

Grandma Sylvia's Salt Butter Cookies

SUE GRAPEL | CHAPPAQUA, NEW YORK

Made with salted butter and a touch of whiskey, these chocolate-filled cookie sandwiches are unusual and old-fashioned. They are similar to a traditional French butter cookie, or *sablé*, which is often used as a sandwich cookie. These were clearly special cookies in Sue's family: "When I was 16 years old, I was diagnosed with a rare tumor in my leg. I was very lucky and the doctor was able to save my leg. Grandma showed up at the hospital with a large tin filled with her special cookies for the doctor. Years later, when I brought my son to the same doctor, he remembered my grandmother and her special cookies."

MAKES 36 COOKIES

COOKIES

- 2 large egg yolks
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon whiskey
- 16 tablespoons (2 sticks) salted butter, softened
- ²/₃ cup granulated sugar
- 2¹/₄ cups all-purpose flour

FILLING

- 1 ounce unsweetened chocolate, chopped
- ¹/₄ cup water
- 2 cups confectioners' sugar

1. For the cookies: Adjust an oven rack to the middle position and heat the oven to 350 degrees. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Whisk the yolks, vanilla, and whiskey together in a measuring cup.

2. With an electric mixer at medium-high speed, beat the butter and granulated sugar together until fluffy, about 2 minutes. Reduce the speed to medium, add the yolk mixture, and beat until combined. Add the flour and beat until incorporated. Shape the dough into

³/₄-inch balls and space half the balls 1 inch apart on the prepared baking sheet. Bake until lightly browned around the edges, 10 to 12 minutes. Cool the cookies on the baking sheet for 2 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely, about 30 minutes. Repeat with the remaining dough balls.

3. For the filling: Combine the chocolate and water in a small saucepan and stir over low heat until smooth, about 5 minutes. Off the heat, whisk in the confectioners' sugar until smooth.

4. Following the photos, turn half of the cookies over (flat-side up) and spread with about 1 teaspoon of the filling. Top with another cookie. Let the filling set until hardened, about 20 minutes. (The cookies can be stored in an airtight container for up to 3 days.)

Notes from the Test Kitchen

These cookies have a wonderful sandy texture and rich butter flavor. The chocolate filling is a sweet complement to the simple cookie. Be sure to use a fresh or cooled baking sheet for each batch.

Wacky Cake

THE EDITORS OF COOK'S COUNTRY

During both world wars, butter, sugar, milk, and eggs were often in short supply, leading American women to devise a variety of "make-do" cakes like this one. We couldn't understand how this recipe earned its name until we found it in *The Time Reader's Book of Recipes*, a collection of reader recipes compiled by the editors of *Time* magazine in 1949. Mrs. Donald Adam of Detroit, Michigan, submitted this strange recipe, which called for mixing the dry ingredients—flour, cocoa powder, sugar, salt, and baking soda—right in the baking pan. If that wasn't strange enough, three holes—two small and one large—were made in the dry mix. Into the large hole went melted vegetable shortening, while vanilla and vinegar were destined for the smaller holes. Cold water was poured over everything, then the whole mess was stirred and popped into the oven. How does this strange recipe work? Without eggs, this cake depends on the last-minute reaction of vinegar and baking soda to lift the thick batter. The three holes ensure that the dry ingredients (including the baking soda) remain dry until the last possible second. The lift provided by the baking soda and vinegar reaction is fleeting, and the

recipe's odd mixing method ensures that the batter gets into the oven quickly.

SERVES 6 TO 8

1¹/₂ cups all-purpose flour
3³/₄ cup sugar
1¹/₄ cup natural cocoa powder
3³/₄ teaspoon baking soda
1¹/₂ teaspoon salt
5 tablespoons vegetable oil
1 tablespoon white vinegar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 cup water
Confectioners' sugar for dusting

1. Adjust an oven rack to the middle position and heat the oven to 350 degrees. Grease an 8-inch square baking pan.
 2. Whisk the flour, sugar, cocoa powder, baking soda, and salt in the prepared pan. Following the photos, make one large and two small craters in the dry ingredients. Add the oil to the large crater and vinegar and vanilla separately to the small craters. Pour the water into the pan and mix until just a few streaks of flour remain. Immediately put the pan in the oven.
 3. Bake until a toothpick inserted in the center of the cake comes out with a few moist crumbs attached, about 30 minutes. Cool in the pan, then dust with confectioners' sugar. (The cake can be stored at room temperature for up to 3 days.)
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A WACKY MIXING METHOD

1. Make one large and two small craters in the dry mix. Pour oil into the large crater, then vinegar and vanilla into the smaller craters. Pour the water over everything.
2. Using a wooden spoon or spatula, mix the batter, taking care not to overmix; the batter should still contain a few streaks of flour.

Just Chicken Pie

DEENA STOVALL | GURNEE, ILLINOIS

This is no ordinary chicken pot pie. It's a hearty double-crust pie packed with chicken (and cheese)—and with nary a pea or carrot in sight. Deena first sampled a pie like this in 1979 in Keokuk, Iowa. New to the area, she attended a spring bazaar where the line to get in wound around the building. Recalling the moment, Deena said, "After waiting for 10 minutes or so, I asked the woman in front of me, 'Is the line to get in always this long?' She replied, 'This isn't the line to get in. This is the line for the best chicken pie you will ever eat.' And yes, it WAS worth the wait in line. I had never eaten a 'chicken only' pie, and spent about two years looking for a recipe. I raised seven daughters on this pie and also ran a catering business. I've sold hundreds, maybe thousands, of my version of the Keokuk Bazaar Chicken Pie."

SERVES 6 TO 8

2¹/₂ pounds bone-in, skin-on split chicken breasts
Salt and pepper
8 tablespoons (1 stick) unsalted butter
1 celery rib, chopped fine
2 garlic cloves, minced
1¹/₃ cup all-purpose flour
1 (12-ounce) can evaporated milk
2 cups low-sodium chicken broth
1 teaspoon grated lemon zest
3 scallions, chopped
1 recipe Double-Crust Pie Dough,
bottom crust fit into a 9-inch pie plate, top crust rolled to a 12-inch circle and refrigerated
(see page 175)
3³/₄ cup shredded sharp cheddar cheese
1 large egg, beaten, for brushing the top of the pie

1. Adjust an oven rack to the middle position and heat the oven to 400 degrees. Cover a rimmed baking sheet with foil.
2. Pat the chicken dry with paper towels and season with salt and pepper. Place on the prepared pan, skin-side up, and roast until the temperature registers 160 degrees, 35 to 40 minutes. Let cool to room temperature, remove and discard the skin, and cut the meat from the bone and shred the chicken into 2-inch pieces. Reduce the oven temperature to 350 degrees.
3. Melt the butter in a large saucepan over medium heat. Cook the celery until softened, about 5 minutes. Add the garlic and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Stir in the flour and cook until it begins to brown, about 1 minute. Stir in the milk, broth, and zest and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to low and simmer until thickened, about 5 minutes. Strain the sauce into a large bowl (discard the vegetables), stir in the chicken and scallions, and season to taste with salt and pepper. Let the filling cool until just warm, about 30 minutes.
4. Spoon the chicken mixture into the pie shell and sprinkle with the cheese. Top with the remaining chilled circle of dough. Trim all but ½ inch of the dough overhanging the edge of the pie plate. Press the top and bottom crusts together, then tuck the edges underneath. Crimp the dough evenly around the edge of the pie, using your fingers.
5. Cut four 2-inch slits in the top of the dough, brush with the beaten egg, and bake until the crust is deep golden brown, 45 to 55 minutes. Let cool 10 minutes. Serve.

24-Hour Salad

HARRIET MATTES | HIGH POINT, NORTH CAROLINA

There is a tradition going back to the late 19th century of fruit salad married with a sweet custard and frozen. Then, in the 1930s, we began to see all sorts of creamy fruit salads with marshmallows and cream or whipped cream along with coconut—most notably a recipe called Ambrosia. This recipe differs from both, though it has the same spirit (and creamy appeal). The name, 24-Hour Salad, is sometimes attached to savory layered salads and sometimes to sweet salads like this one, which must sit for the flavors to meld.

SERVES 8 TO 10

- 2 large eggs
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 2 cups frozen sour cherries, drained (see note)
- 1 (20-ounce) can pineapple tidbits or crushed pineapple packed in juice, drained
- 2 (14.5-ounce) cans mandarin oranges packed in juice, drained
- 3 cups large marshmallows, quartered (see note)
- 1 cup sliced almonds, chopped coarse

1. Combine the eggs and sugar in a medium heatproof bowl. Set the bowl over a saucepan containing an inch of simmering water and whisk until the sugar begins to dissolve, about 1 minute. Whisk in ¼ cup of the heavy cream and the lemon juice and cook, whisking constantly, until the mixture begins to thicken slightly, about 5 minutes. Let cool completely, at least 30 minutes.
2. Meanwhile, with an electric mixer on high speed, beat the remaining ¾ cup heavy cream in a large bowl to soft peaks. Gently fold into the cooled egg mixture.
3. Toss the cherries, pineapple, oranges, marshmallows, and almonds together in a large bowl. Pour the egg and cream mixture over the fruit and toss gently until combined. Refrigerate until ready to serve, at least 24 hours and up to 2 days in advance. Serve.

Notes from the Test Kitchen

This take on a familiar holiday favorite was a pleasant surprise for the test kitchen. The tart cherries really cut the sweetness of the custard, and the almonds added some necessary texture to the salad. Fresh sour cherries will also work well in this recipe, but do not substitute canned cherries, which are too soft and will turn mushy. Originally the recipe called for 2 cups of fresh orange segments, a little too much work for a salad (in our opinion). Instead, we turned to mandarin orange slices, which are ready to go and taste great.

The recipe also called for whole chopped almonds, which we felt were too coarse for this elegant combination. Our version uses sliced almonds, which provide a more delicate crunch in the salad. We also tried substituting miniature marshmallows to avoid quartering large ones. Bad idea—the small marshmallows simply turned to mush. To make the prep work easier, we found that if we sprayed our chef's knife with cooking spray, the marshmallows did not cling to the blade (and were less likely to stick together).