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## Do it yourself Chanukah: Gifts from your kitchen

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By Joan Kekst  
Food Writer

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Instead of the usual store-bought gifts, try giving friends and family some of these homemade treats.

### **BASIC BUTTER COOKIES** – *Dairy or Pareve*

From Amy Kekst

1 lb unsalted butter (recommended)

or pareve margarine

1-1/3 C sugar

3/4 t salt

3 large egg yolks

2 t vanilla

4-2/3 C all-purpose flour

Preheat oven to 350° F.

In the large bowl of an electric mixer, beat butter or margarine, sugar and salt until light and fluffy. Add yolks one at a time and vanilla. Gradually beat in 4-1/2 C flour until batter is well combined. Divide dough in half and chill in two plastic bags several hours or overnight. Roll to 1/8" thick. Dough can be cut into a variety of shapes with cookie cutters and baked plain for 10-12 minutes to make 60 cookies. Or else, use dough for the following two recipes:

### **RASPBERRY MOGEN DAVIDS** – *Dairy or Pareve*

Half the dough from "Basic Butter

Cookie" recipe (above)

1/2 C seedless raspberry jam

1/3 C chopped almonds

Preheat oven to 350° F. Remove one half of the chilled dough from the plastic bag. Roll dough into a 15" square, 1/8" thick. Spread with a thin layer of jam. Cut dough with a sharp knife into 2 – 2-1/2" squares. Halve each square into a triangle. Sprinkle half the triangles with chopped almonds over the jam.

Arrange on a baking sheet, about 1/2" apart. Bake about 12 minutes until golden. Cool briefly on baking sheet; place almond triangles over jam coated triangles to form a Mogen David. Cool thoroughly on a rack. Continue with remaining dough. Makes about 4 dozen cookies.

#### **APRICOT FILLED CHANUKAH CUT-OUT COOKIES** – *Dairy or Pareve*

Half the dough from "Basic Butter

Cookie" recipe (above)

2/3 C apricot jam

Preheat oven to 350° F. Use one half the chilled dough from the plastic bag. Roll dough into a 10" square, 1/8" thick. Chill on a baking sheet until firm. Cut desired shapes with a 2" cookie cutter. On half the cookies, cut out a small hole or shape to form an opening. Re-roll scraps. Bake cookies in batches 8-10 minutes until golden. Cool on a rack.

Warm the jam; strain through a fine sieve. Spread about 1/4 t jam nearly to the edges of the solid cookies; cover with the cutout cookie. Allow cookies to set and store between layers of wax paper. Makes about 30 double-layer cookies. Cookies will keep frozen in airtight containers 6 weeks. Decorate after defrosting.

#### **CHOCOLATE SESAME CANDY** – *Pareve*

Vegetable cooking spray

1/2 C currants

1 C boiling water

8 oz high-quality semi-sweet

chocolate, finely chopped

3-1/2 T tahini

18 candy violets

Lightly spray 18 petit (1") candy paper cup liners with vegetable spray.

Soak currants in boiling water 5 minutes; drain and pat dry with paper towels. Melt chocolate with 3 T tahini in a metal bowl set on a saucepan of simmering water, stir until smooth. Stir in currants. Add more tahini if too thick. Spoon chocolate into paper cups and cool 5 minutes.

Decorate tops by dipping a wooden skewer in remaining chocolate and swirling chocolate over the top of each cup; top with a candy violet. Candies keep covered for one week.

#### **SPICY COCKTAIL NUTS** – *Pareve*

2 T olive oil + more for coating sheet

1/2 t ground ginger

1/2 t curry powder

1/4 t cayenne pepper

2 T sugar

1 T honey

3/4 C walnut halves

3/4 C pecan halves

Line baking sheet with foil; lightly coat with oil. Heat 2 T oil in a large non-stick skillet on medium heat. Add ginger, curry powder and cayenne pepper; sauté until fragrant, about 5 seconds. Stir in sugar and honey. Add nuts and stir until honey is amber colored and nuts are well coated, about 6 minutes.

Transfer nut mixture to prepared baking sheet; quickly separate the nuts with a spoon. Sprinkle with salt to taste, and cool. Store in an airtight container for two weeks. Makes 1 -1/2 C.

### **CANDIED FRUIT PEELS** – *Pareve*

4 large oranges, or 3 grapefruit or 6 lemons

(these fruits yield about 3 C candied peels)

2 C water

2 C sugar

Cut off ends of fruit so each piece stands on the counter. Remove the zests in 1/2" wide, long strips with a sharp knife (zesters make strips that are too narrow); try to avoid the white pith.

In a medium saucepan, cover fruit rind strips with cold water and bring to a boil on medium heat. Reduce heat, and simmer gently 5 minutes. Drain, rinse under cold water, and return peels to pan. Repeat the procedure.

In a large saucepan, combine sugar and water, stirring constantly until sugar dissolves. Add the blanched peels and simmer uncovered about one hour, stirring occasionally. Cook until peels are translucent. Drain thoroughly and cool; separate peels with a fork. Toss the peels in a bowl of granulated sugar until coated. Dry overnight on a rack.

Store in airtight containers at room temperature. Keeps one month.

### **BESOMIN BAGS** – *Kids love to make these!*

6 cinnamon sticks, broken in small pieces

2 T whole cloves

2 T preserved ginger, chopped

8 bay leaves

8 pieces of nylon net or tiny nylon bags

Combine the spices in a small bowl. Add a few

dried flowers if available.

Place two pieces of net together; divide spice mixture among four sets of fabric. Gather it

together and tie with a ribbon. Use to conclude Shabbat or to throw during a simchah in the synagogue.

**HOMEMADE PLAY DOUGH - NON-EDIBLE!**

2 C flour

2 C water

1 C salt

4 t cream of tartar

2 T cooking oil

Food coloring

Combine all ingredients except food coloring in 6 -qt heavy pot. Heat slowly, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon. When mixture is lumpy and thick, remove from heat and spoon onto waxed paper. Add food coloring (divide dough to make more colors). Knead until smooth. Chill in plastic bags.

To make mobile or hanging shapes, roll one piece at a time to 1/2" thick. Cut in desired shapes with cookie cutter. Poke a hole with a pencil point near top of decorations for a string to hang. Make waxed paper pattern to cut out a large menorah or other shapes.

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