**December -Cookie Swap**

**7 Layer Cookies**

*Ingredients:*

½ cup unsalted butter, melted

1 ½ cups graham cracker crumbs

6oz chocolate chips

6oz butterscotch chips

1 cup coconut flakes

1 cup mixed nuts, chopped

1 14oz can sweetened condensed milk

Preheat oven to 350°. In a 9x13 pan, combine butter and graham crumbs. Pat to even crust. Top with the two kinds of chips, coconut, and nuts. Pour milk evenly over. Bake 20 to 25 minutes. Cool completely. Cut into bars.

**Linzer Hearts**

22 sandwich cookies

*Ingredients:*

1/3 stick margarine, softened

1 package sugar cookie mix

½ cup all purpose flour

½ cup almonds, finely ground

1 egg

1 tbsp water

3 tbsp confectioners’ sugar

½ cup plus 1 tbsp seedless red raspberry jam, warmed

Preheat oven to 375°. Combine cookie mix, butter, flour almonds, egg, and water in large bowl. Stir with spoon until blended. Roll dough 1/8 inch thick on lightly floured board. Cut out 3 inch hearts with floured cookie cutter cut out center of half the hearts with smaller heart cookie cutter. Reroll dough as needed. Place 2 inches apart on ungreased baking sheet. Bake whole hearts for 8 to 9 minutes and cut out hearts for 6 to 7 minutes or until edges are lightly browned. Cool for 1 minute on baking sheet. Remove to cooling rack. Cool completely. To assemble, dust cut out hearts with sifted confectioners’ sugar. Spread warm jam over the whole hearts almost to edges. Top with cut out hearts. Fill center with ¼ tsp jam.

**Blue Ribbon Almond Roca Cookies**

*Ingredients:*

2 ½ cups all purpose flour

½ tsp baking soda

¼ tsp salt

1 cup dark brown sugar

½ cup sugar

1 cup butter, room temperature

2 eggs, room temperature

2 tsp pure vanilla extract

1 package toffee bits

1 cup almonds, coarsely ground

4oz milk chocolate

½ tbsp vegetable oil

Preheat oven to 300°. In a medium mixing bowl, whisk together flour, baking soda, and salt. Set aside. In the bowl of an electric mixer, blend sugars together on medium speed. Add butter and mix to form a grainy paste. Add eggs and vanilla and mix at medium speed until light and fluffy. At low speed, slowly add the flour mixture and then the toffee bits. Mix until just blended; do not over mix. Place ground nuts in a small bowl. Using hands, roll balls of dough into 1 to 1 ½ inch balls, and then roll in the ground nuts. Place on cookie sheets several inches apart. Bake for about 22 minutes and then transfer cookies to a cooling rack. Melt the chocolate with the vegetable oil in a double boiler or in a bowl set over a pan of simmering water. Drizzle melted chocolate over cooled cookies. Place cookies on a cookie sheet and place in freezer pr refrigerator until chocolate is firmly set.

**Chocolate Crinkles**

6 dozen cookies

*Ingredients:*

½ cup vegetable oil

4oz unsweetened baking chocolate, melted, cooled

2 cups granulated sugar

2 tsp vanilla

4 eggs

2 cups all purpose flour

2 tsp salt

½ cup powdered sugar

In a large bowl, mix oil, chocolate, granulated sugar, and vanilla. Stir in eggs, one at a time. Stir in flour, baking powder, and salt. Cover, refrigerate at least 3 hours. Heat oven to 350°. Grease cookie sheet with shortening or cooking spray. Drop dough by teaspoonfuls into powdered sugar; roll around to coat and shape into balls. Place about 2 inches apart on cookie sheets. Bake 10 to 12 or until almost no imprint remains when touched lightly in center. Immediately remove from cookie sheets to cooling racks.

**Molasses Honey Ginger Cookies**

3 dozen cookies

*Ingredients for cookies:*

1 cup shortening

1 cup sugar

½ cup molasses

½ cup honey

2 egg yolks

4 cups all purpose flour

1 tsp baking soda

2 tsp baking powder

1 tsp salt

1 tbsp cinnamon

2 tsp ground cloves

2 tsp ground ginger

1 tsp ground nutmeg

*Ingredients for icing:*

1 cup confectioners’ sugar

1 tbsp butter, melted

1 tbsp milk

½ tsp vanilla extract

Liquid food colorings

Colored sugars

Cream together the shortening, sugar, molasses, and honey in a bowl with an electric mixer. Add the egg yolks and mix well. Sift together flour, baking soda, baking powder, salt, and spices; stir into the shortening mixture. Wrap the dough in plastic and chill well. Roll out dough on a lightly floured surface to ¼ inch thickness. Cut out the shapes with Christmas tree and or other holiday cookie cutters; transfer to lightly greased baking sheets. Preheat oven to 350°. Bake cookies for 8 to 10 minutes. Let the cookies cool on the baking sheets until they are firm, and then transfer to a rack to cool completely. Beat confectioners’ sugar, butter, milk, and vanilla until smooth, adding more sugar or milk as needed.

**Orange Pecan Cookies**

2 ½ to 3 dozen

*Ingredients:*

½ cup margarine

1 cup flour

¾ cup brown sugar

½ cup dried cranberries

1 egg

½ cup pecans

1 tsp grated orange peel

1 tsp orange extract

½ cup oatmeal

¾ tsp baking soda

Blend all ingredients thoroughly in order with a spoon. Bake at 350° for 7 to 8 minutes.

**Chocolate-Glazed Raspberry Cream Puffs**

*Ingredients for pastry:*

1 cup water

1 stick unsalted butter

1 tsp sugar

1 cup all purpose flour

4 large eggs

Preheat oven to 425°. Line two rimmed baking sheets with parchment. In a small saucepan, bring water, butter, and sugar to a boil over high. Immediately remove from heat. With a wooden spoon, stir in flour (spooned and leveled). Continue to stir until mixture pulls away from sides of pan, about 2 minutes. Let cool for 2 minutes. Add the eggs, one at a time, mixing after each addition until batter comes together. Transfer batter to a large zip top bag; twist and squeeze bag so batter is in one corner. With scissors, snip a ½ inch opening in corner (or use pastry bag with a ½ inch round plain tip). Pipe batter into desired size mounds, 1 inch apart, onto sheets. With a wet finger, smooth pointy tops. Bake for 10 minutes. Reduce oven temperature to 350° and bake until puffs are golden brown and feel light and hollow inside, 20 to 30 minutes. Let cool on sheets on wire racks.

*Ingredients for chocolate-glazed raspberry cream puffs:*

1 pastry puffs recipe (above)

1 ½ cup heavy cream

¼ raspberry jam

1 tbsp brandy

4 semisweet or bittersweet chocolate, coarsely chopped

1 tbsp light corn syrup

Make one recipe of large pastry puffs. Use a toothpick or skewer to make a ¼ inch wide hole in the bottom of each puff. In a medium bowl, whip 1 cup of heavy cream to firm peaks; fold in raspberry jam, and brandy (optional). Transfer mixture to a large zip top bag and snip a ¼ inch opening in one corner. Place cut corner of bag in hole in puff and squeeze to fill puff with cream mixture. Place filled puffs, whole side down, on a rimmed baking sheet. Refrigerate while making the glaze. In a medium heatproof bowl, combine chocolate, and corn syrup. In a small saucepan, bring ½ cup heavy cream just to a boil. Immediately pour over chocolate and let it sit for 2 minutes. Stir until mixture is smooth. Dip top half of each puff into chocolate glaze (or pour on top) and place, glaze side up, on baking sheet. Refrigerate, uncovered, for 30 minutes or up to 2 hours.

**Turtle Tassies**

48 cookies

*Ingredients:*

1 pouch (17.5oz) Betty Crocker sugar cookie mix

Butter and egg as called for on cookie pouch mix

¾ cup dark chocolate chips

2 bags (14oz each) caramels, unwrapped

1/3 cup whipping cream

½ cup chopped pecans

Heat oven to 375°. Lightly spray 48 mini muffin cups with cooking spray. Make dough as directed on cookie pouch. Shape dough into 48 (1 inch) balls; press 1 ball into bottom of each muffins cup, pressing sides to fill cups. Bake 8 to 9 minutes or until edges begin to brown. Meanwhile, in 3 quart saucepan, heat caramels and cream over medium heat, stirring frequently, until melted. Reduce heat to low. Remove pan from oven; gently press end of wooden spoon into bottoms and against sides of cookie cups to flatten, being careful not to make holes in dough. Bake 1 to 2 minutes longer or until edges are light golden brown. Immediately place about 4 chocolate chips into each cookie cup. Spoon about 1 tbsp caramel mixture into each cookie cup. Immediately top with chopped pecans. Cool for 5 minutes; remove from pans with sharp knife.

**Cranberry White Chocolate Chip Cookies**

30 to 36 cookies

*Ingredients:*

2 ½ cups flour

1 tsp baking soda

1 tsp salt

2 sticks butter, softened

1 cup packed brown sugar

½ cup granulated sugar

2 eggs

1 tsp vanilla extract

2 cups white chocolate chips

1 cup sweetened dried cranberries

Preheat oven to 350°. Line two cookie sheets with parchment paper. In a small bowl, combine flour, baking soda, and salt; set aside. In a large bowl, beat butter, brown sugar, and granulated sugar together with an electric mixer until light and fluffy. Beat in eggs and vanilla. Add flour mixture gradually to butter mixture and beat until well blended. Stir in white chocolate chips and dried cranberries. Drop dough by heaping tablespoons onto parchment lined cookie sheets. Bake for 12 minutes or until light brown. Slide parchment with cookies onto a wire rack to cool.

**Chunky Applesauce Bars**

*Ingredients for bars:*

2 cups chopped apples (2 to 3 apples)

2 ½ tsp cinnamon, divided

1 ½ cup applesauce

1 tsp baking soda

½ cup butter, melted

1 ½ cup sugar

½ tsp nutmeg

½ tsp all spice

½ tsp ground cloves

2 2/3 cups flour

*Ingredients for streusel topping:*

¼ cup soft butter

¼ cup brown sugar

¼ tsp cinnamon

½ cup quick oats

½ cup flour

Preheat oven to 375°. Peel chopped apples. Mix with 1 tsp cinnamon, set aside. In large bowl, place applesauce, baking soda. Mix well. Add melted butter, sugar, and all spice. Including remaining cinnamon. Nix well. Slowly add flour until well combined. Fold in chopped apples. Spread on ungreased cookie sheet to about 11x14 inches. Sprinkle with streusel topping and bake until dough springs back, about 25 minutes. Cool. Option: drizzle with powdered sugar icing for a sweeter taste.

**Pumpkin Spice Pudding Cookies**

35 servings

*Ingredients:*

2 ¼ cups all purpose flour

1 tsp baking soda

1 cup butter, softened

¾ cup packed brown sugar

¼ cup white sugar

1 (3.4oz) package instant pumpkin spice pudding

2 eggs

1 tsp vanilla extract

1 cup chopped walnuts

Preheat oven to 350°. In a large bowl, cream together the butter, brown sugar, and white sugar. Beat in the instant pudding mix until blended. Stir in the eggs and vanilla. Blend in the flour and baking soda. Finally, stir in the walnuts. Drop cookies by rounded spoonfuls onto ungreased cookie sheets. Bake for 8 to 12 minutes in the preheated oven. Edges should be golden brown.

**Double Dark Chocolate Thumbprints**

*Ingredients for the cookies:*

1 1/3 cups unbleached all purpose flour

½ tsp table salt

½ baking powder

¼ tsp baking soda

½ cup unsalted butter, softened

1 1/3 cups granulated sugar

½ cup natural, unsweetened cocoa powder, sifted if lumpy

3 large eggs

¾ tsp pure vanilla extract

3oz bittersweet chocolate, melted and cooled slightly

*Ingredients for the chocolate filling:*

½ cup bittersweet chocolate, coarsely chopped

4 tbsp unsalted butter, cut into 3 pieces

*Making the cookies:*

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 350°. Line 3 cookie sheets with parchment or nonstick baking liners. In a medium bowl, whisk the flour, salt, baking powder, and baking soda. In a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat the butter, sugar, cocoa powder on medium speed until well blended, about 2 minutes. Scrape down the bowl and the beater. Add the eggs one at a time, mixing until blended after each addition, about 30 seconds, and adding the vanilla along with the last egg. Continue mixing on medium speed until well blended, about 1 minute. Add the cooled, melted chocolate and mix until just blended, about 30 seconds. Add the flour mixture and mix on low speed until well blended about 1 minute. Using 2 tablespoon measures or a mini ice cream scoop, drop tablespoons of dough about 1 ½ inches apart on the prepared cookie sheets. Bake, one sheet at a time, until the cookies are puffed and the tops are cracked and look dry, about 11 to 13 minutes. When the cookies are just out of the oven, use the rounded side of a half teaspoon measure or the end of a thick handled wooden spoon to make a small, deep well in the center of each cookie. Let the cookies sit on the cookie sheet for 5 minutes and then transfer them to a rack to cool completely. At this point, you can fill the cookies or store them in an air tight container up for three days before filling. Melt the chocolate and butter in the microwave or in a medium bowl set in a skillet of barely simmering water, stirring with a rubber spatula until smooth. Remove from the heat and set aside until cool and slightly thickened. Spoon the chocolate mixture into the wells of cooled cookies. Set aside until the chocolate firms up, about 1 hour. Serve immediately or store in airtight container.

**Chocolate-Dipped Butterscotch Logs**

54 cookies

*Ingredients:*

1 cup butter, softened

1 cup packed dark brown sugar

½ tsp baking powder

½ tsp salt

1 egg

1 tsp vanilla

2 1/3 cups all purpose flour

¾ cup butterscotch baking pieces, finely chopped

2/3 cup almonds, finely chopped

1 ½ cups semisweet chocolate pieces or use chocolate wafers

2 tbsp shortening

In a large bowl, beat butter with an electric mixer on medium to high speed for 30 seconds. Add brown sugar, baking powder, and salt. Beat until combined, scraping sides of bowl occasionally. Beat in egg and vanilla until combined. Beat in as much of the flour with the mixer. Stir in any remaining flour and the butterscotch pieces with a wooden spoon. Divide dough in half. Shape each half into a 9 inch long log; flatten so logs are about 2 ½ inches wide. Wrap logs in plastic wrap or waxed paper. Chill for 2 hours or until firm. Preheat oven to 350°. Using a sharp knife, cut logs crosswise into ¼ inch slices. Place slices 1 inch apart on an ungreased cookie sheet. Bake in preheated oven for 10 minutes or until edges are lightly browned. Transfer to a wire rack and let cool. Meanwhile, spread almonds in a single layer in a shallow baking pan. Toast in the oven for 5 to 10 minutes or until light golden brown, stirring occasionally. Remove from oven; cool. Combine chocolate pieces and shortening in a small sauce pan. Cook and stir over low heat until melted. Dip ends of cookies into melted chocolate. Place cookies on waxed paper. Sprinkle almonds on chocolate. Let stand about 30 minutes or until chocolate is set.

**Carmel Tassies**

32 servings

*Ingredients:*

1 cup butter

8oz cream cheese

2 cups flour

*Ingredients for filling:*

14oz caramels

½ cup evaporated milk

1 tbsp whiskey optional

*Ingredients for topping:*

½ cup butter

½ cup shortening

2/3 cup sugar

1 tsp vanilla

½ cup plus 2 tbsp evaporated milk

*Tassies:*

Cream together the butter and cream. Add the flour to make a soft dough. Press on bottom and up side of mini muffin pans. Bake at 350° for 12 to 15 minutes or until golden brown. Wait for a few minutes and remove tarts from pan. Set on cookie rack to cool.

*Filling:*

Mix above ingredients in double boiler. Stir occasionally until mixture is melted and smooth. Place a teaspoonful of filling in each tart shell; allow filling to set for about an hour.

*Topping:*

Cream butter and shortening. Slowly add sugar and milk. Beat until light and fluffy. Add vanilla and beat for another few minutes. Spread on top of each tart. Or for a more professional look, fill pastry bag with topping and pipe on tarts.

**Elephant Ears**

2 cups granulated sugar

1/8 tsp kosher salt

1 package frozen puff pastry (preferable Pepperidge Farm)

Preheat oven to 450°. Line two large cookie sheets with parchment paper. In a small bowl, combine sugar and salt; pour one cup mixture onto work surface. Using wax as work surface is preferable. Unfold one sheet puff pastry onto sugar mixture; pour another ½ cup of mixture on top spreading it evenly on pastry. With rolling pin, lightly roll dough into 13 inch square, pressing sugar into pastry on top and bottom. Fold two sides of square toward center so edges are halfway to middle. Fold again so the two folds meet exactly at the middle of the dough. Then fold one half over the other half as through closing a book (you will have six layers. Cut dough. Bake cookies 6 minutes or until caramelized and brown on bottom. With metal spatula, turn cookies over and bake 3 to 5 minutes longer, until caramelized on other side. Transfer cookies to wire rack to cool completely. Place second sheet of pastry on same sugared work surface; sprinkle with remaining ½ cup sugar mixture. Continue as in steps 2 and 3, reusing cooled cookie sheets as necessary. Store cookies in airtight container, with waxed paper between layers, at room temperature up to overnight.

**Texas Kisses**

65 to 70 Texas Kisses

*Ingredients:*

1 cup sugar

1 cup white Karo syrup

18oz jar smooth peanut butter

4 cups Special K Cereal

1 large package Hershey kisses (14oz), peeled

Bring sugar and syrup to a boil. Add peanut butter, stirring until melted. Add the cereal. Mix well. Drop by tablespoon onto waxed paper or foil. Put a kiss on top of each…FAST…so the chocolate will melt. Keep pushing the kiss down as you add others. Smooth over with a knife when melted.

**Lemon Tea Cakes**

*Ingredients for lemon tea cakes:*

3oz cream cheese, softened

½ cup unsalted butter

1 cup all purpose flour

½ tsp salt

Nonstick spray for mini pans

Spray 24 mini muffin pan, and when dough is chilled. Roll into 24 equal balls and press evenly into pans. Return to refrigerator while making the filling.

*Ingredients for fillings:*

½ cup granulated sugar

1 large egg

2 tbsp heavy cream

2 tbsp unsalted butter, softened

2 tbsp fresh lemon juice

½ tsp vanilla

½ tsp lemon zest

24 fresh raspberries or blueberries

Preheat oven to 325°. In a bowl, combine cream cheese and ½ cup butter. Add flour, ¼ tsp salt, and mix until combined. Chill dough for 15 minutes. Filling: with electric mixer, beat egg, 2 tbsp butter, cream, lemon juice, lemon zest, ¼ tsp salt, and ½ tsp vanilla until creamy. Spoon equally into mini pans. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes unitl filling is set. Cool completely. Remove to serving dish and top each with raspberries or blueberries and serve.

**Buckeye Brownies**

2 to 3 dozen brownies

*Ingredients:*

19 ½ oz package brownie mix

2 cups powdered sugar

½ cup plus 6 tbsp butter, soften, divided

1 cup creamy peanut butter

6oz package semi-sweet chocolate chips

Prepare and bake brownie mix in a greased 9x13 baking pan according to package directions. Let cool. Mix together powdered sugar, ½ cup butter and peanut butter; spread over cooled brownies. Chill for one hour. Melt together chocolate chips and remaining 6 tablespoons butter in a saucepan over low heat, stirring occasionally. Spread over brownies. Let cool; cut into squares.