



Hassle-free holiday breads and

THE HOLIDAYS are all about decorated trees, brightly wrapped packages, good friends gathered 'round to sing the old familiar carols — and good smells coming from the kitchen.

Our Jam Pastry Puffs use commercial puff pastry. Called millefex, by the French because of its hundreds of paper-thin layers, it is enormously time-consuming and terribly tricky to make from scratch.

But today, there is readily available frozen puff pastry so good that no one, except true purists, could even tell the difference.

Keep the wrapped package in the freezer until about an hour or two before using, then thaw as much as needed (it comes in folded sheets) in the refrigerator until pliable. Do not allow it to come to room temperature or it will be difficult to use and lose much of its flakiness.

When rolling the pastry, be sure to handle it as little as possible and use a sharp knife to cut it in order to preserve the integrity of the many layers

of fat and flour that cause the dramatic puff in the oven.

Then we make simple little pastry sandwiches filled with sweet, jewel-colored jam — a very pretty and fancy look on a cookie tray.

JAM PASTRY PUFFS
1 (9-by-10 inch) sheet frozen puff pastry (about 8 ounces), thawed according to package directions
1 egg
1 teaspoon water
Raspberry or strawberry jam
Apricot or peach jam

Yield: 35 sandwiches.
Place heavy baking sheet in freezer. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
On lightly floured board, roll sheet of pastry to rectangle measuring about 10-by-14 inches. Using long ruler as a guide, cut pastry with fluted cutter into two-inch squares. Transfer to chilled baking sheet and chill in freezer for 10 minutes.
Beat egg with water. Brush chilled squares with egg glaze, being careful

not to drip egg down sides of pastry as this will prevent pastry from rising properly.
Bake in center of oven for 12-15 minutes. Until puffed and golden brown. Remove to rack to cool.
Split each pastry square with small knife. Spread half of bottoms with about 1 teaspoon raspberry jam and other half of bottoms with apricot jam. Replace tops, arrange on a platter for serving.

THE FOLLOWING recipe uses the food processor to make short work of a conventional cookie dough.
We have flavored our Molasses Ginger Sugar Cookies with all the spices that ensure your kitchen will have the traditional smells of the holidays.

MOLASSES GINGER SUGAR COOKIES
2 cups flour
¼ teaspoon baking soda
¼ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon ginger

¼ cinnamon
¼ teaspoon mace
pinch of cloves
¼ cup unsalted butter
¼ cup granulated sugar for dough
1 egg
¼ cup dark molasses
¼ cup granulated sugar for rolling cookies

Yield: 2 ½ dozen cookies.
In food processor, place flour, baking soda, salt, ginger, cinnamon, mace and cloves. Pulse four-five times to sift. Remove sifted ingredients to sheet of waxed paper. Do not wash processor.
Cut butter into about 12 pieces and place in processor with ¼ cup sugar. Process about 30 seconds until mixture is smooth. Add egg and molasses and beat until light and fluffy. Add flour mixture and pulse six-seven times until dry ingredients are blended into dough. Scrape dough onto large piece of waxed paper, flatten to about ¼ inch thick and wrap completely in paper. Place in freezer for 10 minutes. Meanwhile, preheat oven to 350 degrees. Lightly grease two baking

cookies

sheets. Place ¼ cup granulated sugar in small, shallow dish.
Remove half of dough from freezer. Dust hands lightly with flour and pinch off pieces of dough about one inch in diameter. Roll into smooth balls with your hands and then roll each ball in granulated sugar. Place two inches apart on prepared baking sheet. Repeat with other half of dough and remaining sugar.

Bake each sheet in center of preheated oven for 12-15 minutes until tops are rounded and crinkled and cookies are set. (The first sheet of cookies can be baked while you are shaping the second one. If you wish to bake them both at the same time, place on both oven racks and reverse sheets halfway through baking time to ensure even baking.) Cool on racks. Store tightly covered.

Chef Rolf Steiner of Chez Beate and Rolf in California uses this recipe to create his elegant and edible gingerbread house.

GINGERBREAD HOUSE
Dough:
1 pound sugar



Homemade cookies and breads offer the perfect outlet for holiday creativity for the whole family.

24 ounces honey
4 pounds pastry flour
½ tablespoon baking soda
½ tablespoon baking powder
dash salt
1 cup water
1 pound butter
2 tablespoons cinnamon
½ tablespoon ginger
½ tablespoon nutmeg

½ tablespoon cloves
Mix together until well incorporated.
MERINGUE:
1 cup egg whites (clean, without any egg yolk or shell)
1 pound regular sugar

water, constantly whisking, until the mixture starts to warm. Continue whisking gently until mixture feels very hot to the touch and there are no sugar crystals remaining (rub a bit of meringue between forefinger and thumb to determine this).
Then whip mixture with electric

Heat ingredients together over hot

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