**It's time to start planning out your cookie platters!**

**Making a baking plan is an important step and not to be skipped. Planning oven time, cooling, dipping and frosting, is often a delicate dance in the kitchen, and necessary to make sure the kitchen operates efficiently.**

**Try a new cookie recipe this week and add it to your platters. Have fun!**

## Oatmeal Almond Butter Breakfast Cookies

*Prep Time: 10 min.*
*Cook Time: 18 min.*
*Total Time: 28 min.*
*Servings: 16 cookies*

2 C. rolled oats (not quick-cooking oats)
1 C. all-purpose flour
1 C. whole wheat flour
1/2 C. wheat germ
2 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. kosher salt
1 tsp. ground cinnamon
1-1/2 C. almond butter, room temp.
1-1/3 C. packed light brown sugar
2 tsp. vanilla extract
2 lg. eggs
1/3 C. water
1 C. semi-sweet choc. chips

Preheat your oven to 350°F. Line a sheet pan with parchment paper or a silicone baking mat.

Combine the rolled oats, flours, wheat germ, baking soda, salt, and cinnamon together in a large mixing bowl. Set aside.

In the bowl of a stand mixer using the paddle attachment, mix the almond butter, brown sugar, and vanilla extract at low speed until smooth.

With the mixer still on low, add the eggs, one at a time, to the bowl. Scrape down the bowl after each egg is blended into the batter. This helps the mixture to stay smooth and uniform.

Add the water to the bowl and mix on low until the batter no longer looks soupy. Gradually add the flour mixture to the batter, stopping the mixer to scrape down the sides of the bowl. Mix again for one minute to make sure the flour is completely blended in.

Gradually add the chocolate chips to the dough. Mix for 30 seconds more still on low speed.

Using a large (2 oz.) ice cream scoop, or a lightly greased 1/4 measuring cup, scoop the dough onto your prepared sheet pan.

Slightly flatten each cookie with the back of your scoop or measuring cup.

Bake for 15 to 18 min., or until the outer edges of the cookies are slightly browned and the centers are puffed.

## No Bake Chocolate and Peanut Butter Cookies

*Prep Time: 10 min.*
*Cook Time: 3 min.*
*Chilling: 20 min.*
*Total Time: 33 min.*
*Servings: 16 to 20 cookies*

**Cookies:**
1-1/2 C. sugar
1/2 C. unsalted butter
1/2 C. milk
1/4 C. cocoa powder
1/2 C. creamy peanut butter
1 tsp. vanilla extract
1/4 tsp. kosher salt
3 C. rolled oats

**Peanut butter drizzle:**
3 T. creamy peanut butter
2 tsp. coconut oil

Line a baking sheet with parchment and set to the side.

In a medium saucepan over medium heat, combine the sugar, butter, milk, and cocoa powder. Cook until the sugar and butter are melted, stirring to combine. Bring the mixture to a boil, and then continue to boil for 1 min.

Pour the mixture into a large mixing bowl and stir in the peanut butter, vanilla, and salt. Stir in the rolled oats.

Using a medium cookie scoop, scoop and place the cookie dough on the lined parchment baking sheet.

Melt the peanut butter and coconut oil together in the microwave for 30 seconds. Stir to combine, then drizzle over the cookies using a spoon.

Refrigerate for 20 min. to firm up the cookies and set the drizzle.

## Italian Rainbow Cookies

*Total Time: 6 hr. 30 min.*
*Servings: 36-40*

1 C. unsalted butter, at room temperature, plus more for greasing
7 oz. almond paste, torn into pieces
1 C. sugar
1/4 C. canola oil
4 lg. eggs, whites and yolks separated
1 tsp. pure almond extract

1/2 tsp. kosher salt
2 C. all-purpose flour
20 drops red gel food coloring
20 drops green gel food coloring
2/3 C. apricot preserves
6 oz. bittersweet chocolate, finely chopped, divided

Arrange racks in upper and lower thirds of oven and heat oven to 350°F. Butter 3 rimmed quarter sheet pans (9-1/2 by 13-inch), then line each with parchment paper, leaving overhang on long sides.

In stand mixer fitted with paddle attachment, mix almond paste and sugar on low until fine crumbs form, 4 to 5 min. Add butter and mix until incorporated, then increase speed to medium and beat, scraping bowl halfway through, until fully incorporated and light and fluffy, 3 to 4 min.

With machine running on low speed, slowly stream in oil and mix until incorporated. Increase speed to medium and beat in yolks 1 at a time, scraping bowl as needed, then beat in almond extract and salt. With mixer running on low speed, gradually mix in flour until just combined. Transfer batter to large bowl.

Wash and dry stand mixer bowl and return to stand mixer fitted with whisk attachment. Beat egg whites on medium-high until stiff peaks form, 2-1/2 to 3-1/2 minutes. Fold large spoonful of whites into batter to lighten; then, in 2 more additions, fold remaining whites into batter until just incorporated with no streaks remaining.

Transfer one-third of batter (heaping 1-1/2 cups) to 1 prepared baking sheet. Transfer half of remaining batter (heaping 1-1/2 cups) to second bowl and tint with red food coloring. Tint remaining batter with green food coloring.

Transfer red and green batter to separate prepared pans; use offset spatula to spread each batter in even layers, wiping spatula clean after each color. Place 2 pans on 1 rack and remaining pan on other rack and bake, rotating sheets and swapping positions on racks halfway through, until tops look dry and toothpick inserted in center comes out clean, 13 to 15 min. Let cool in pans 10 min., then loosen edges with offset spatula and use parchment overhang to transfer to wire racks to cool completely.

In small bowl, microwave apricot preserves 20 seconds and stir to loosen (microwave in additional 10-second increments as necessary to loosen), then push through sieve, discarding any chunks.

Transfer green cake layer (including parchment) to cutting board. Spread half of preserves (heaping 1/4 C.) on top, then carefully invert white cake layer on top of preserves and peel off and discard parchment. Spread remaining preserves on white cake layer, then carefully invert red cake layer on top (do not peel off parchment). Place rimmed quarter sheet pan on top of stacked layers and top with several heavy cans, spacing evenly, to weigh down. Refrigerate at least 4 hours, up to 24 hours.

Remove cans and peel off parchment on top. Using sharp knife, trim edges.

In medium bowl, microwave 3 oz. chopped chocolate in 30-second increments, stirring in between, until melted and smooth, 1 minute 15 seconds total. Spread evenly over red layer all the way to edges, then refrigerate until set, about 20 min.

Carefully invert entire rainbow cookie onto second cutting board, then peel off parchment paper and discard.

Repeat microwaving for remaining 3 ounces chopped chocolate, then spread on top in even layer all the way to edges. If desired, use offset spatula to make wavy pattern on top. Refrigerate until set, at least 20 min.

Using sharp knife, cut rainbow cookie into 1- by 2-inch pieces (to minimize cracking of chocolate, run knife under hot water and wipe between cuts, and cut slowly, holding knife at a sharp angle). Store leftover cookies in airtight container at room temperature up to 3 days, in refrigerator up to 1 week or in freezer up to 2 months. Let soften at room temperature before serving.

## Butterscotch Toffee Cookies

2 lg. eggs, room temperature
1/2 C. canola oil
1 pkg. butter pecan cake mix (regular size)
1 pkg. (10 to 11 oz.) butterscotch chips
1 pkg. (8 oz.) milk chocolate English toffee bits

Preheat oven to 350°F. In a large bowl, beat eggs and oil until blended; gradually add cake mix and mix well. Fold in chips and toffee bits.

Drop by tablespoonfuls 2 in. apart onto greased baking sheets. Bake until golden brown, 10-12 min. Cool 1 minute before removing to wire racks.

## Grinch Cookies

*Prep: 20 min.*
*Cook: 15 min.*
*Servings: 4 doz.*

1/2 C. butter, softened
1 pkg. (8 oz.) cream cheese, softened
1-1/4 C. sugar
2 tsp. vanilla extract
1 tsp. green food coloring
2 lg. eggs, room temperature
3 C. all-purpose flour
2 tsp. baking powder
1/4 tsp. salt
1 C. confectioners' sugar
48 heart-shaped gumdrops

In a large bowl, beat butter, cream cheese and sugar until smooth. Beat in vanilla and food coloring. Add eggs, 1 at a time, beating well after each addition. In another bowl, whisk flour, baking powder and salt; gradually beat into creamed mixture. Refrigerate, covered, 1 hour or until firm enough to shape.

Preheat oven to 350°F. Shape dough into 1-1/2-in. balls; roll in confectioners' sugar. Place 2 in. apart on ungreased baking sheets.

Bake until tops are cracked and edges are set; 12-15 min. Immediately press a gumdrop into each cookie. Cool cookies 5 min. on pans before removing to wire racks to cool.

# Danish Butter Cookies

*Total Time: 45 min.*
*Servings: 20-24*

1 C. unsalted butter, at room temperature
1/2 C. granulated sugar
1 lg. egg plus 1 lg. egg yolk
2 tsp. pure vanilla extract
1/4 tsp. kosher salt
2 C. all-purpose flour
White sparkling sugar, for sprinkling

In stand mixer on medium, beat butter and sugar, scraping down bowl halfway through, until light and fluffy, about 3 min. Beat in egg and yolk, then vanilla and salt, scraping bowl as needed. Reduce mixer speed to low, gradually add flour and mix until just combined.

Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper. Transfer dough to piping bag fitted with large star tip and pipe 2-inch shapes on prepared sheets, spacing 1-1/2 inches apart. Refrigerate 30 min.

Heat oven to 350°F. Sprinkle cookies with sparkling sugar if desired and bake, rotating positions of pans halfway through, until cookies are light golden brown around edges, 16 to 18 min. Let cool on pans 5 min., then transfer to wire racks to cool completely.

## Quote of the Week:

***"Fear not November's challenge bold. We've books and friends, and hearths that never can grow cold. These make amends."***

**~ Alexander L. Fraser (1870-1954)**