minutes. Allow them to cool for two minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to finish cooling.

CHEDDAR-SAGE SCONES

Ingredients

- 2 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon dried sage
- 6 tablespoons butter, cut into 1-inch pieces and chilled in the freezer for fifteen minutes
- 2/3 cup sharp cheddar cheese, grated
- 1 egg
- 1/2 cup milk

Directions

Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

Set aside 1/4 cup flour in a small bowl. In a medium bowl combine 2 cups flour, baking powder, salt, and sage. Add chilled butter and cut into flour by rubbing with your fingers or using a pastry blender until the consistency of rough cornmeal.

Add the grated cheddar to the 1/4 cup flour and toss to coat. Shake to remove excess flour and add to pastry mixture, tossing with your hands to evenly distribute the cheese.

Whisk together the egg and milk. Add to flour mixture, stirring lightly with a fork until ingredients are moistened and just hold together.

Transfer to a lightly floured surface and knead twenty times. Add more flour to the surface if needed. Pat into an 8-inch circle, slightly higher in the center than on the edges. Using a very sharp knife, cut eight equal wedges. Place scones on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper, slightly apart from one another. Bake for 12-14 minutes, until golden brown.

CINNAMON-GINGER COOKIES

Ingredients

- 1 cup butter
- 1 1/2 cups white sugar
- 3 tablespoons light corn syrup
- 2 eggs
- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 cup quick oats
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cloves

Directions

Cream butter and sugar. Add corn syrup and eggs. Mix well. Add dry ingredients to the butter mixture and mix well. Roll into teaspoon-sized balls (refrigerate if dough is too soft) and bake at 350 degrees for about 6 minutes or until bottom edges are barely browned.

Remove cookies from oven and press flat with a glass dipped in sugar. (Spray bottom of glass with cooking spray for first "press" and then dip back into sugar between each cookie thereafter). Let cookies cool 1 minute on baking sheet before moving to cooling rack.

To make sandwich cookies, spread a layer of cream cheese frosting between two cookies.

Cream Cheese Frosting

- 1/4 cup butter
- 8oz cream cheese (Neufchatel or fat-free works fine)
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 1/2 cups powdered sugar

Cream butter and cream cheese. Add vanilla and mix until smooth. Add powdered sugar until desired consistency is reached; you want a thick frosting to hold the cookies together. If frosting is too thick, thin with evaporated milk. If frosting is too thin, thicken by adding more powdered sugar. Spread between cookies when cookies are cool.

PEANUT BUTTER SWIRL BROWNIES

Ingredients

- 3/4 cup chunky peanut butter
- 4 tablespoons butter, melted
- 1/2 cup powdered sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla
- 3/4 cup cocoa powder
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 2/3 cup vegetable oil
- 1/2 cup boiling water
- 2 cups sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 1/3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1/4 teaspoon salt

Directions

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Oil and flour a 9" x 13" baking pan.

Mix together the peanut butter, butter, powdered sugar, and vanilla extract. Set aside.

Combine cocoa powder and baking soda in a medium bowl. Add 1/3 cup of the vegetable oil and mix together thoroughly. Add boiling water and stir until mixture thickens. Add the rest of the vegetable oil, eggs, and sugar and stir until smooth. Mix in flour, vanilla, and salt until thoroughly blended. Pour brownie batter into the prepared baking pan.

Drizzle peanut butter mixture over brownie batter. Using a knife, cut through the topping and batter to create a marbled effect.

Bake for 35-40 minutes, or until brownies are set in the middle and peanut-butter-swirl topping begins to puff slightly. Allow to cool in pan before cutting.

PEANUT BUTTER MELTS

Ingredients

- 1 cup melted butter (2 sticks)
- 2 cups white sugar
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- 2 tablespoons molasses
- 1 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup peanut butter (smooth or crunchy)
- 2 beaten eggs (whip with a fork)
- 2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- Sugar for rolling, optional

Directions

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Place oven rack in middle position.

Microwave the butter to melt it. Add the sugar, vanilla, and molasses. Stir until it's blended, then add the baking soda, baking powder, and salt. Mix well.

Measure out the peanut butter. (Spray the inside of the measuring cup with Pam so it won't stick - I do the same with the molasses.) Add it to the bowl and mix it in. Pour in the beaten eggs and stir. Then add the flour, and mix until all the ingredients are thoroughly blended.

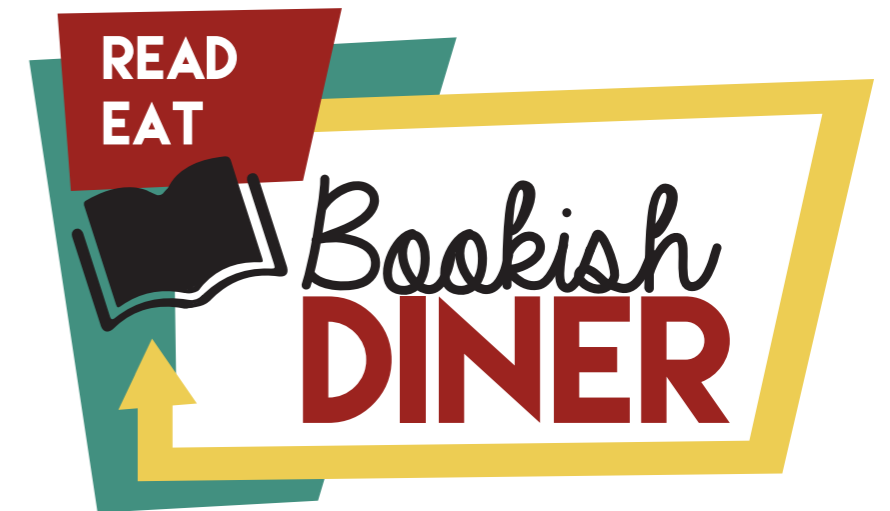
Form the dough into walnut-sized balls and arrange them on a cookie sheet lined with parchment or silicone. (These spread a lot so keep it to 12 for a standard jelly roll pan.) Roll in sugar if desired (but I tried both ways and I think they're plenty sweet without the extra roll.) Flatten slightly in a criss-cross pattern with fork.

Bake for 8 to 10 minutes, or until the edges are just beginning to turn golden. Cool on cookie sheet for 2 minutes, then transfer to wire rack to finish cooling. Makes about 3 1/2 to 4 dozen

*For PBJ cookies, spread jam on one cookie and use another to make a sandwich. Or go for it and use fudge frosting or Nutella in the middle.

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