

Plan a shopping
vacation during
the holidays. B8

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Side dish

Cooking for pals

Need recipes for good food for all seasons? Then this recipe brochure is for you. "Cooking for Friends" features four fabulous, easy-to-prepare beef recipes. To get your copy, send a self-addressed, stamped, No. 10 business size envelope (one brochure per envelope) to: National Cattlemen's Beef Association, Dept. FC-CFF, P.O. Box 670, Bloomington, IL 61708-0670.

Cheese please

You can't go wrong with cheese, one of America's favorite comfort foods. Easy, cheesy gifts are simple to create and ideal for almost everyone on your list.



Present someone special with a cheese board with wedges of tangy cheddar, zesty Monterey Jack and savory Parmesan and attach cards for your favorite cheese recipes. Visit www.lovecheese.com for a variety of "grate" recipes from baked brie to mascarpone fondue.

Hanukkah pairings

For tips on pairing holiday foods with wine, check out www.winematters.com. For Hanukkah, Louise Fitzer, a California-based cooking teacher and author of "Jewish Holiday Feasts," suggests that a crisp California Chardonnay partners well with latkes topped with tart apple sauce or sour cream and a Cabernet Sauvignon or a Merlot are a great match for the brisket.

Turkey time

Don't panic. If you're cooking Thanksgiving dinner for the first time, click and go to www.oceanspray.com for recipes, tips and advice. Here's a recipe for leftover turkey and cranberry sauce.

TURKEY SALAD WITH CRANBERRY FETA DRESSING

- 1 head red leaf lettuce
- 12-16 slices cooked turkey
- 1/2 cup Ocean Spray® Craisins® Original Sweetened Dried Cranberries
- 1/2 cup chopped pecans
- 1 cup whole berry cranberry sauce
- 2 tablespoons vinegar
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 cup crumbled feta cheese
- 1/2 cup oil

Line 4 salad plates with lettuce. Arrange 3 or 4 slices of turkey on plates. Sprinkle with 2 tablespoons each of sweetened dried cranberries and pecans. Set aside. Put cranberry sauce, vinegar, sugar and half of the feta cheese in a blender. Blend for a few seconds on high speed. Remove the cap in the center of the blender lid, place lid back on blender. With the blender running, slowly add oil through the hole in the lid. Stir in remaining feta cheese. Serve salad with dressing drizzled on top or on the side. Makes 4 salads.

'Tis the season to bake cookies

BY LANA MINI
STAFF WRITER

Dolores Padgett and her crew at Baker's Rack in Plymouth are laying out cookie cutters, stocking up on chocolate, and getting out the red and green sprinkles in anticipation of cookie orders that will start pouring in after Thanksgiving.

"During Thanksgiving people want pies," she said. "At Christmas, we sell a lot of cookies."

Mary Denning is also preparing for the holiday cookie rush at Mary Denning's Pastry Shoppe in Westland. Even though many cookies aren't too difficult to make at home—like chocolate chip or thumbprint—many people are just too busy to bake.

"People have bought cookies from me for their cookie exchange," Denning said with a laugh. "They don't tell anyone that they were purchased...our cookies are baked fresh with homemade dough."

Good cookies can still be made quickly.

Gadgets like the cookie press will shape sugar cookie dough easily. Denning says simple recipes like butter cookies that have limited ingredients are difficult to ruin.

"A good basic butter cookie is easy. And once you master the recipe, it can be built on."

The most common cookie error is over-mixing, Denning said.

Cream and butter are the cookie "cement" that is creamed first. Eggs give the lightness, and the dry ingredients are the "brick," she said.

"There is a reason why we mix things in the order listed by the recipe. Some ingredients need only a little bit of mixing. If not, the cookies will not be right."

Over-mixing can add too much air to dense doughs like chocolate chip and ruin the consistency, said Jeff Pavlik, owner of Farmington Bakery in Farmington. Over-whipping can cause the dough to spread to thin or thick, he said.

The second big error is over-baking.

"Cookies bake on the sheet for at least one minute after they are removed from the oven," Denning said.

Her baking tip—always use real butter for the best flavor.

Keeping butter at room temperature is also crucial, said Pavlik. Heating cold butter in a microwave is not a good idea because it results in uneven dough texture.

TEDIOUS COOKIES ARE POPULAR

The most popular types of cookies are also the most tedious to bake, Pavlik said. For example, cutout cookies are time-consuming because the dough is constantly being rolled and rerolled. Farmington Bakery sells many hand-cut holiday cookies to customers looking to save time, he said.

Gingerbread cookies are tedious to bake and therefore are big-sellers for Pavlik. For families who like to decorate gingerbread cookies, Farmington Bakery also sells them undecorated.

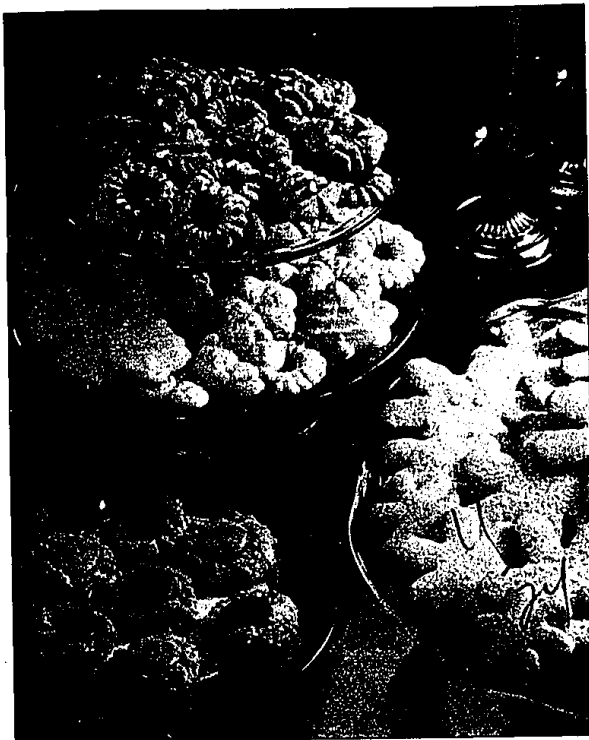
The popularity of the cookie flavor depends on the age group, said Denning, who lives in Garden City and is the advanced pastry instructor at Henry Ford Community College in Dearborn.

"The most popular are definitely shortbread and sugar cutouts," Padgett said. "Candy canes, Santa faces and wreath shapes." They sell more than 90 dozen of them.

At Denning's shop, children almost always choose cookies with either frosting, M&M's or sprinkles. Those toppings can be added to a simple butter cookie.

Adults, she said, request old-fashioned comfort cookies—chocolate chip, gingerbread, macaroon, oatmeal and peanut butter.

Just last week, Denning took an order for chocolate chip cookies that will be sent to an American serviceman in Kuwait who is missing Christmas in



Pictured clockwise from top to bottom: Cinnamon apple butter spritz, orange spritz, almond snowflakes and thumbprint cookies. All recipes are simple with no more than 10 ingredients in each and require few preparation steps.

Michigan this year.

For holiday parties, she recommends heavier fruit cookies, such as cherry nut, date or orange walnut. Russian tea cakes topped with confectioner's sugar can add a touch of elegance to cookie platters, Denning said.

Bar cookies are the easiest to make at home for those who still want home-baked treats, Pavlik said.

"Mix the dough, put it in a greased baking dish and bake all at once," Pavlik said. "It's a lot easier than working egg whites for meringue cookies or preparing gingerbread dough."

FAMILY EVENTS

Parents and children can work together to decorate a gingerbread cookie house with frosting, candy and other sugary treats 1-3 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 1, or 6:30-8:30 p.m. Monday, Dec. 2 at Denning's shop, 8306 N. Wayne Road, Westland. The cost is \$30. Call (734) 261-3680 for information. Reservations recommended.

"The kids love it because they

can take home their creation," she said. "Food brings people together...and isn't that what the holidays are about?"

The Kitchen Witch, 134 E. Main in Northville, is offering a holiday cookie baking class 7-9 p.m. Monday, Dec. 2. Participants will learn to make

cuccidati, an Italian fig cookie that goes nicely with espresso, raspberry-linzer cookies, and a vanilla almond "cigarette" with kahlua-chocolate ganache and brandy whipped cream. The cost is \$30, call (248) 948-0488.

Everyone is cut out to make cute holiday cookies

CHOCOLATE COOKIE BEARS

- 1 cup granulated sugar
 - 8 tablespoons (one stick) butter softened
 - 1 cup semi-sweet chocolate pieces, melted
 - 2 eggs
 - 1 teaspoon vanilla
 - 2 cups Quaker oats (quick or old-fashioned), uncooked
 - 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
 - 1 teaspoon baking powder
 - 1/4 teaspoon salt, optional
- Ready to spread frosting of

your choice Assorted candies like M&M's or gum drops for decorating

In large bowl, beat sugar and butter until creamy. Add chocolate, eggs and vanilla. Beat well. Add oats, flour, baking powder and salt and mix well. Cover and chill for two hours.

When ready to bake, heat oven to 350 degrees. To make bears, shape dough into one-

PLEASE SEE COOKIES, B2

Choose zinfandel for your Thanksgiving feast

Thanksgiving, like the Fourth of July, is uniquely American. We give thanks for all the blessings bestowed on those of us who are privileged to call ourselves Americans.

As one of few varieties grown almost exclusively in the United States, zinfandel is now recognized as a great American tradition. Call it a taste of Americana in its own right. As



Focus on Wine
Ray & Eleanor Heald

such, zinfandel is a great wine for Thanksgiving. Those we've recommended in the Wine Picks that follow have the balance and richness to stand up

to the big tastes of foods in a traditional Thanksgiving feast.

Yet, over the years, Thanksgiving foods have evolved into a complex collection of aromas, flavors and textures that reflect the multi-cultural diversity of America. Because zinfandel is rich, but not too rich, and also complemented by a spicy character, it stands up well to ethnic foods.

ZINFANDEL'S ROOTS

Although it is one of California's oldest grape varieties, zinfandel is not a native species. We know that early zinfandel plantings flourished in the soils and climate of locations such as Sonoma County, Calif., where the first wave of European emigrants planted it. The gold rush era saw it flourish in California's Amador

foothills, and this continues today.

For many years, zinfandel's exact origin was up for academic debate. Its roots were traced to southern Italy and eastern Europe. DNA testing in the early 1990s indicated that it was a cousin of the primitive grape. Further research led scientists to Croatia, where renowned grapevine geneticist

PLEASE SEE WINE, B2

Are there cobwebs on your cultural calendar?



Turn to today's ARTS section. Get inspired with ideas for some worthwhile things to do.