



*How to Host a  
Cookie Exchange*  
**12 EASY RECIPES**  
By LISE ODE





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*\*Recipe has a gluten free option.*

# How to Host a Cookie Exchange

The holidays are the perfect time to host a cookie exchange or cookie swap. It's a great way to get together with friends and enjoy some delicious cookies. It's also a fun way to try new cookie recipes.

## Planning your Cookie Exchange:

I've included a *printable invitation* for you to use. Pick a day and time. Decide who to invite. You could make it big or small. If you invite 6 people to your party, ask them to each bring 6 dozen of the same cookie or more. The idea is for each person to bring enough so each person can leave with lots of different cookies to sample. Ask each person to bring copies of their cookie recipe too. I've included a *printable recipe card* you can use.

## Baking your Cookies:

It's good to start baking a couple days ahead. I've purposely included 12 simple recipes, so it will be easier for you to make dozens of cookies for the party. A couple of the recipes don't even require baking like *Christmas Holly Cookies* or *Chocolate-Peppermint Shortbread*. It's also nice to include gluten free options. I've included four recipes that can be gluten free (see table of contents).

## Have a Cookie Contest:

You don't have to do this, but it's fun to have prizes for the *Best Tasting Cookie*, *The Prettiest Cookie*, *Most Unique Cookie*, *Most Festive Cookie*, etc. At the party, you can set up little buckets or bags with pieces of paper, so your guests can submit their votes. Before the end of the party, you can tally the votes and give out prizes such as Christmas ornaments, Baking Utensils, Oven Mitts or even a copy of this Ebook!

## At the Party:

Make sure you have a place cleared for your guests to display all of their cookies. One big dining room table should do or you could set up card tables, if needed. Use a pretty table cloth and holiday decorations on your table. You can set out empty platters, if you want to. Or tell your guests to bring their cookies on a serving platter. Tell them to place a stack of recipes next to their cookies on the table. You will want to have paper plates, napkins and beverages on hand, so your guests can sample some cookies. Now enjoy yourself! Talk to your friends and eat yummy cookies!

## Time to Divide up the Cookies:

Everyone gets to take cookies home! When it's time to leave, just divide the cookies equally. Everyone gets an assortment of cookies. Plastic wrap or aluminum foil comes in handy here. It's fun to bring home lots of cookies to share with your family. You can also wrap them up and give them as gifts to teachers, neighbors, friends or family!

# Easy Chocolate Caramel Turtles

This is the easiest cookie recipe I've ever made. Hands down! If you're short on time but want to bring a crowd pleasing treat to a party, this one's for you.

Make them in a snap. All you need is 3 ingredients and 30 minutes. The only problem, it's hard to eat just one. I strongly suggest making a double batch. That way you'll have plenty to sample and still have enough for your guests. *If you can't have gluten, substitute GF pretzels.*



## Ingredients

36 small pretzels  
36 pecan halves  
36 Rolo® chewy caramels in milk chocolate

## Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
  2. Line a cookie sheet with parchment paper. Place pretzels on the cookie sheets. Unwrap the chocolate caramels and place one on each pretzel.
  3. Bake for three minutes. Immediately press pecan on top of Rolo. Place in the refrigerator to chill until set, about 20 minutes.
- Makes 36 turtles



# Strawberry Chocolate Cake Mix Cookies

Of the 12 cookie recipes in this little book, these were my children's favorite. They kept coming back for more and the cookies disappeared very quickly. They are such a pretty pink color with lots of chocolate chips. They are soft on the inside with a lovely hint of strawberry. Using a cake mix makes this recipe quick and easy.



## Ingredients

1 box (18.25 oz./432g) strawberry cake mix  
2 large eggs, at room temperature  
1/3 cup (75mL) vegetable oil  
1 1/4 cups (165g) semisweet chocolate chips

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## Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line large cookie sheets with parchment paper or silicone mat. Set aside
  2. In large bowl, place mix, eggs and oil. With electric mixer, mix on low speed until dough forms (about 1 minute).
  3. Stir in 1 cup of the chocolate chips. Cover and refrigerate for 30 minutes to 1 hour or until firm enough to shape into balls.
  4. Drop rounded balls of dough, about 2 tablespoons each, onto prepared baking sheets. Using the remaining 1/4 cup of chips, stick a few more chips on top of the dough balls (I used about 4 chips per cookie).
  5. Bake for 10 minutes. Do not let cookies get brown. Allow to cool on baking sheet for 3 minutes. They are soft at first, but firm up as they cool. Transfer to a wire rack to cool completely. Store in an airtight container for up to one week (if they last that long). Or freeze for several months.
- Makes 24 cookies

# 5-Ingredient Chocolate Mint M&M Cookies

I love recipes that are only a few ingredients. Especially when they are as cute and delicious as these festive cookies. If you can't find the mint flavored candy coated chocolates, then just use the regular ones and add a 1/2 teaspoon of mint flavoring.



## Ingredients

1 cup (296g) chocolate hazelnut spread (I used Nutella)  
2 tablespoons (24g) brown sugar, packed  
1 large egg, at room temperature  
1/2 cup + 1 tablespoon (84g) all-purpose flour  
1/2 cup (114g) mint flavored candy coated chocolates  
(I used Holiday Mint M&Ms)

## Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
  2. In a large bowl, place all of the ingredients except for the M&Ms. With an electric mixer, mix on medium low until well combined. Stir in half of the candies. Place dough in freezer for 10-20 minutes or until firm enough to form balls.
  3. Roll chilled dough into 1-inch balls. Place on an ungreased baking sheet at least two inches apart. Using the remaining candies, place a few M&Ms on top of each cookie and gently press down.
  4. Bake for 8-10 minutes. Let cool for a few minutes, then place in refrigerator to cool completely. About 30 minutes. Store in airtight container in the refrigerator for up to a week. Or freeze for several months.
- Makes 12-14 cookies



# *Peanut Butter Reindeer Cookies*

These are great for the kids. So cute for Christmas. Since they are made with store bought cookie dough, they are super easy. My children tell me these were their second favorite in this book. If you can't find the mini chocolate covered pretzels, you can use regular pretzels. You could also use sugar cookie dough instead of the peanut butter if you have a child that's allergic to peanuts.



## **Ingredients**

- 1 (16.5 oz/467g) package refrigerated peanut butter cookie dough
- 32 chocolate covered pretzels
- 32 mini brown M&Ms
- 16 regular sized red M&Ms

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## **Instructions**

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line a large cookie sheet with parchment paper or a silicone mat.
  2. Form cookie dough into 1 1/2-inch balls. You will be making 16 balls. Pinch the bottom of each ball to form a point. Place 2-inches apart on cookie sheet, then gently flatten with your hand.
  3. Bake for 9-10 minutes or until set and just beginning to brown.
  4. Remove from oven and immediately (and gently) press two pretzels into the tops of the cookies for the reindeer antlers. Press two mini brown candies in for the eyes and one red candy for the nose. Work quickly as the cookies will firm up as they cool.
  5. Place in refrigerator to cool completely, about 20 minutes. Serve immediately or store in an airtight container for up to 3 days.
- Makes 16 cookies

# Christmas Holly Cookies

Aren't these no-bake cookies colorful and Christmasy! I love these bright green and red treats. They taste a lot like Rice Krispy treats but instead of Rice Krispies, they are made with corn flakes. And melted marshmallows and butter, of course. They add color to your cookie tray and are simple to make. Great for kids!



## Ingredients

1/2 cup (113g) unsalted butter  
30 large (200g) marshmallows  
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract  
1 1/2 teaspoons green food coloring  
3 1/2 cups (110g) corn flakes  
red cinnamon candies  
(find them with the sprinkles at your grocery store)

## Instructions

1. Line a large cookie sheet with parchment paper. Spray with cooking spray.
  2. In a large heavy saucepan, melt butter and marshmallows over medium heat, stirring constantly. Remove from heat as soon as it's melted. Add vanilla and food coloring. Mix in corn flakes.
  3. Grease a spoon and drop spoonfuls of mixture on to prepared cookie sheet. Place 3 candies on each mound, pressing slightly so that they stick.
  4. Let them cool completely. They will harden as they cool. Serve immediately or store in airtight container for up to 1 week.
- Makes 24 cookies



# Karen's Rumballs

I'm not sure who Karen is, but she came up with a wonderful rumball. I've had this recipe in my recipe box (the kind that sits on the counter as opposed to the virtual one) for at least 20 years. This one is for the adult bakers. You can also make them with bourbon. Why not have a little bit of booze in your candy! They contain just the right amount of spirits and are oh so good. *If you can't have gluten, you can make these with GF cookies instead of vanilla wafers. They're just as tasty.*



## Ingredients

- 1 cup (170g) semisweet chocolate chips
- 3 tablespoons light corn syrup
- 1/2 cup (125mL) bourbon or rum
- 1 (10 oz/290g) box vanilla wafers, crushed\*
- 1/2 cup (55g) powdered sugar, plus more for rolling
- 1 cup (110g) finely chopped walnuts
- \*Substitute gluten free animal crackers, if desired

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## Instructions

1. Place chocolate in a small microwave safe bowl. Microwave on high for 1 minute. Stir. Microwave for 15 more seconds, if needed. Stir until smooth.
  2. Add corn syrup and liquor to chocolate. Stir until completely combined.
  3. In a large bowl, mix together the crushed cookies, sugar and nuts. Add the chocolate mixture and stir until completely incorporated. Let stand about 30 minutes.
  4. Form into 1-inch balls. Roll in powdered sugar. Serve immediately or store in an airtight container for a week or up to two weeks if stored in the refrigerator. They're better if you let them "soak in" for a few days.
- Makes 36 cookies

# Chocolate Peppermint Shortbread

Easy, easy, easy! This one's for you if you're super busy and only have a few minutes to throw something together for a holiday party. Use store bought shortbread for this one. Just melt chocolate, crush candy canes, dip cookies in chocolate, sprinkle with candy and you're done. Very tasty and pretty too! *If you can't have gluten, substitute GF cookies.*



## Ingredients

14 store bought shortbread cookies (I used Archway)  
1 cup (170g) semisweet chocolate chips  
10 small candy canes, crushed

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## Instructions

1. Line a large cookie sheet with parchment paper. Set aside.
2. Place chocolate chips in a medium, microwave safe bowl. Microwave on high for 1 minute. Stir. Microwave for 15-20 seconds more, if needed. Stir until completely smooth.
3. Dip one half of each cookie into the melted chocolate. Place on prepared cookie sheet and sprinkle with crushed candy canes. Place in refrigerator until set, about 25-30 minutes. Serve immediately or store in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

Makes 14 cookies



# Almond Joy Thumbprint Cookies

If you're a fan of Almond Joy candy bars, you'll love these cookies. A rich, brownie-like cookie topped with a sweet coconut filling, whole almonds and melted chocolate. Almond Joy Thumbprint Cookies are incredibly good. Oh yeah!



## Ingredients

1 roll (16.5 ounces) Pillsbury® refrigerated sugar cookies  
4 ounces (113g) semisweet baking chocolate, melted and cooled 10 minutes  
2 tablespoons all purpose flour  
1/3 cup (112g) sweetened condensed milk  
1 cup, plus 2 tablespoons (95g) sweetened coconut flakes  
1/4 cup (45g) semisweet chocolate chips  
32 raw almonds

## Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line two large cookie sheets with parchment paper.
  2. In large bowl, break up cookie dough. Stir or knead in melted baking chocolate and flour until well blended. Divide dough in half; wrap each half in plastic and refrigerate for 30 minutes. Shape chilled dough into 32 balls. Place balls 1 inch apart on prepared cookie sheets.
  3. Bake 10 to 12 minutes or until set. Immediately make indentation in center of each cookie with end of wooden spoon. Cool until set, about 30 minutes.
  4. Meanwhile, mix together milk and coconut. Drop heaping teaspoonfuls onto cooled cookies. Top each cookie with an almond.
  5. In a small microwavable bowl, microwave chocolate chips on high for 1 minute. Stir until smooth. Pour into a plastic resealable bag. Cut a tiny corner off and drizzle chocolate over cookies. Let the chocolate set for about 30 minutes before serving. Store extra cookies covered in the refrigerator up to 1 week.
- Makes 32 cookies

# Cinnamon Sand Dollars

No rolling pin required. Make your cookie dough and shape into a log, then you chill it until it's firm enough to slice up. So much easier than rolling it out and cutting with cookie cutters. Aren't they adorable! The cookie is buttery and crisp with a nutty cinnamon sugar topping.

## Ingredients

*For the cookies:*

- 1 cup (226g) unsalted butter, softened
- 1 cup (140g) powdered sugar
- 1/2 cup (110g) granulated sugar
- 1 egg, at room temperature
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 2 1/4 cups (340g) all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

*For the decoration:*

- 1 egg, beaten
- 1/4 cup (55g) granulated sugar
- 1 1/2 teaspoons cinnamon
- 2/3 cup (63g) sliced almonds



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## Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
  2. In a large bowl, cream butter and sugars until light and fluffy, about 3 minutes. Beat in egg and vanilla. Combine flour, baking soda and salt; gradually add to creamed mixture and mix well. Cover and freeze for 20-30 minutes or until firm enough to shape.
  3. Shape the dough into two 2-inch thick logs; wrap each in plastic wrap. Refrigerate for 2 hours or until firm.
  4. Meanwhile, combine the remaining sugar and cinnamon in a small bowl.
  5. Cut logs into 1/4-inch slices. Place 2 inches apart on ungreased baking sheets. Brush each cookie with a little bit of egg, sprinkle with cinnamon sugar and place 5 almond slices on top.
  6. Bake for 11-14 minutes or until slightly golden on edges. Remove to wire racks to cool. Serve immediately or store in airtight container for up to 1 week or several months in the freezer.
- Makes 5 dozen cookies



# Cherry Almond Christmas Cookies

These cookies are so merry. I love the red and green candied cherries. The almond flavor comes from marzipan or almond candy dough which adds such a pleasant flavor. They are soft on the inside and slightly crisp on the outside. They are sure to be a hit at your cookie exchange or holiday party. Perfect with tea or coffee.



## Ingredients

2 cups (270g) all-purpose flour, sifted  
1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
7 ounces (198g) almond candy dough or marzipan  
3/4 cup (170g) unsalted butter, softened  
1 cup (220g) granulated sugar  
2 large egg whites, room temperature  
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract  
red and green candied cherries, cut in half

## Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 325°F. Line cookie sheets with parchment paper or silicone mat.
  2. In a large bowl, break up marzipan. Add egg whites and sugar. With an electric mixer, beat on medium high speed for 3 minutes. Add butter and vanilla. Beat until completely combined.
  3. With mixer on low, add flour, baking soda, and salt. Beat on low until just combined. Cover and freeze for 30 minutes.
  4. Roll dough between palms to make balls. Place balls 2 inches apart on prepared baking sheets.
  5. Firmly press a cherry half on top of each cookie.
  6. Bake for 11-13 minutes. Do not overbake. Remove from pans and cool on wire racks. Store in airtight container for up to a week.
  7. Note: Dough can be frozen for several months.
- Makes 36 cookies.

# Grandmother's Butterfingers (Gluten Free)

Have you ever heard of Butterfingers? Not the candy bar but the cookie. My grandmother used to make them at Christmas time. They are made with butter, sugar, flour and pecans. Then dipped in powdered sugar. They are so, so good and remind me of the holidays. I had to alter my grandmother's original recipe for my mom since she can't have gluten. *If you CAN have gluten, you could substitute all-purpose flour and omit the xanthan gum.*

## Ingredients

3/4 cup unsalted butter (softened)  
1/4 cup granulated sugar  
2 teaspoons vanilla extract  
2 teaspoons water  
2 cups gluten free all-purpose baking flour  
1/4 teaspoon xanthan gum  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1 1/2 cups pecans, finely chopped  
1 cup powdered sugar, divided



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## Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
  2. In a large bowl, cream butter and granulated sugar with an electric mixer on medium for 3 minutes. Scrape bowl. Add vanilla and water. Mix until combined.
  3. With mixer on low, gradually add flour, xanthan gum, salt and pecans. Turn mixer up to medium and mix just until a dough forms. By hand, knead in 1/4 cup of the powdered sugar.
  4. Shape 1-inch pieces of dough into finger shaped cookies. Place the remaining 3/4 cup of powdered sugar in a small bowl. Dip cookies in sugar. Place on ungreased cookie sheet.
  5. Bake for 14-16 minutes or until slightly golden brown around the edges.
  6. Let cool for 10 minutes. Dip in sugar again. Serve warm or store in airtight container for up to a week.
- Makes 30 cookies
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# Peanutty Pie Crust Clusters

## (Million Dollar Recipe)

This recipe won the *\$1 million dollar prize* in the 47th Pillsbury Bake-Off in 2014. I was a finalist in the contest and baked right next to Beth Royals who created this scrumptious treat. She had the clever idea of cutting up little pieces of pie crust, baking them and mixing with melted chocolate, peanut butter, peanuts and toffee bits. Her recipe uses white chocolate chips but I thought I would try it with semisweet chocolate instead. So incredibly good!

### Ingredients

1 Pillsbury™ refrigerated pie crust,  
softened as directed on box  
1 bag (12 oz.) semisweet chocolate chips (2 cups)  
1 tablespoon Crisco® Baking Sticks Butter Flavor  
All-Vegetable Shortening  
1 tablespoon Jif® Creamy Peanut Butter  
1 cup salted cocktail peanuts  
2/3 cup toffee bits



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### Instructions

1. Heat oven to 450°F. Line 2 cookie sheets with wax paper. Unroll pie crust on work surface. With pizza cutter or knife, cut into 16 rows by 16 rows to make small squares. Arrange squares in single layer on large ungreased cookie sheet.
  2. Bake 6 to 8 minutes or until light golden brown. Watch closely. It browns quickly. Remove squares from pan to cooling rack. Cool completely, about 5 minutes.
  3. In large microwavable bowl, microwave baking chips, shortening and peanut butter uncovered on High 1 minute to 1 minute 30 seconds, stirring once, until chips can be stirred smooth. Add pie crust squares, peanuts and toffee bits; stir gently until evenly coated. Immediately drop by heaping tablespoonfuls onto lined cookie sheets. (If mixture gets too thick, microwave on High 15 seconds; stir.) Refrigerate about 15 minutes or until set. Store covered.  
Makes 30 clusters
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# Holiday Cookie

# EXCHANGE

Date:

## Time:

## Place:

Hosted by:

## RSVP:

Please bring            dozen  
of your favorite holiday  
cookies or bars!



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