**Black & White Chocolate Peppermint Cookies**

**Ingredients:**

* 1-1/2 cups semi-sweet chocolate chips, divided
* 1-3/4 cups all-purpose flour
* ½ teaspoon baking soda
* ¼ teaspoon salt
* 1 stick butter, softened
* ½ cup granulated sugar
* ¼ cup brown sugar, packed
* ½ teaspoon peppermint extract
* ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
* 2 eggs
* 1 cup white chocolate chips

**Directions:**

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.

Melt ¾ cup semi-sweet chips in microwave-safe bowl in 30 second intervals until melted. Stir until smooth; set aside to cool to room temp.

Combine flour, baking soda, and salt in small bowl. In a large bowl beat butter, both sugars, peppermint extract, and vanilla extract until creamy. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Beat in melted chocolate. Gradually beat in flour mixture. Stir in remaining semi-sweet chips and white chocolate chips. Drop dough using medium scoop onto baking sheet lined with parchment paper.

Bake for 8-11 minutes, until sides are set but centers are still soft. Cool on baking sheets for 2 minutes; remove to wire racks to cool completely. Yield: 45 cookies.

**Non-peppermint chocolate cookie variation:** eliminate peppermint extract, increase vanilla extract to 1 teaspoon and add 1 cup butterscotch chips. Bake as per above. Yield: 56 cookies.

**Angeletti**

1/2 cup butter or margarine, melted

¾ cup sugar

¼ cup milk

1 ½ teaspoons vanilla extract

3 large eggs

3 cups flour

1 tablespoon baking powder

¼ teaspoon salt

2 cups confectioners’ sugar

3 ½ tablespoons water

½ cup multicolor candy decors (optional)

Preheat oven to 375F. Grease two large cookies sheets.

In large bowl, whisk butter, sugar, milk, vanilla, and eggs until blended. In a medium bowl, mix flour, baking powder, and salt. Stir flour mixture into egg mixture until evenly blended. Cover dough with plastic wrap or waxed paper; let stand 5 minutes.

With floured hands, shape dough by level tablespoons into 1-inch balls. Place, 2 inches apart, on prepared cookie sheets. Bake until puffed and light brown on bottoms, 7 – 8 minutes.

When cookies are cool, whisk confectioners’ sugar and water in a small bowl, until blended. Dip top of each cookie into glaze and place on wire rack set over wax paper to catch any drips. Immediately sprinkle cookies with decors, if using. Allow glaze to set, about 20 minutes.

Store cookies, with wax paper between layers, in an airtight container up to 5 days, or freeze up to 3 months. Yield: about 60 cookies.

**Peppermint Cookies:**

* **3/4** stick **Crisco**® Baking Sticks Butter Flavor All-Vegetable Shortening
* OR **3/4** cup **Crisco**® Butter Flavor All-Vegetable Shortening
* **1/2** cup firmly packed brown sugar
* **1/2** cup sugar
* **2** tablespoons milk
* **1** tablespoon vanilla extract
* **1** large egg
* **2** cups **Pillsbury** BEST® All Purpose Flour
* **1** teaspoon salt
* **3/4** teaspoon baking soda
* **3/4** cup crushed peppermint candy canes or peppermint hard candies, divided

Heat oven to 350F. Beat shortening, brown sugar, sugar, milk and vanilla in large bowl of electric mixer on medium speed until well blended. Beat in egg. Combine flour, salt and baking soda. Mix into shortening mixture at low speed just until blended. Stir in ½ cup crushed candy. Shape into 1-inch balls. Place 2-inches apart on ungreased baking sheet. Bake 8 – 10 minutes or until lightly browned. Immediately sprinkle each cookie with about ¼ teaspoon crushed candy. Cool 2 minutes. Remove to rack to cool completely. To have enough crushed candy for this recipe, use 9 medium candy canes or 36 peppermint hard candies.

**Butterscotch Cookies Recipe**

* **Yield:** Makes 4 dozen

**Ingredients**

* 12 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into tablespoon sized slices
* 1 3/4 cups dark brown sugar
* 1/2 teaspoon salt
* 1 egg
* 1 egg yolk
* 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
* 2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
* 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
* 1/4 teaspoon baking powder

*Sugar Dredging Mixture*

* 1/4 cup dark brown sugar
* 2 tablespoons sugar
* Fleur de sel, Maldon, sea salt, or Kosher salt for sprinkling\*

*\*Do not use fine grain table salt (aka: iodized salt) as the flavor will be way off and unpleasant.*

**Method**

**1** Preheat oven to 375°F and line baking sheets with parchment paper. Vigorously whisk together the flour, baking soda, and baking powder and set aside. Mix together the sugar dredging mixture in another bowl and set aside.

**2** Place 10 tablespoons of butter into a thick-bottomed skillet over medium heat. The butter will foam a bit before subsiding. Once the butter takes on a tan color and begins to smell nutty take it off of the heat. Add the other two tablespoons of butter and mix it in until it melts. (See tutorial on [how to brown butter](http://www.simplyrecipes.com/recipes/how_to_brown_butter/).)

**3** Pour the brown butter into a mixing bowl fitted with a paddle attachment. Add the brown sugar and salt and mix. Add the egg, egg yolk, and vanilla extract and mix together, scraping down the sides and bottom of the bowl at least once. Add the flour mixture in three increments being sure to scrape down the sides and bottom once or twice. Mix just until the flour is incorporated. The dough will be very thick.

**4** Take 1/2 to full tablespoon-sized pieces of dough (you can make them a bit bigger or smaller to your liking, just make sure the pieces of dough are all the same size) and gently roll them into ball shapes. Dredge them in the sugar dredging mixture until well-coated. Place on the baking sheet and sprinkle with a little bit of the sprinkling salt (be reserved with the salt as very little goes a long way).

**5** Bake for 10-12 minutes or until the edges have browned a bit. Be careful not to over-bake. Allow to cool on the sheet for one minute before transferring to a wire rack to cool completely.

**Homemade Samoas**

1 cup butter, softened

½ cup sugar

2 cups flour

¼ teaspoon baking powder

½ teaspoon salt

½ teaspoon vanilla extract

Up to 2 tablespoons milk

Preheat oven to 350F.

Cream together butter and sugar in a large bowl. Mix in flour, baking powder and salt at a low speed, then add the vanilla and milk, adding in the milk only as needed to make the dough come together without being sticky (you may not need any milk). The dough should come together into a soft, pliable ball. Add in a bit of extra flour if your dough seems sticky. Divide the dough into thirds and roll each third between pieces of waxed paper or parchment paper to about ¼ inch thickness or a little thinner. Cut using a 1 ½ inch round cookie cutter. Place on parchment lined (or silicon mat) baking sheet and make a hole in the center of each cookie using the small end of a large round piping tip or a knife or the end of a wide straw. Repeat until all of the dough is used up (this dough is okay to re-roll. It is very forgiving.). Bake cookies for 10 – 12 minutes, until bottoms are very lightly golden brown around edges. Cool for a few minutes on baking sheet to allow them to firm up, then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely.

Topping:

3 cups shredded coconut (sweetened or unsweetened) (1-14 oz bag is enough to make 3 cups)

12 ounces good quality chewy caramels, unwrapped

¼ teaspoon salt

3 tablespoons milk

8 ounces dark, semisweet, bittersweet OR milk chocolate (I used a 24 ounce bag of semisweet chocolate chips).

Preheat oven to 300F.

Spread coconut evenly on a rimmed baking sheet and toast 20 minutes, stirring every 5 minutes until coconut is golden. Watch carefully, especially near the end of toasting time as it turns golden very quickly. Cool on baking sheet, stirring occasionally. Set aside.

Place the caramels in a large microwave-safe bowl with the milk and salt. Cook on high for 3 – 4 minutes, stopping to stir occasionally, until melted and smooth. Fold in toasted coconut.

Using a spatula or a small offset spatula, spread topping on cooled cookies, using about 2 – 3 teaspoons per cookie. Reheat caramel mixture in microwave if it begins to harden to make it soft and spreadable once again.

While topping sets up place chocolate in a small microwave-safe bowl. Heat in the microwave on high for 45 seconds intervals, stirring occasionally to prevent scorching, until melted. Dip the base of each cookie into the chocolate and place on a piece if parchment or wax paper (a silicone baking mat can be used). Transfer remaining chocolate into a piping bag or a zip lock bag with the corner snipped off and drizzle finished cookies with chocolate. Let chocolate set completely before storing in an airtight container. Yield: 3 ½ - 4 dozen.

**Red Velvet Crinkle Cookies**

* 6 tbsp. butter
* 1 cup powdered sugar
* 1 tsp. cornstarch
* 1 box  [Red Velvet Cake Mix](http://www.duncanhines.com/products/cakes/signature-red-velvet-cake-mix/)
* 2 large eggs
* 1 tsp. lemon zest or ½ teaspoon peppermint extract
* Preheat oven to 375°F. Melt butter; set aside to cool. Place powdered sugar and cornstarch in shallow dish. Mix with a fork to blend.
* Place cake mix, cooled butter, eggs and lemon zest in large mixing bowl. Mix by hand until well blended and a dough forms.
* Form dough into 1" balls and roll in powdered sugar. Place on cool, ungreased baking sheets about 2" apart.
* Bake, 1 sheet at a time, in center of oven for 9 to 11 minutes or until set. Cool 1 minute. Transfer to wire rack to cool completely.
* Store in airtight container with wax paper or parchment separating layers.
* Tips:
* For consistency, use a small scoop (1" to 1¼" inches in diameter) to form dough into balls.
* For best results, bake only one sheet of cookies at a time. If two are baked at once, rotate sheets midway through baking.

 Yield: 4 dozen

#### Baklava Bars

#### Ingredients

## Cookie Base

1 pouch (1 lb 1.5 oz) Betty Crocker® sugar cookie mix

1/2 cup butter or margarine, softened

1/2 teaspoon grated lemon peel

1 egg

## Filling

1 1/2 cups chopped walnuts

1/3 cup granulated sugar

1/4 cup butter or margarine, softened

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1/8 teaspoon salt

8 frozen mini fillo shells (from 2.1-oz package)

## Glaze

1/3 cup honey

2 tablespoons butter or margarine, softened

1 tablespoon packed brown sugar

1/2 teaspoon lemon juice

1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1 teaspoon vanilla

## Garnish

5 tablespoons honey

#### Directions

* Heat oven to 350°F. Spray bottom only of 13x9-inch pan with cooking spray.
* In large bowl, stir cookie base ingredients until soft dough forms. Press dough in bottom of pan. Bake 15 minutes.
* Meanwhile, in medium bowl, stir walnuts, granulated sugar, 1/4 cup butter, 1 teaspoon cinnamon and the salt with fork until mixture is well mixed and crumbly.
* Sprinkle nut mixture evenly over partially baked base. With hands, crumble frozen fillo shells evenly over nut mixture. Bake 18 to 20 minutes longer or until golden brown.
* Meanwhile, in small microwavable bowl, microwave 1/3 cup honey, 2 tablespoons butter, the brown sugar, lemon juice and 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon uncovered on High 1 minute or until bubbly. Stir in vanilla.
* Drizzle honey mixture evenly over fillo. Cool completely, about 2 hours.
* For bars, cut into 6 rows by 4 rows. Before serving, drizzle 1/2 teaspoon honey over each bar. Store covered at room temperature.

 Yield: 24 bars.

**Yuletide Cherry Cookies**

* 1/2 cup butter, softened
* 1 package (3 ounces) **cream cheese**, softened
* 1/2 cup sugar
* 1/4 teaspoon almond extract
* 1 cup all-purpose flour
* 1 teaspoon baking powder
* 1/8 teaspoon salt
* 3/4 cup crushed crisp rice cereal
* 15 red *and/or* green maraschino cherries, halved and patted dry
1. In a large bowl, cream the butter, cream cheese and sugar. Beat in almond extract. Combine the flour, baking powder and salt; gradually add to the creamed mixture. Cover and refrigerate for 1 hour or until easy to handle.
2. Shape dough into 1-in. balls; roll in crushed cereal. Place 2 in. apart on ungreased baking sheets. Bake at 350° for 12-15 minutes or until lightly browned. Immediately press a cherry half into the center of each cookie. Remove to wire racks to cool. Yield: 18 cookies.

**Pumpkin Snickerdoodles**

3 ¾ cups flour

1 ½ teaspoons baking powder

½ teaspoon salt

½ teaspoon ground cinnamon

¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg

2 sticks unsalted butter, room temperature

1 cup sugar

½ cup dark brown sugar

1 cup pumpkin puree

1 large egg

2 teaspoons vanilla extract

For the coating:

½ cup sugar

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

½ teaspoon ground ginger

Dash of allspice

In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, salt, cinnamon and nutmeg. In a large bowl, beat together butter and sugars on medium speed until well combined. Beat in pumpkin then add the egg and vanilla extract. Gradually add the flour mixture. Beat until combined but do not over mix. Cover the dough and refrigerate for 1 hour or until firm.

Preheat oven to 350F. Line the baking sheets with parchment paper. In a small bowl, mix together the coating ingredients. Scoop dough (approximately 2 ½ tablespoons) and roll into a ball. Roll the dough ball into the coating mixture and place on baking sheet leaving about 2 inches between each cookie. Take a drinking glass with a flat bottom and moisten with water. Dip the glass into the coating mixture and use it to flatten the dough balls. Re-coat the glass as needed.

Bake the cookies for 10 – 12 minutes. Remove when the centers of the cookies have set. Let cool on the baking pan for approximately 5 minutes and then transfer to wire cooling racks to cool completely.

**Italian Walnut Pillow Cookies**

### Ingredients:

Dough:
1 cup sugar
1 cup shortening
1 egg
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 cup milk
4½ cups all-purpose flour
4 teaspoons baking powder
½ teaspoon salt

Filling:
1½ lbs. walnuts, chopped (I use my food processor)
4 oz. (1 stick) unsalted butter, melted
1½ cups sugar
4 egg whites, lightly beaten

Icing:
2 cups powdered sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla
4 tablespoons milk (approximately)

### Directions:

Preheat the oven to 350°. Grease cookie sheets or line them with parchment paper.

In a bowl, mix together the flour, baking powder, and salt. Cream together the sugar and shortening. Add the egg and vanilla and combine well. Add in the remaining ingredients, alternating between the flour mixture and milk, starting and ending with the flour mixture and making sure all of the ingredients are well incorporated. The dough will be soft. Divide the dough into four even pieces, wrap each in plastic wrap, and refrigerate until ready to use.

To make the filling, either process the nuts through a food processor until finely chopped (just a smidge larger than all-out ground), or chop by hand. The smaller the pieces, the better. Combine the chopped nuts with the sugar and then add in the melted butter. Mix well, making sure there are no large clumps. Add the egg whites and again, mix well.

On a well-floured surface, roll out a piece of dough into a rectangle measuring about 6 inches by 18 inches. Spread ¼ of the nut filling onto the dough, leaving a small border around the perimeter of the dough. Roll up as you would a jelly roll, with the short ends to the left and right of you, and seal the ends. Cut the roll into 1-inch pieces and place on the cookie sheet. Bake for 15-20 minutes or until the tops are just slightly starting to turn brown. Cool completely. Repeat with the remaining pieces of dough and remaining filling.

Once the cookies are cooled, prepare the icing by mixing together the powdered sugar, vanilla, and enough milk to achieve the desired consistency. You'll want the icing to be thick enough to not be runny, but still easily spreadable. Ice the tops of the cookies and let set completely before storing in an airtight container.

Yield: approximately 7 dozen cookies.