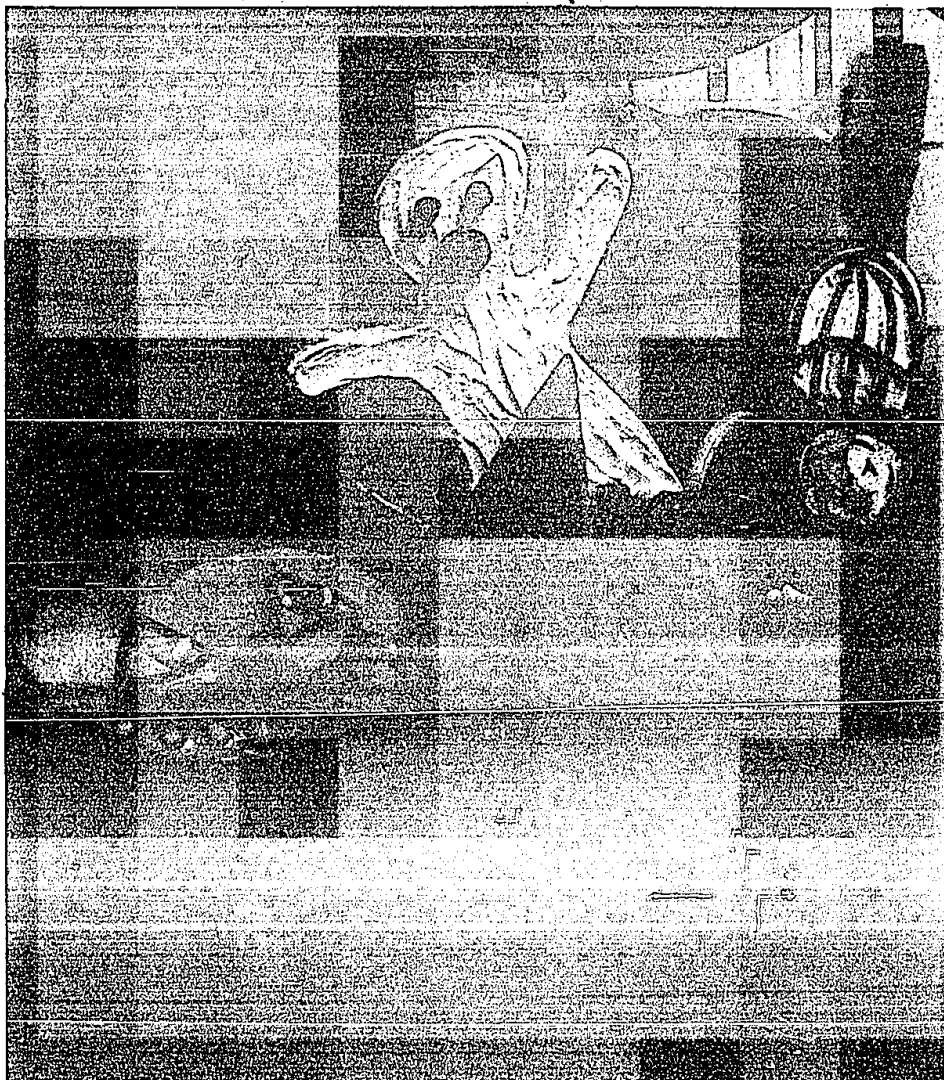


HALLOWEEN FUN WITH CANDY DECORATED COOKIES



As the end of October draws near, thoughts turn to pumpkins, black cats, ghosts and goblins. Halloween, that well-loved celebration that's practically synonymous with candy and parties, gives children and adults alike carte blanche to dress in costume and have good old-fashioned fun.

Little do most people know that the light-hearted customs of feasting and visiting came from ancient New Year's festivals in Wales, Ireland, Scotland and Brittany. October 31st was the Celts' New Year's Eve, when evil spirits were supposed to wander back to their homes. To appease them, villagers would greet these spirits with a banquet. Afterwards, the villagers, disguised in costumes for protection, marched to the edge of town to lead the visiting spirits away.

Today, we present candy to friends and family as gestures of friendship at Halloween. One such fun project for adults and children is making Jumbo Halloween Cookies decorated with candy.

Parents simply cut stencils of ghosts, pumpkins,

witches, cats and other holiday symbols out of stiff cardboard. These are then placed on sugar cookie dough to guide in cutting shapes. After baking and frosting with melted chocolate bars or ornamental icing, kids can decorate the cookies with an assortment of confections such as candy corn, licorice, gum drops and jelly beans.

While in days gone by people would use costumes and torches to remain safe from "evil spirits" on this special night, today parents and children are encouraged to observe safety rules from The National Safety Council and the National Confectioners Association to make sure Halloween is enjoyable for all.

It's best to put reflector tape on light-colored children's costumes and to keep clothes short enough to prevent tripping. Choose face masks that let kids see well. Young children need to have an adult with them when they go door-to-door, and older ones should be alerted to watch for cars, stay close to home and carry a flashlight in case it's dark when they return.

It's especially important to remind children to be careful about where they walk and how they cross streets. Excitement can lead to hasty darts between cars instead of crossing at street corners. Tell them to always stay on the sidewalk and to look in all directions before crossing an intersection. Remind them to walk—not run—and to watch for cars backing out of driveways.

Once back at home, adults should check candy and make sure it's properly wrapped before allowing children to eat it. Then it's time to decorate the Jumbo Halloween cookies, snack on collected treats and play games. Time-tested activities include pinning the tail on the donkey and bobbing for apples. Fruit juices or milk are welcome beverages to go with the food and festivities.

With plenty of candy, a few precautions and an evening of enjoyable activities, Halloween can be a wonderful time for togetherness, as well as safe and fun for all.

JUMBO HALLOWEEN COOKIES

- 6 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup butter or margarine, softened
- 2 cups sugar
- 1 large egg
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- 2/3 cup milk
- Milk chocolate candy bars
- Assorted candies for decoration

In a large bowl stir flour, baking powder and salt together. In another large bowl cream butter and sugar together; beat in egg until light and fluffy. Add vanilla. Add dry ingredients alternately with milk until combined. Cover dough and chill 2 hours. To make cookie patterns, cut Halloween shapes from light weight cardboard. Each shape should be between 5 and 7 inches tall.

Divide dough into four equal portions. On a lightly floured board with a lightly floured rolling pin, roll out one portion of the dough at a time to approximately 3/8-inch thickness. Using the cardboard patterns as guides, cut out cookies with the point of a sharp knife or use Halloween shaped cookie cutters. With a metal spatula, carefully transfer cookies to lightly greased baking sheets. Bake in a preheated 350°F, oven 10 to 12 minutes or until cookies are lightly browned around the edges. Remove to wire racks to cool. When completely cool, frost with Decorator Frosting*. Melt milk chocolate candy bars (6 to 8 ounces) in the top of a double boiler over hot, not boiling, water. Apply chocolate to cookies using a small spatula. Decorate with assorted candies.

Yield: Approximately 3 dozen cookies.

*DECORATOR FROSTING

- 2 1/2 to 3 cups confectioners' sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon cream of tartar
- 2 egg whites
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla
- Assorted food colors

In a medium bowl stir together confectioners' sugar and cream of tartar; add egg whites and vanilla. Beat with a electric mixer or wooden spoon, until frosting holds its shape. Cover surface of frosting with a damp cloth when not in use to prevent crust. Divide frosting into small portions and tint with food coloring, as desired. Spread a thin layer of frosting on each cookie with a small flexible spatula. Decorate immediately with candies, pressing candies gently into the frosting. Allow cookies to dry on wire racks. Store in airtight containers at room temperature. Do not refrigerate.