



What would Christmas be without cookies? Kick start your holidays with twelve decadent recipes featuring Nadine Hughes' (aka The Groove Mamma) favourite holiday cookie recipes from childhood to today. Recipes, make ahead tips and festive touches just in time to make your holiday memories that extra special delicious.



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## **RUM BALLS**

*Makes 16-18 Balls*

*Preparation 20 minutes + 24 hour freeze time*

Notes: My mother is famous for her many Christmas cookies but none so much as her Rum Balls. I remember as a kid she would make all her cookies a few months in advance and freeze them. For some strange reason the rum ball quantity always seemed to be much smaller by the time they were ready to be served to company! These balls are equally delicious at room temperature or snuck straight from the freezer. Enjoy.

### **Ingredients:**

- 2 cups crushed Lady Fingers biscuits *Tip: Crush biscuits in food processor.*
- ¼ cup sifted icing sugar
- 1 ½ tbsp cocoa powder
- ¼ cup ground almonds (optional)
- 65ml (¼ cup) Rum



1. Combine crushed lady fingers, icing sugar, cocoa powder, almonds (if using) and rum in a large bowl. With slightly damp hands, form the mixture into a large ball.
2. Using your hands pinch off 1 tbsp of mixture at a time and roll into 1 inch balls.
3. Place balls on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Cover with plastic wrap and freeze overnight. Once frozen, transfer balls to air tight container and continue to freeze until ready to serve. Take out from freezer 30 minutes prior to serving.

### **Decorating Options:**

1. Using a toothpick, pierce individual balls and roll in:
  - a. Chocolate sprinkles
  - b. Shaved coconut
  - c. Sifted icing sugar
  - d. Ground nuts
  - e. Melted chocolate
2. To dry balls stick other end of toothpick into a piece of Styrofoam.

## **LEMON RASPBERRY BUTTER COOKIES**

Makes 24 cookies

Notes: Melt in your mouth, buttery cookies are given the added decadence of sweet raspberry jam and tart lemon icing. These cookies freeze very well and will defrost in 30 minutes so make an extra batch and have them at the ready for guests who drop in during the holidays.

### **Ingredients:**

- 1/8 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 egg yolk
- 2 sticks of unsalted butter (225g/ 1/2 lb), softened
- 1 1/2 cup all purpose flour
- 1 cup raspberry jam

For the icing:

- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice (or to taste)
- 1/2 cup icing sugar



1. Preheat oven to 350F and place racks in middle of oven.
2. In a food processor, combine baking powder, sugar, vanilla, egg yolk and butter. Add the flour and pulse until the dough comes together. Turn out onto a lightly floured board and shape into a ball. Wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate for one hour.
3. Roll dough to 1/4 inch thickness. *Tip: Roll the dough between two sheets of parchment paper to avoid the dough sticking.*
4. Using a 1 inch round cookie cutter, cut cookies and place on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Combine and reroll scraps of dough to use all the dough up. *Tip: Use the mouth of a champagne flute as your cookie cutter.*
5. Bake in oven 10-12 minutes or until cookies just start to turn golden.
6. Remove cookies and allow to cool completely on rack.
7. While cookies are cooling, in a small bowl stir together the lemon juice and icing sugar to taste. *Tip: Add the lemon juice a little bit at a time until you reach a thick (not runny) consistency.*
8. To assemble cookies, spread one teaspoon of raspberry jam on one cookie, sandwich another cookie on top of jam. Ice with lemon icing. Let icing harden (about 30 minutes) before storing.

*Make Ahead Tip: Cookies can be frozen for up to 2 months or kept in an air tight container for 2 weeks.*

### **SCOTTISH SHORTBREADS**

Makes approximately 36 cookies

Notes: Put your feet up and indulge in these traditional buttery cookies. They are the perfect treat to have with a cup of tea after a long day of holiday shopping and wrapping!

#### **Ingredients:**

- 2 sticks of unsalted butter (225g/ ½ lb), softened
- ½ cup fruit sugar (extra fine sugar)
- ½ cup rice flour
- 1 ¾ cup all purpose flour



1. Preheat oven to 325F.
2. In a large bowl, add the butter and slowly add the sugar a little but at a time until it is creamed together. Add the rice flour and all purpose flour. Using your hands form the dough into a ball and divide into four pieces. Wrap each dough section in plastic wrap and refrigerate for one hour.
3. Roll dough to ½ inch thickness. *Tip: Roll the dough between two sheets of parchment paper to avoid the dough sticking.*
4. Using your favourite shape cutter, cut out cookies and place on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Chill in refrigerator for 20 minutes or until firm. *Tip: Using the points of a fork lightly prick the shortbread to make a decorative pattern.*
5. Bake in oven for 15-20 minutes or until lightly golden.
6. Remove from oven and let cool completely on a baking rack.
7. Store cookies in an airtight container or freeze for up to 2 months.

## **GERMAN LINZERTORTE**

Makes approximately 32 squares

Notes: Growing up I always new Christmas was nearing when the house began to smell of this classic German dessert - cinnamon and cloves. One of the prettiest and most fragrant holiday cookies from my childhood, Linzertorte is always a crowd favourite!

### **Ingredients:**

- 250g all purpose flour
- 155g sugar
- 1 ¼ teaspoon baking powder
- 1 ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon ground cloves
- 1 teaspoon cocoa powder
- 200g ground almonds
- 115g (½ cup) butter + 55g (4 tbsp)
- 1 egg
- 2 tablespoons Rum
- 2 cups raspberry jam
- Egg wash (1 egg white and 1 tbsp of water lightly beaten together)
- Sifted icing sugar for dusting



1. Preheat oven to 350F and grease a 10x17 rimmed baking sheet (alternatively you could use a fluted round pan with a removable bottom).
2. In a large mixing bowl, add all the ingredients except the Raspberry jam and egg wash. Using your hands (dusted with flour), bring the dough together into a large ball (don't overwork the dough). Cut the dough into 2/3 and 1/3.
3. Using the heel of your hand, press the larger portion of dough (2/3) into the greased baking sheet bringing it up the four sides of the sheet.
4. Spread the raspberry jam evenly over the jam.
5. Roll the remaining dough (1/3) on a lightly floured surface. Using a star cookie cutter or shape of your choice, cut out cookies. Place on raspberry jam randomly. Brush the star cookies with the egg wash. *Tip: If you don't have a cookie cutter, you can roll out the dough and cut strips to layer in a grid pattern – see photo.*
6. Bake in oven for 25-30 minutes or until dough is cooked through.
7. Remove from oven and let cool completely. Cut linzertorte into squares and dust with powdered sugar.
8. Store squares in an airtight container or freeze for up to 2 months.



## **BUTTERSCOTCH PECAN BARS**

Makes approximately 36 bars

Notes: You'll need to hide these addictive bars or else you'll find they'll disappear before you have a chance to serve them.

### **Ingredients:**

- 2 cups all purpose flour
- ½ cup packed brown sugar
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 300g (1 cup) unsalted butter, cubed
- Topping:
- 1 cup packed brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons all purpose flour
- 75ml (1/3 cup) whipping cream
- 65ml (1/4 cup) Scotch whisky or dark rum
- ¼ cup corn syrup
- 2 tablespoons butter, cubed
- 1 ½ cups chopped pecans



1. Preheat oven to 375F.
2. To make base, combine flour, brown sugar and salt in a food processor. Add butter and process to make fine crumbs. Line bottom and sides of a 13x9 inch baking pan with heavy foil. Pat crumbs in bottom of pan. Bake for 20 minutes or until lightly golden. Let cool.
3. To make topping, combine brown sugar and flour in a saucepan. Stir in cream, whiskey, corn syrup and butter. Place over medium heat and cook, stirring, until sauce boils. Let boil for 1 minute. Let cool slightly.
4. Sprinkle pecans over cooked base, drizzle with butterscotch sauce. Bake for 15-18 minutes or until filling is bubbly. Place on rack and let cool completely. Lift foil out of pan and cut into bars.

## **CHOCOLATE CRANBERRY BISCOTTI**

Makes approximately 24 biscotti

Notes: Biscotti are the perfect after dinner cookie to serve because they are so versatile. Dipped in coffee, liqueur or a chocolate fondue, these chocolaty biscotti are the perfect end to a holiday dinner.

### **Ingredients:**

- 3 eggs
- 1 cup sugar
- 250ml (1 cup) canola oil
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 3 cups all purpose flour
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 cup dried cranberries
- 1 cup semi sweet chocolate chips
- ¾ cup cereal flakes (such as cornflakes, Special K or rice krispies)



### **For topping:**

- 1 teaspoon cinnamon & 1 cup sugar combined

1. Preheat oven to 350F.
2. In a bowl mix the eggs, sugar, oil and vanilla with a whisk.
3. In a separate bowl stir flour, salt, baking powder, cranberries, chocolate chips and cereal.
4. Add the egg mixture and stir with a wooden spoon until the dough is well blended and forms a sticky, moist. Using slightly damp hands, dump the dough onto a parchment lined cookie sheet. Shape the dough into two logs (roughly 7x11 – ½ inch high). Press and shape the dough as evenly as possible.
5. Bake for 20 minutes or until they are golden brown on top and slightly darker brown around the edges. Transfer cookie sheet to a rack to cool for about 10 minutes or until it can be easily handled.
6. Transfer logs to cutting board and cut into slices about 1/3 inch thick. *Tip: Use a serrated knife and a gentle sawing motion to break through the crust. Then a firm push down on the knife is all that's needed.*
7. Place slices back on cookie sheet and back for another 20 minutes or until the biscotti are golden brown and feel dry. Remove and immediately sprinkle cinnamon sugar over top while still hot. Allow them to cool completely; they will crisp as they cool.

*Make ahead tip: The cooled biscotti can be frozen for up to 2 months or stored at room temperature for up to 3 weeks, layered between sheets of parchment or waxed paper in an airtight container.*



## **GINGER HEARTS**

Makes 36 cookies

Notes: Sweet, spicy and crunchy all at the same time! Ginger is synonymous with holiday baking and these cookies are best kept in the simple traditional format where spice is the star of the show!

Ingredients:

- 2 cups all purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 3 teaspoons ground ginger
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- Pinch ground cloves
- 85g (6 tablespoons) unsalted butter, softened
- ½ cup dark brown sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 tablespoon molasses
- ¼ cup coarse sugar crystals



1. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
2. In a large bowl, mix the flour and spices together. In a separate bowl, cream the butter and brown sugar until light and fluffy, and add the egg, beating well. Stir through the molasses. Fold this mixture through the flour and spice mixture until combined.
3. Using your hands, gather the dough into a ball. Roll out the dough between two sheets of parchment or wax paper to a thickness of ¼ inch. Using a heart shape cookie cutter, cut shapes from the dough and sprinkle evenly with coarse sugar. Transfer to a baking tray lined with parchment paper and bake for 12 minutes or until golden. Remove from oven and cool on a baking rack.

## **CRYSTAL CRANBERRY COOKIES**

Makes 36 cookies

Notes: Chewy and tart, Crystal Cranberry Cookies are the perfect addition to any sweet tray. They also make a great hostess gift wrapped in cellophane bags with a pretty ribbon around them. Don't forget to add the recipe so the lucky recipient can make them for you next year!

### Ingredients:

- 1 cup All-Purpose Flour
- 1 ½ cups dried cranberries, packed
- 2 tablespoons confectioners' (icing) sugar
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon (15ml) vanilla extract
- 85g (6 tablespoons) cold unsalted butter, cut into cubes
- 3 tablespoons (45ml) milk
- 1/3 cup coarse white sparkling sugar



1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Lightly grease (or line with parchment) two baking sheets.
2. Place the flour and dried cranberries in the bowl of a food processor. Process until the cranberries are coarsely shredded.
3. In a large bowl, whisk together the flour/cranberry mixture, sugar, baking powder, and salt. Add the vanilla and butter, mixing until the butter is thoroughly distributed, but some pea-sized chunks still remain. Dribble in the milk while mixing; the dough will come together as you mix.
4. Place the coarse sugar into a large Ziploc bag. Using a teaspoon cookie scoop (or a spoon), scoop the dough (about 1 ¼" balls) into the bag, 6 or 8 at a time. Close the top of the bag, and gently shake to coat the balls with sugar. Place them on the prepared baking sheet, and use the bottom of a glass or the heel of your hand to flatten them to about ¼" thick (about 1 ½" in diameter). Repeat with the remaining dough.
5. Bake the cookies for 16 to 17 minutes, until they're set and just beginning to brown around the very edge. Remove them from the oven, and let cool. Store at room temperature in an airtight container.

*Make ahead tip: To freeze cookie dough, drop tablespoons of dough onto parchment-lined baking tray, placing them close together, then freeze. When dough balls are frozen, place in plastic bag and freeze.. When ready to bake, remove from the freezer, space them on your parchment-lined baking sheets, and turn oven to 350F. The dough will thaw as the oven gets up to temperature, about 20-25 minutes.*

## **BLACK FOREST BROWNIES**

Makes 16 brownies

Notes: Black forest cake was always the requested birthday cake growing up in our family but it always took such a long time for my mother to make. Capturing the flavours of this cake is easy in these bite sized brownies but they are easier to make than the traditional cake but with all the yumminess!

### Ingredients

- 1/3 cup semi-sweet chocolate pieces
- 55g (4 tbsp) butter
- ¾ cup sugar, divided
- ¼ cup cocoa
- 2/3 cup all-purpose flour
- ½ teaspoon baking powder
- Pinch salt
- 2 tablespoon applesauce
- 2 egg whites
- ½ cup tart cherries (well drained)



1. Preheat oven to 325°. Lightly coat 8"x 8" pan with butter or canola oil and set aside.
2. Melt chocolate and butter in a medium saucepan over low heat. Remove from heat.
3. Combine sugar and cocoa in a medium bowl. Add to chocolate mixture and stir to combine. Stir in remaining ingredients and mix well.
4. Pour batter into prepared pan and bake for 30 to 40 minutes, or until knife comes out clean when inserted in middle.
5. Remove from oven and cool completely. Cut into 16 servings. Remove brownies from pan with a flexible spatula.

*Serving Option: Cut the brownies into slightly larger pieces and serve them as a dinner party dessert along side a dollop of whipped cream and a sour cherry sauce – deconstructed black forest cake in a flash!*

### **IRISH ROCKY ROAD FUDGE**

Makes 16 squares

Notes: My mom used to make this fudge treat as a holiday gift for our teachers when my sister and I were little. No wonder our teachers always liked us!

#### **Ingredients:**

- 60ml (1/4 cup) Irish Cream Liqueur
- 200g good quality dark chocolate, roughly chopped
- 30g (2 tablespoons) unsalted butter
- 1/3 cup sweetened condensed milk
- 50g chopped unsalted pistachio kernels
- 75g roughly crushed shortbread cookies
- 200g mini marshmallows (or regular marshmallows, chopped)
- 150g white chocolate, roughly chopped



1. Grease an 8cm x 20cm shallow baking pan. Line with parchment paper, leaving some overhanging.
2. Place Irish Cream Liqueur, dark chocolate, butter and milk in a heat proof bowl over a pan of simmering water (don't let the bowl touch the water). Allow to melt, then stir gently until smooth. Remove from heat and cool slightly. Stir in nuts, cookies, marshmallow and 100g white chocolate. Spread mixture into pan, then chill for 2-3 hours until firm.
3. Melt remaining 50g white chocolate as before. Drizzle over fudge, leave for 3-4 minutes to set, then cut into squares. The fudge will keep in an airtight container in the fridge for up to 1 week

## **CHOCOLATE CHILI BITES**

Makes approximately 36 bites

Note: These little bites are light as air but they're guaranteed to heat you up. When you bite into them you'll wonder where the chili is but just wait a moment – you'll find it!

### Ingredients:

- 115g (½ cup / 1 stick) unsalted butter
- 100g (7oz) good-quality dark chocolate
- 125g (¾ cup) sugar
- 3 small eggs or 2 large eggs
- 1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon ground chili (adjust to your taste and to the strength of your chili)



1. Pre-heat oven to 400°F. Grease miniature muffin cups.
2. Melt the butter with the chocolate in a small saucepan over low heat or in a bowl in the microwave. *Tip : If melting in the microwave, be sure to do it slowly, stopping and blending with a spoon frequently.*
3. Transfer mixture into a medium bowl; add sugar, mixing with a wooden spoon. Let mixture cool slightly. *Tip: You want the mixture to cool so that when you add the eggs, the eggs won't start to cook and give you scrambled eggs!*
4. Add the eggs one by one, mixing well after each addition. Add the flour and the chili powder and mix well. Pour the mixture into miniature muffin cups. *You'll have some batter left over.*
5. Bake for 10-12 minutes or until the top looks set, but the inside are still on the soft side.
6. Cool in pan for 2 minutes then remove to rack to cool completely while you bake the other batches.

*Make ahead tip: Store in a plastic container, refrigerate, and take out about an hour prior to serving. The bites will keep up to one week.*

### **SUGARPLUM COOKIES**

Makes approximately 24 cookies

Note: A no bake cookie that is perfect to make with the kids. The adult can work the food processor and the kids can work the “dough” into balls and then roll in sugar! A great holiday afternoon tradition that you can start with your family this year.

#### **Ingredients:**

- 1 cup pitted dates
- ½ cup dried figs or pitted prunes
- ½ cup pecans
- 1/3 cup candied orange peel
- 1 cup sweetened flaked coconut
- 1 teaspoon orange juice or water
- Superfine sugar, for coating



1. In a food processor, combine the dates, figs, pecans and candied peel. Process until chopped. Add the coconut and orange juice and process, pulsing, until the mixture begins to clump.
2. Turn the mixture out onto a sheet of waxed paper and using your hands shape into 1 inch balls.
3. Place the superfine sugar in a shallow bowl and roll the balls in the sugar, coating them well.

*Make ahead tips: The Sugarplums can be stored in an airtight container for up to 1 week.*