**Cheese Cake Tarts**

2-inch baking cups

1 package graham crackers, crumbs

1/4 cup butter, softened

4 packages 8 ounces cream cheese

2 cup sugar

4 eggs

4 teaspoons vanilla

1 can cherry pie filling, sliced strawberries or blueberries

 Make graham crust mixture. Press crumbs down firmly into baking cups.

 Combine cream cheese and sugar to taste. Add egg and vanilla. Beat very well. Put baking cups inside muffin tins. Fill cups to top. Bake 400-degrees for 13 minutes. Chill. (Freezes well.) Top with fruit.

# \***S'mores**

2/3 cup light corn syrup

2 teaspoon butter

11 ½ ounces milk chocolate bits

1teaspoon vanilla

8 cups Golden Graham cereal

3 cups miniature marshmallows

 Grease 9x13-inch pan. Heat corn syrup, butter and chocolate bits to boiling , stirring constantly; remove from heat. Stir in vanilla. Pour over cereal in large pot; toss quickly until completely coated. Fold in marshmallows, one cup at a time. Press mixture evenly in pan with waxed paper. Let stand until firm, at least 1 hour. Cut into 1 ½-inch squares.

**Rice Kipsie Marshmallow Treats**

4 cups butter

10 ounces marshmallows

5 cups Rice Kipsie cereal

 Melt butter in large pan over low heat. Add marshmallows and stir until melted and blended. Remove from heat. Add cereal. Stir until well coated. Press mixture into greased 9x13-inch pan. Cool completely and cut into bars.

\***James Beard's Brownies**

9x9-inch pan, well greased and dusted with flour

4 ounces unsweetened chocolate

1 cup butter, softened

2 cups sugar

3 eggs, slightly beaten

2 teaspoons vanilla

(1 cup blanched almonds or pecans, chopped)

1 cup flour, sifted

sweetened whipped cream

Optional: zest of three oranges

 Melt chocolate. Pour into bowl of food processor. Mix in butter, bit at a time. Add sugar, eggs and vanilla; mix well. Gradually add flour. (Stir in nuts.)

 Pour batter into prepared pan, somewhat mounding center higher than sides. Bake 350-degrees for 40 to 45 minutes. Cool in pan. Cut into squares and serve, at room temperature, with sweetened whipped cream. Freezes well.

**Pecan (Raspberry) Tarts**

Makes 24 mini tarts Sylvia Kambas

3 ounces cream cheese, softened

1/4 pound butter, softened

1 cup flour

Pecan Filling:

1teaspoon butter, melted

1 cup brown sugar

1 egg

pinch salt

1 cup chopped pecans

Raspberry Filling

1-12 ounces seedless raspberry jam or preserves

 By hand, cream together cream cheese and butter. Blend in flour. Divide dough into 24 balls. Put one in each of 24 muffin tin depressions, pressing against bottom and sides to make a lining.

 Pecan Filling: Mix together all filling ingredients by hand. Spoon filling into each dough cup.

 Raspberry Filling: Fill each with a slightly rounded large melon-ball spoon. (Do not over fill.) If you have used more than 12 ounces filling, then you have filled them too much and they will run over the tops.

 Bake 350-degrees for 30 minutes. Cool 15 minutes. If filling has overflowed rim, loosen edge with knife. Remove tarts by lifting with knife or invert muffin tin onto towel. Cool on wire

 rack. Freezes well.

**Seven Layer Bars**

#  Naomi Minegishi

9 x 13-inch pan

1 1/2 cups cornflake crumbs

3 teaspoons sugar

1/2 cup butter, melted

1 cup walnuts, chopped

1 cup chocolate chips

1 cup butterscotch chips

1 1/3 cups flake coconut

1 can sweetened condensed milk

 Mix crumbs, sugar and butter together. Press into bottom of pan. Sprinkle on next 4 ingredients in layers. Level and pour milk over all.

 Bake 350-degrees for 25-30 minutes or until coconut turns light brown. Cut while still warm.

\***Oatmeal Crispy Cookies**

# Makes 6 dozen Kay Heise

1 cup Crisco

1 cup brown sugar

## 1 cup white sugar

2 eggs

1 teaspoon vanilla

1 1/2 cups flour

3 cups oatmeal

1 teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon baking soda

1/2 cup nuts, chopped

 Cream Crisco with sugars. Beat in eggs and vanilla. Add flour, salt and baking soda. Mix well. Stir in oatmeal and nuts. Divide into 4 rolls 2-inchs in diameter. Wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight. Slice ½ inch thick and bake 350-degrees on greased cookie sheet for 10 to 12 minutes.

**Toll House** **Chocolate Chip Cookies**

(1/2 recipe)

1 cup butter, softened (½ C)

3/4 cup white sugar (1/4 C+2 T)

3/4 cup brown sugar (1/4 C+2 T)

1 teaspoon vanilla (1/2 t)

2 eggs, room temperature (1)

2 1/4 cups flour (1 C+2 T)

1 teaspoon baking soda (1/2 t)

1 teaspoon salt (1/2 t)

12 ounces semisweet chocolate chips (6 oz)

1 cup walnuts, coarsely chopped (1/2 C)

 In food processor blend butter and sugars. Add vanilla and eggs and blend well. Add flour, soda, salt; blend. Stir in chocolate chips and nuts.

 Bake 375-degrees for 10 to 12 minutes.

**No Bake Oatmeal Cookie-Candy**

1 ¾ cups sugar

1/2 cup cocoa

1/2 cup milk

1/2 cup butter

3 cups oatmeal

1/2 cup peanut butter

1teaspoon vanilla

 Bring first 4 ingredients to boil. Remove from heat and stir in remaining ingredients. Form into balls and cool.

\***Chinese Chews**

#  Patti Driscoll

3 sticks butter, softened

3 cups sugar

6 eggs

2 teaspoons salt

2 teaspoons vanilla

3 cups flour

8 ounces chopped dates

chopped walnuts, same volume as dates

1/2 box powdered sugar

 Cream butter, eggs, sugar, salt and vanilla. Add flour in batches and mix. Stir in nuts and dates. Spread out in greased and floured 11x15x1-inch pan with parchment. Bake 350-degrees for 30 minutes or until golden brown. Cool overnight. Cut into 4 lengthwise strips and remove from pan. (Strips can be frozen.) Cut each strip once, lengthwise, and cut into 1-inch squares. Toss squares in bag with powdered sugar and shake off excess. Store in airtight container.

**Mexican Chocolate Wedding Cakes (Cookies)**

# Makes 40 cookies Trudi Schneider

3/4 cup brown sugar

1 cup butter, softened

2 eggs, cold

3 ounces unsweetened baking chocolate, melted

1 teaspoon vanilla

2 cups flour

1 cup finely chopped nuts

¼ teaspoon salt

1 cup powdered sugar or

½ cup sweetened cocoa + ½ cup powdered sugar

 Preheat oven to 350-degrees. In food processor beat sugar, butter, egg and vanilla until light and fluffy, scraping bowl. Add melted chocolate and vanilla. Continue beating until well-mixed. Add flour and salt turn on/off until blended. Stir in nuts.

 Shape rounded teaspoonfuls of dough into 1-inch BALLS. Place 2 inches apart on cookie sheets. Bake 12 minutes or until set when tops just begin to crack. Carefully transfer to wire rack; cool 10 minutes. Roll in powdered sugar or sugar cocoa mixture (cookies will still be warm), then cool and roll again in powdered sugar mixture.

\***Nanaimo Bars**

Makes16 bars

Crust

1/2 cup butter

1/2 cup sugar

5 teaspoons unsweetened cocoa

1 egg, slightly beaten

1 teaspoon vanilla

2 cups (1 ½ packages) finely crushed graham crackers

1 cup finely chopped coconut

1/2 cup finely chopped nuts

\*Filling:

1/4 cup butter, softened

2 tablespoons instant custard or vanilla pudding mix

2 cups powdered sugar

milk or cream

Topping

4 ounces semisweet baking chocolate

2 tablespoons butter

Crust: Melt 1/2 cup butter, sugar, cocoa and egg. Cook until melted and thicken. Remove from heat and stir in vanilla. Set aside. Stir together graham crumbs, coconut and nuts. Add cocoa mixture and mix. Press firmly into greased 9-inch square pan. Refrigerate 2 hours.

Filling: Combine 1/2 cup soft butter, powdered custard, powdered sugar and just enough milk (few drops) to make it spreading consistency. Mix well and spread on top of crust. Refrigerate 1 hour.

Topping: Melt chocolate with 1teaspoon butter and 2tablespoons hot water. Spread over chilled filling. Refrigerate until serving. Remove from refrigerator 20 minutes before serving. Cut into small squares. Very rich!

\*Other Fillings: Fresh peanut butter, Reese’s Peanut butter, half sweet marmalade mixed with half custard filling.

**Apricot Squares**

8x8x2-inch pan Martha Stewart

1 cup flour

¼ pound + 1 tablespoon unsalted butter, softened

¼ cup sugar

Filling:

1/3 cup flour

2/3 cup dried and plumped apricots (save 3 apricots for topping)

3/4 cup brown sugar

2 large eggs at room temp.

½ cup toasted sliced almonds

½ teaspoon baking powder

¼ teaspoon salt

½ teaspoon vanilla extract

 Plump dried apricots in boiling water. Drain, dry and chop by hand into1/2-3/4-inch pieces. Set aside.

 Cream together flour, butter and sugar with spatula. Don’t overwork. Spread into buttered parchment baking pan and pat down evenly. Bake in preheated 350-degree oven until golden brown, about 18 minutes. Cool.

Filling: Sift flower, sugar, baking powder and salt into bowl and mix well. In a separate bowl, mix apricots, nuts, eggs and vanilla. . Mix two bowls together by hand. Pour over crust. Quarter remaining 3 apricots. Use 9 quarters to decorate top of batter. Sprinkle top with sugar. Bake at 350-degrees for about 25-30 minutes, until firm and golden.

\***Florentine Shortbread Cookies**

Makes about 4 dozen

Pastry:

1 ½ sticks unsalted butter, cut into ½-inch dice and chilled

## 6 teaspoons sugar

¼ teaspoon salt

1 ½ cup + 2 teaspoons flour

Topping:

½ cup heavy cream

1 large orange: finely grated zest

1 cup + 3 teaspoons sugar

1 teaspoon light corn syrup

1/3 cup water

½ cup orange honey

1 stick unsalted butter

3 ¼ cups sliced blanched almonds (12 ounces)

2/3 cup finely diced candied orange rind (4 ounces)

10 ounces Lindt bittersweet chocolate, coarsely chopped

2 teaspoons Crisco

Pastry: Preheat oven to 350-degrees. Butter bottom and sides of 10 x 13-inch rimmed baking sheet. Line bottom with parchment paper, leaving about 2-inch overhanging at short ends. Butter parchment.

 In food processor, pulse the diced butter with the sugar and salt 6 times. Sift, then measure flour. Add flour and process until mixture resembles coarse meal. Spread crumbs on baking sheet with a metal scraper and press into a thin, even layer (cover with parchment and press with metal scraper). Refrigerate 20 minutes. Bake in middle of oven until lightly browned, at least 15-18 minutes. Do not overbake. Transfer to wire rack. Increase oven temp to 425-degrees.

 Topping: Put almonds and candied orange rind in a deep pot; set aside.In small saucepan, heat cream with orange zest over moderate heat just until bubbles appear around the edge, about 2 minutes. In a heavy medium-large saucepan, combine sugar, corn syrup and water and bring to boil over moderately high heat, stirring just until sugar dissolves. Cook syrup over moderately high heat, swirling pan occasionally, until a medium amber caramel forms, about 10 minutes. Remove from heat. Add honey, orange-cream and butter and stir until butter melts. Cook caramel topping over moderately high heat until candy thermometer registers 255-degrees, about 4 minutes. Pour over the almonds-orange rind mixture and quickly stir; immediately spread the caramel over pastry with small plastic bowl scraper.

 Return baking sheet to oven and bake pastry for 5-7 minutes, or until topping is bubbling. Transfer the baking sheet to a rack and let cool for 30-40 minutes.

 Run knife around edge of baking sheet to loosen pastry and slide parchment onto a work surface. Using a sharp, heavy knife dipped in hot water, cut the pastry into four 2 ½-inch strips lengthwise. Cut strips into 3-inch rectangles. Cut each rectangle diagonally in half.

 Line 2 large baking sheets with wax paper. Melt chocolate with Crisco in large coffee mug at low microwave setting (#5) at 1 minute intervals. Stir lightly. Dip short side of each cookie into chocolate and transfer to prepared baking sheets. Reheat chocolate if it gets too thick. Refrigerate until chocolate is just set, about 5 minutes.

 Cookies can be stored in airtight container at room temperature for up to 1 week or frozen for up to 2 months.

**Baklava**

Serves 8 *The World of Jewish Desserts*

Notes: Defrost phyllo overnight in the refrigerator. Remove from the refrigerator two hours before using. Keep lightly covered to prevent drying out.

To double recipe use 13 x 9-inch baking pan. Bake 20 minutes at 350-degrees and 15 minutes at 300-degrees.

Syrup:

1 ½ cups sugar and ¾ cup orange honey

1 cup + 2 tablespoons water

1 ½ tablespoon lemon juice

1 ½ tablespoon light corn syrup

1 (3-inch) stick cinnamon

½ teaspoon ground cardamom

Filling:

½ pound (about 2 cups) blanched almonds, pistachios, walnuts; toasted and finely chopped

2 tablespoons sugar

2 teaspoons ground cinnamon

¼ teaspoon cardamom

phyllo dough

4 ounces clarified butter, melted

 Syrup: Stir the sugar, water, lemon juice and corn syrup, cinnamon stick and cardamom over low heat until the sugar dissolves, about 5 minutes. Stop stirring, increase the heat to medium and cook until the mixture is slightly syrupy, about 10 minutes (it will register 230-degrees on candy thermometer). Discard the cinnamon stick. Let Cool. (It should be the consistency of honey. If too thick, add water.)

 Filling: Combine all filling ingredients.

 Preheat oven to 350-degrees. Grease 8 x 8-inch baking pan. Using a pizza cutter, cut each sheet of phyllo into two 7 ½-inch square pieces plus leftover pieces you can also use. Lightly brush phyllo with butter. Layer 8 pieces in pan. Spread with half the filling. Top with 8 more sheets and spread with remaining filling. Top with 8 more sheets.

 Using a sharp knife, cut 4 x 4-inch squares through the top layer of pastry. Make a diagonal cut across each square to form triangle shape. Just before baking, lightly sprinkle the top of the pastry with cold water. This inhibits the pastry from curling. Bake for 30 minutes. Reduce the heat to 300 and bake until golden brown, about 15 additional minutes or longer.

 Cut through the scored lines. Reserve ¾ cup syrup then pour remaining (warm it up a bit) slowly over the hot baklava and let cool for at least 4 hours. Cover and store at room temperature for up to 1 week. Serve with remaining syrup.

**Peanut Butter and Jelly Thumbprints**

Makes 36 cookies *Cooking Light*

2 cups flour

¼ teaspoon salt

¾ cup brown sugar

2/3 cup white sugar

½ cup chunky peanut butter¼ cup butter, softened

2 large eggs, room temperature

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

peanut oil

7 tablespoons seedless raspberry preserves

 Lightly spoon flour into dry measuring cups; level with a knife. Whisk to combine flour and salt; set aside.

 Place sugars, peanut butter and butter in large mixing bowl; beat with a mixer at medium speed until well combined. Add eggs, 1 at a time, beating well after each addition. Beat in vanilla. Gradually add flour mixture to sugar mixture, beating on low speed until just combined.

 Lightly coat hands with peanut oil. Shape dough into 36 balls. Place balls 2 inches apart on baking sheets lined with parchment paper. Press thumb into center of each dough ball, leaving an indentation. (?)Cover and chill 1 hour—no longer.

 Preheat oven to 350-degrees. Uncover dough and bake for 14 minutes or until lightly browned. Remove cookies from pan and cool on a wire rack.

 Place preserves in a small microwave-safe bowl and heat on HIGH 20 seconds, stirring once. Add juice, stirring until smooth. Spoon about ½ teaspoon preserves mixture into the center of each cookie.

\***Chewy Almond-Raspberry Sandwich Cookies**

Makes about 18 cookies *Bon Appetit*, Christmas, 2010

2 cups sliced almonds

1 7-ounce tube almond paste, lightly crumbled

1 cup sugar

½ teaspoon ground cinnamon

egg whites from 2 eggs, room temperature

powdered sugar

1 cup seedless raspberry jam

 Position 1 rack in top third and 1 rack in bottom third of oven; preheat to 350-degrees. Line 2 large baking sheets with parchment. Place almonds in center of third (unlined) rimmed baking sheet, forming ¼-inch-thick layer.

 Finely grind almond paste, 1 cup sugar and cinnamon in processor. Add egg whites; process until well blended. Transfer dough to large resealable plastic bag. Press dough down into 1 corner of bag. Using scissors snip off corner, leaving ½-inch opening. Working in batches, squeeze dough from bag in 2 ½-inch long strips atop almonds on sheet. Spinkle some of loose almonds on sheet over strips; carefully roll strips in almonds to coat lightly (dough will be soft and sticky). Transfer cookies to prepared baking sheet, spacing apart. Lightly flatten with back of metal spatula.

 Bake cookies until light golden brown, reversing position of sheets halfway through baking, about 12 minutes. Remove from oven; lightly flatten each cookie again. Let cookies stand on sheets 5 minutes, transfer to cooking rack. Sift powdered sugar over cookies.

 Simmer jam in saucepan until it is bubbling thickly. Cool. Spread 1 teaspoon jam over the bottom of 1 cookie. Top with a second cookie, bottom side down. Repeat with remaining cookies and jam.

 Can be made 3 weeks ahead. Store airtight in freezer.

**Oatmeal Butterscotch Cookies**

(1/2 recipe)

¾ cup (12 tablespoons) butter, softened (6 T)

¾ cup white sugar (1/4 C+2 T)

¾ cup light brown sugar (1/4 C+2T)

2 eggs at room temperature (1)

1 teaspoon vanilla extract (1/2 t)

1 ¼ cups flour( ½ C+2 T)1 teaspoon baking soda (1/2 t)

½ teaspoon ground cinnamon (1/4 t)

½ teaspoon salt (1/4 t)

3 cups oatmeal (1 ½ C)

11 ounces butterscotch chips (5.5 ounces)

 Preheat oven to 375-degrees. Cream butter and sugars. Add eggs and vanilla and beat well.

 In a separate bowl combine flour, baking soda, cinnamon and salt. Gradually add to butter mixture.

 Stir in oatmeal and butterscotch chips.

 Drop by heaping teaspoons onto parchment covered baking sheet. Bake 8 to 10 minutes or until golden brown. Cool on wire rack.

**Chocolate Toffee Shortbread Bars**

1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon

2 sticks butter, at room temperature

1/2 cup packed brown sugar

1/4 cup granulated sugar

1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract3 ounces bittersweet, semisweet or milk chocolate, finely chopped or chocolate chips

6 ounces bittersweet, semisweet, or milk chocolate, finely chopped, don't use chips

1 1/2 cups toffee bits, 1 package

 Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Line a 9 x 13 baking pan with foil leaving overhang on the ends to lift bars out after baking. Lightly grease the foil and set aside.

 Whisk together the flour, salt, and cinnamon in a medium bowl, set aside.

 Place the butter in the bowl of a stand mixer (or use a hand mixer). Beat for 3 minutes, or until the butter is smooth and fluffy. Add the brown sugar and granulated sugar and beat for an additional 3 minutes. Briefly mix in vanilla.

 Gradually add the flour mixture to the butter/sugar mixture (add gradually so you don't have flour everywhere). Mix until the flour is almost incorporated. Add the 3 ounces of chocolate to the mixer and mix until the rest of the dry ingredients are incorporated. Don't over mix, just mix until combined.

 Scrape the dough into the prepared pan and press down the mixture with a spatula and/or your fingertips. Bake for 18-20 minutes, or until the crust is bubbling. Remove the crust from the oven and place on a cooling rack.

 Immediately Sprinkle the 6 ounces of chocolate over the hot bars and cover the pan with foil for about 5 minutes to allow the chocolate melt. Using an offset spatula or the back of a spoon, spread the softened chocolate over the crust. Sprinkle the toffee pieces over the chocolate and press down gently with your fingers.

 Let the bars completely cool to room temperature. Once cool, if chocolate is not totally set just stick pan in the freezer for 5-10 minutes or until set. Using the foil overhang as handles, lift the bars out of the pan and cut into bars.

**White Chocolate Chunk Macadamia Cookies**

 Betty Crocker

1 cup packed brown sugar

1/2 cup granulated sugar

1/2 cup butter, softened

1/2 cup shortening

1 teaspoon vanilla

1 egg2 1/4 cups flour

1 teaspoon baking soda

1 teaspoon salt

6 ounces white chocolate, cut into 1/4-inch chunks

5 1/2 ounces raw macadamia nuts coarsely chopped & toasted

 Preheat convection oven to 325-degrees.

 Beat sugars, butter, shortening, vanilla and egg with electric mixer on medium speed until light and fluffy. Stir in flour, baking soda and salt. Stir in chocolate and nuts.

 Drop dough by rounded tablespoonfuls about 2 inches apart onto 2 parchment covered baking sheets. Bake 6 minutes then exchange sheets. Bake an additional 6 minutes or until light brown. Cool for 2 minutes; remove from sheets to wire rack.

**Diana’s Peanut Butter Chocolate Stack**

Serves 8 to 12

**READ NOTES AT END OF RECIPE CARD**

1 package fudge brownie mix

3/4 cup fresh, smooth peanut butter

1/2 cup powdered sugar

1/2 cup graham cracker crumbs, 7 squares

1/2 cup butter, softened

[caramel sauce](http://battermeup.blogspot.com/2013/04/caramel-sauce.html) for drizzling

handful of chocolate bits and peanuts for topping

 Baked brownie in 8 x 8-inch pan; cool to room temperature. Refrigerate thoroughly. Using a chef’s knife, trim all edges and discard. Then, carefully cut the brownie in half vertically and then each section in half horizontally. Set aside.

 Mix butter, peanut butter, powdered sugar and cracker crumbs in a food processor bowl until well blended. Layer the peanut butter mixture on the brownie bases. Top with the other half of the fudge brownies and press down so the layers come together, press enough for it to stick but not for the peanut butter to ooze out.

 Top with another layer of peanut butter mixture and sprinkle with chocolate and peanuts.

 Finally drizzle the caramel sauce over the tops.

 Refrigerate to firm -up filling. Remove 5 to 10 minutes before serving.

Fudge brownies are very moist but hard to cut horizontally. You may want to try the “cake” brownie mixes.

 Refrigerate thoroughly

 Use chef’s knife, not serrated.

 Heat knife in hot water for several minutes, dry, cut brownies, clean, reheat briefly, repeat.

 Spray knife lightly with cooking spray, cut brownies, clean, repeat.

**Dark Chocolate Peppermint Brownies**

Makes (16) 24 Arnold Eric Wong

Note: Make a day before serving

(1/2 recipe)

(3/4 cup) 1 1/2 cups flour

(1/4 cup+2tablespoons) 3/4 cup unsweetened cocoa powder

(1/4 teaspoon) 1/2 teaspoon salt

(1/8 teaspoon) 1/4 teaspoon baking powder

(1/2 cup) 1 cup unsalted butter

(3 ounces) 6 ounces bittersweet chocolate, finely chopped

(3/4 cup) 1 1/2 cups sugar

(2 ½) 5 large eggs

(3/4 teaspoon) 1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract

(1/2 teaspoon) 1 teaspoon peppermint extract

(2 ½ ounces) 5 ounces dark chocolate, finely chopped

Coarsely crushed peppermint candies (William Sonoma), very fine pieces sifted out

large candy cane for decoration

 Preheat oven to 300°. Grease a 9- by 13-in. baking pan; set aside. Sift together flour, cocoa, salt, and baking powder into a bowl.

 Microwave butter and bittersweet chocolate in a medium glass bowl on medium setting, stirring often, until melted and smooth, about 1 1/2 minutes.

 Whisk together sugar and eggs in a large bowl until blended. Add extracts and whisk to blend. Stir melted chocolate mixture into egg mixture. Gently fold in flour mixture with a plastic spatula until no streaks remain. Pour batter into prepared pan and spread evenly.

 Bake brownies for 20 to 25 minutes or until toothpick inserted 2-inches from edge come out with a few crumbs sticking

 Melt the dark chocolate in microwave on low setting, stirring occasionally. Put chocolate in a resealable plastic bag, snip off a small corner tip. Drizzle half over brownies evenly and spread with spatula. Sprinkle with candies and drizzle with remaining chocolate. Let cool until chocolate sets, 45 minutes, then cut into squares or refrigerate or freeze. Decorate with large candy cane

**Seriously Soft Molasses Cookies**

* Yield**:** 13 large cookies

2 and 1/4 cups flour

1 and 1/2 teaspoons baking soda

2 teaspoons ground ginger or equal amounts of other spices

1 and 1/4 teaspoons ground cinnamon

1/4 teaspoon ground cloves

1/4 teaspoon nutmeg

1/4 teaspoon salt

3/4 cup unsalted butter, softened to [room temperature](https://sallysbakingaddiction.com/room-temperature-butter/)

1/2 cup packed light or dark brown sugar

1/4 cup granulated sugar

1/4 cup unsulphured or dark molasses

1 large egg, at room temperature

2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract

1/3 cup granulated or coarse sugar, for rolling

 Whisk the flour, baking soda, ginger, cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg, and salt together until combined. Set aside.

 In a large bowl using a hand-held or stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, beat the butter and both sugars together on high speed until creamy and combined, about 2 minutes. Add the molasses and beat until combined. Then add the egg and vanilla extract and beat until combined, about 1 minute. Scrape down the sides and bottom of the bowl as needed.

 On low speed, slowly mix the dry ingredients into the wet ingredients until combined. The cookie dough will be slightly sticky. Cover dough tightly with aluminum foil or plastic wrap and chill for 1 hour and up to 2-3 days.

 Preheat oven to 350°F (177°C). Line two large baking sheets with parchment paper or silicone baking mats.   Set aside.

 Remove cookie dough from the refrigerator. If the cookie dough chilled longer than 2 hours, let it sit at room temperature for at least 30 minutes. The cookies may not spread in the oven if the dough is that cold. Roll cookie dough, 2 Tablespoons each, into balls. Roll each in granulated sugar and arrange 3 inches apart on the baking sheets. Bake for 11-12 minutes or until edges appear set. If the tops aren’t appearing cracked as pictured, remove the baking sheet from the oven and gently bang it on the counter 2-3x. This will help those warm cookies spread out and crack on top. Return to the oven for 1 additional minute.

 Remove from the oven and allow cookies to cool on the baking sheet for 5 minutes before transferring to a wire rack to cool completely.

 Cookies will stay fresh covered at room temperature for 1 week.