

PECAN DIAMONDS

Makes four dozen 2-inch or eight dozen 1-inch diamonds

Cookie Dough:

1¼ cups (2½ sticks) unsalted butter, softened
¾ cup sugar
1 whole egg
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
3⅔ cups cake flour, sifted

Filling:

2 cups (4 sticks) unsalted butter, cubed
2 cups light brown sugar, packed
½ cup sugar
1 cup honey
½ cup heavy cream
7½ cups pecans, chopped



Cookie Dough:

Cream together butter and sugar in a mixer bowl with the paddle attachment on medium speed until smooth and light, 1 to 2 minutes. Gradually incorporate egg and vanilla, stopping mixer and scraping bowl as necessary.

Add flour and mix on low speed until just blended, about 30 seconds. Do not over-mix.

Place dough onto parchment paper or a lightly floured surface and shape into a flat square. Wrap dough well with plastic wrap and refrigerate at least an hour.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F and line bottom of a 15-inch by 10-inch jelly roll pan with parchment.

Roll dough out to a rectangle 17 inches by 12 inches by ⅛-inch thick. Transfer the rolled dough to the baking pan, gently pressing it to the pan. Trim the edges with a paring knife, and prick the bottom of the dough with the prongs of a fork to prevent bubbling during baking.

Bake until dough is firm but has no color, about 10 to 12 minutes. Cool dough while you make the filling.

Pecan Filling:

Place the butter, sugars, honey, and cream into a heavy-bottom saucepot. Bring mixture to a boil over medium-high heat and cook, stirring constantly, until it reaches 240 degrees F on a candy thermometer. Remove pot from the heat, add pecans, and stir until fully incorporated. Immediately pour into the pre-baked crust and spread into an even layer.

Bake in 350 degree F oven until the filling bubbles evenly across the surface and the crust is golden brown, about 40 minutes. Cool thoroughly before cutting.

Remove from pan using a knife to release the edges and invert the slab onto the back of a sheet pan. Transfer to a cutting board by flipping it over so it is right side up. Trim off the edges and cut into 1-inch or 2-inch diamonds.

The bars store well at room temperature, but can also be refrigerated or frozen as long as wrapped airtight.

Recipe from the bakeshops of the CIA.
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PEPPERMINT BARK

Makes one 12-inch by 16-inch sheet

8 ounces candy canes

8 ounces dark chocolate,
tempered **or** dark chocolate
coating, melted*

1/8 teaspoon peppermint oil

8 ounces white chocolate,
tempered **or** white chocolate
coating, melted*

*Either tempered or melted coating
may be used to create this recipe.



Place the candy canes in a plastic bag. Crush lightly using a rolling pin.

Mix the dark chocolate with the mint oil.

Spread the dark chocolate-oil mixture into a 12-inch by 16-inch baking sheet lined with parchment paper using an offset palette knife.

When the dark chocolate has set, spread the white chocolate on top of the dark in an even layer. This may be done immediately, or any time within an hour of the dark chocolate setting.

Sprinkle the crushed candy canes uniformly onto the surface of the white chocolate before it sets.

Allow to set at room temperature for 1 hour or longer. Break into pieces to serve.

Recipe from Peter Greweling, C.M.B., C.H.E., professor in baking and pastry arts at the CIA.

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MUDSLIDE COOKIES

Makes 24 large cookies

Flourless cooking spray for greasing
¾ cup plus 2 tablespoons cake flour
1 tablespoon baking powder
⅛ teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon powdered instant coffee
1 tablespoon boiling water
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
7 ounces unsweetened chocolate,
coarsely chopped
6 ounces bittersweet chocolate, coarsely chopped
8 tablespoons (1 stick) unsalted butter
7 large eggs
2¾ cups sugar
2 cups chopped walnuts
1½ cups bittersweet chocolate chips



Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Lightly spray cookie sheets with cooking spray or line them with parchment paper.

Sift the flour, baking powder, and salt into a bowl and set aside.

Combine the instant coffee and boiling water to make a paste. Blend in the vanilla extract.

Melt the unsweetened chocolate, chopped bittersweet chocolate, and the butter in a saucepan over low heat or in a bowl in the microwave in 15- to 20-second intervals. Gently stir to blend.

In a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, beat together the eggs, sugar, and coffee paste mixture on high speed until light in texture and thick, 6 to 8 minutes. Add the chocolate mixture with the machine running on medium speed. On low speed, mix in the dry ingredients until just blended. Mix in the walnuts and chocolate chips until blended. Scrape down the bowl as needed during mixing to blend evenly.

Using a ¼-cup measure as a scoop, fill it with dough, level it, and drop the dough onto a prepared cookie sheet, leaving 3 to 4 inches between the cookies.

In batches, bake the cookies until they are cracked on top but still slightly moist, rotating the pans as necessary to bake the cookies evenly, 14 minutes. Allow the cookies to cool slightly on the baking sheet before transferring them to wire racks to cool completely.

Adapted from the CIA's *Baking at Home* cookbook.

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ANISE BISCOTTI

Makes 32 biscotti

Flourless cooking spray for greasing
2 cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
3 large eggs
¾ cup sugar
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon anise extract
1¼ cups whole almonds
2 tablespoons aniseed



Preheat the oven to 300 degrees F. Lightly spray a cookie sheet with cooking spray or line with parchment paper.

Sift the flour and baking soda into a bowl and set aside.

In a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, whip the eggs, sugar, salt, and anise extract on high speed until thick and light in texture, about 4 minutes. On low speed, mix in the dry ingredients until just incorporated. Add the almonds and aniseed and blend until evenly combined, scraping down the bowl with a rubber spatula as needed.

Form the dough into a 4-inch by 16-inch log and place on the prepared cookie sheet. Bake until light golden brown, 30 minutes. Remove the pan from the oven and let cool for 10 minutes.

Lower the oven temperature to 275 degrees F. Using a serrated knife, cut the log crosswise into ½-inch-thick slices. Place the sliced cookies on 2 unlined cookie sheets and bake until golden brown and crisp, 40 minutes. Transfer the cookies to wire racks and let cool completely.

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COCONUT MACAROONS

Makes about 32 macaroons

- 1 cup sugar (divided use)
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 3½ cups shredded unsweetened coconut
- 6 large egg whites
- 2 teaspoons grated orange zest
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract



Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Line cookie sheets with parchment paper.

Combine $\frac{1}{3}$ cup of the sugar with the flour and set aside.

Combine the remaining $\frac{2}{3}$ cup sugar, the coconut, and egg whites in the top of a double boiler. Heat over simmering water, stirring constantly, until the mixture thickens and holds together, about 3 minutes. Remove from the heat. Fold in the flour mixture, orange zest, and vanilla extract.

Drop tablespoonfuls of batter onto the prepared cookie sheets, spacing them 2 inches apart and shaping into neat mounds as needed.

In batches, bake until the macaroons are a light golden brown on the outside but still soft enough to give slightly when you press them lightly with your fingertip, 20 to 25 minutes. Transfer the macaroons, still on the parchment paper, to a wire rack to cool completely. When cool, they will lift off easily.

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SOFT CARAMELS

Makes 1½ pounds

Flourless cooking spray for greasing

2 cups sugar

1 cup heavy cream

¾ cup whole or low-fat milk

Large zest strips from ½ orange

½ vanilla bean, split lengthwise

⅓ cup light corn syrup

1 tablespoon unsalted butter



Lightly coat a 9-inch-square baking pan with cooking spray. Cut two 9-inch by 16-inch rectangles of parchment paper. Lay one strip of the parchment in the baking pan, pressing it to the bottom and sides.

Lightly coat the parchment with cooking spray. Lay the second parchment rectangle across the pan in the opposite direction to form a cross. Press the parchment to the bottom and sides of the pan and lightly coat with cooking spray. You should have a few inches of paper overhang on each side of the pan.

Combine the sugar, cream, milk, zest, and vanilla bean in a large, heavy saucepan. Bring the mixture to a boil over medium heat, stirring constantly. Once the mixture begins to boil, add the corn syrup while continuing to stir. Continue cooking until the mixture reaches a medium golden brown, 245 degrees F on a candy thermometer, the firm ball stage.

Pour the mixture immediately into the prepared pan, remove the vanilla bean and orange zest, and cool to room temperature. Using greased kitchen shears or a greased sharp knife, cut into squares.

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TURTLES

Makes 20 pieces

Unsalted butter for greasing
100 pecan halves or 100 whole cashews, toasted
(about 1 pound)
One 14-ounce can sweetened condensed milk
1 cup light corn syrup
10 ounces bittersweet chocolate,
coarsely chopped
1 tablespoon vegetable oil



Line baking sheets with parchment paper and coat the paper lightly with butter. Arrange all of the pecan halves or cashews on the parchment paper in groups of 5, with 1 piece forming the head and 4 pieces as the legs of a turtle. Make sure that all the nuts in each group touch in the center.

Combine the sweetened condensed milk and corn syrup in a heavy 3-quart saucepan. Cook the mixture over medium heat, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon, until the mixture turns the color of medium caramel, a deep beige or light tan. Remove from the heat.

Grease 2 serving spoons lightly. Working quickly, very carefully spoon 1 tablespoon of the hot caramel mixture onto each group of nuts to hold them together and form the body of the turtle. Let cool thoroughly, about 1 hour at room temperature.

Melt the chocolate in a double boiler or microwave. Stir in the oil. Use a spoon or parchment paper cone to drizzle or pipe the chocolate over the caramel, completely covering the caramel and forming each turtle shell. Let the turtles set at room temperature until firm, or place them in the freezer for about 3 minutes to set the chocolate.

Note: Store the candies at room temperature in an airtight container.

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SAND COOKIES

Makes 42 cookies

½ cup confectioners' sugar, sifted
½ cup butter, softened
½ teaspoon vanilla extract
2 tablespoons lemon zest, grated
2 cups cake flour
¼ cup milk
½ cup sugar, coarse



Using an electric mixer with the paddle attachment, cream together the sugar, butter, vanilla extract, and lemon zest on high speed until smooth and light, about 3 minutes.

Add the flour all at once and mix on low speed until combined.

Divide the dough in half and roll into 6-inch-long cylinders (they should be 1¼ inches in diameter). At this point the cookies may be tightly wrapped in plastic wrap and frozen or refrigerated for later use or they may be prepared for baking.

To bake the cookies, preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Brush the cylinders of cookie dough with milk and roll them in the coarse sugar.

Cut the logs into ¼-inch thick slices and place them on a parchment-lined cookie sheet.

Bake for 12 minutes or until light golden brown.

Adapted from the CIA's *Gourmet Meals in Minutes* cookbook.

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CHOCOLATE CHUNK COOKIES

Makes 16 cookies

1½ cups all-purpose flour
½ teaspoon baking soda
¾ teaspoon salt
½ cup butter, softened
½ cup sugar
⅓ cup light brown sugar
1 egg
½ tablespoon vanilla extract
1 cup semi-sweet chocolate chunks



Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F.

Line 2 cookie sheets with parchment paper.

Sift together the flour, baking soda, and salt.

Cream the butter and sugars on medium speed with the paddle attachment, scraping down the bowl periodically, until the mixture is smooth and light in color, about 5 minutes.

Combine the egg and vanilla. Add to the butter-sugar mixture and mix until fully incorporated, scraping down the bowl as needed. On low speed, mix in the sifted dry ingredients and the chocolate chunks until just incorporated.

Scale the dough into 2-tablespoon portions and place onto prepared cookie sheets. Alternatively, the dough may be shaped into a 16-inch-long log, rolled tightly in plastic wrap, and refrigerated until firm enough to slice. The chilled log may be sliced into 16 pieces and arranged on the prepared cookie sheets in even rows.

Bake at 375 degrees F until golden brown around the edges, about 12 to 14 minutes. Cool completely on cookie sheets.

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GINGERBREAD COOKIES WITH ROYAL ICING

Makes about 24 cookies

Flourless cooking spray
3¾ cups all-purpose flour plus extra for dusting
2 teaspoons baking soda
1½ teaspoons ground ginger
1½ teaspoons ground allspice
1 teaspoon salt
8 tablespoons (1 stick) unsalted butter,
at room temperature
¾ cup tightly packed dark brown sugar
½ cup honey
2 large eggs

Royal Icing (optional, recipe follows)



Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F. Lightly spray cookie sheets with cooking spray or line them with parchment paper. Sift together the flour, baking soda, ginger, allspice, and salt. Set aside.

In a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, cream together the butter, brown sugar, and honey on medium speed until smooth, about 2 minutes. Add the eggs and mix until smooth and light, another 2 to 3 minutes. Add the sifted dry ingredients and mix on low speed just until the dough is evenly mixed.

Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured work surface, pat into an even disk, and chill until firm, at least 10 minutes. Roll out the dough to a ¼-inch thickness. Use 5½-inch cookie cutters to cut out cookies. Transfer to the prepared cookie sheets, spacing them about 1 inch apart.

Bake the cookies until they are firm, about 12 to 14 minutes, depending on size of cutter used. Transfer to wire racks and let cool completely before decorating, if desired. Bake the remaining dough in batches as directed.

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ROYAL ICING

Makes about 1 cup

2 large egg whites

1/8 teaspoon cream of tartar

2 1/2 cups confectioners' sugar, sifted

Liquid or paste food coloring(s)
as needed (optional)

In the clean, grease-free bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, beat the egg whites on low speed just until they become loose, about 1 minute. Add the cream of tartar and continue mixing on low speed until the whites become frothy, about 2 minutes. Add the confectioners' sugar gradually with the mixer on low speed. Continue to mix until the icing holds a soft peak and is dull in appearance, about 2 minutes. The icing is ready to use for piping lines. Or, add a small amount of water until the icing reaches a looser consistency for flooding, or filling in, an outline. If desired, divide the icing among smaller bowls and add coloring(s).

If you won't be using the icing right away, take the following steps to keep the icing from drying out: Clean the sides of the bowl or container to remove any drips; if a dry crust develops on the bowl, small pieces can drop into the icing and clog the tip of your pastry bag or parchment paper cone. Place a dampened paper towel directly on the surface of the icing and then cover the bowl very tightly with plastic wrap. Refrigerate for up to 5 days.

Note: You may prefer to use pasteurized egg whites in this recipe to eliminate any food safety concerns.

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