

COOKIES & BROWNIES

BAR COOKIES: ADULT

Peanut Butter Bars

By Mark Galayda of Howell, NJ – 1st Place

Ingredients:

- ½ pound (2 sticks) unsalted butter, room temperature, plus more for greasing
- 1½ cups sugar
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 2 extra large eggs, room temperature
- 2 cups creamy peanut butter, such as Skippy (18 ounces)
- 3 cups all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting the pan
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1½ teaspoons kosher salt
- 1½ cups raspberry jam or other jam (18 ounces)
- ⅔ cups salted peanuts, coarsely chopped

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven 350°F. Grease a 9x13x2 inch baking pan.
2. In a bowl of an electric mixer fitted with paddle attachment, cream the butter and sugar on medium speed until light yellow, about 2 minutes.
3. With the mixer on low speed, add vanilla, eggs, and peanut butter. Mix until well combined.
4. In a small bowl, sift together flour, baking powder, and salt.
5. On low speed, slowly add the flour mixture to the peanut butter mixer. Mix just until combined.
6. Spread two thirds of the dough in the prepared pan, using a knife to spread it evenly. Spread the jam evenly over the dough. Drop small globs of the remaining dough evenly over the jam. Don't worry if all the jam isn't covered; the dough will spread when it bakes.
7. Sprinkle chopped peanuts and bake for 45 minutes, until golden brown.
8. Cool and cut into small squares.

Fruit & Chocolate Dream Bars

By Lauren Lenzo of Cream Ridge, NJ – Honorable Mention

Ingredients for Crust:

- 1¼ cups flour
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- ½ cup (1 stick) butter

Ingredients for Topping:

- ⅔ cup all-purpose flour
- ⅓ cup brown sugar
- ¾ stick butter, softened
- ½ cup cherry, raspberry jam
- 1 cup milk chocolate morsels

Instructions for Crust:

1. Combine flour and granulated sugar in a medium bowl. Cut in butter until mixture resembles coarse crumbs.
2. Press onto bottom of greased 9x9 inch baking pan.
3. Bake in 375°F oven for 18-22 minutes, or until set but not brown.

Instructions for Topping:

1. Combine flour and brown sugar in bowl. Cut in butter until mixture resembles coarse crumbs.
2. Spread jam over hot crust. Sprinkle with topping and morsels.
3. Bake in 375°F oven for 15-20 minutes.

Yield 2½ dozen bars.

BAR COOKIES: CHILD

Chocolate Macaroon Bars

By Savannah Lenzo, Age 6 of Cream Ridge, NJ – 1st Place

Ingredients:

- 1 package chocolate cake mix
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup butter, softened
- 2 eggs, divided
- 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (14 ounces can) sweetened condensed milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 cups semi-sweet chocolate morsels
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup flaked coconut

Instructions:

1. Beat cake mix, butter and 1 egg in mixer bowl until mixture is crumbly.
2. Firmly press onto bottom of greased 13x9 inch baking pan.
3. Combine sweetened condensed milk, remaining egg, and vanilla in medium bowl, stir in morsels.
4. Spread mixture in baking pan. Sprinkle with coconut.
5. Bake in preheated 350°F oven for 30-40 minutes or until golden brown.

Yield 2½ dozen bars.

Sugar Cookie Bars

By Maya Armhold, Age 11 of Manalapan, NJ – Honorable Mention

Ingredients:

2 sticks unsalted butter, melted and cooled slightly
1 ½ cups sugar
3 large eggs
1 tablespoon pure vanilla extract
2 cups all-purpose flour
¼ teaspoon salt
Cooking spray

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven 350°F. Line a 9x13 inch baking pan with foil, leaving a 2-inch overhang on two sides. Coat the foil with cooking spray. Combine the melted butter, sugar, eggs and vanilla in a large bowl with a whisk. Stir in flour and salt with a wooden spoon until combined.
2. Spread the batter in the pan with a rubber spatula or press in using damp or oiled fingers. Bake until the edges of the bars are set but the center is soft, about 25 minutes. Remove the pan from the oven with oven mitts, then put the pan on a rack and let the bars cool completely.
3. Lift the bars out of the pan using the overhanging foil, the peel off the foil. Cut into squares.

Active: 25 minutes

Total: 50 minutes (plus cooling)

Yield 24 to 30 bars.

BROWNIE: ADULT

Chocolate & Peanut Butter Crispy Bar

By Mark Galayda of Howell, NJ – 1st Place

Ingredients:

- 1 package fudge brownie mix (13x9 inch pan size)
- 1 ½ cups chunky peanut butter
- 2 cups semi-sweet chocolate chips
- 1 cup creamy peanut butter
- 3 cups Rice Krispies

Instructions:

1. Line a 13x9 inch baking pan with parchment, letting ends extend up sides. Prepare and bake brownie mix according to package directions, using prepared pan. Cool in pan on a wire rack 30 minutes. Refrigerate until cold.
2. Spread chunky peanut butter over brownies. Place chocolate chips and creamy peanut butter in a large microwave-safe bowl. Microwave in 30-second intervals until melted; stir until smooth. Stir in Rice Krispies, spread over chunky peanut butter layer. Refrigerate, covered, at least 30 minutes or until set.
3. Lifting with parchment, remove brownies from pan. Cut into bars. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator.

Aunt Nettie's Crumb Topping Brownies

By Jane Weinermoate of Keyport, NJ – 2nd Place

Ingredients for Brownies:

- 3 ounces unsweetened baker's chocolate
- 1 stick unsalted butter
- 2 large eggs, beaten
- 1 cup (7½ ounces) white sugar
- 1 teaspoon almond extract
- ⅔ cup (3 ounces) all-purpose flour
- ½ teaspoon baking powder
- ¼ teaspoon salt

Ingredients for Crumb Topping:

- ¾ cups + 2 tablespoons (4 ounces) all-purpose flour
- 2 tablespoons (⅞ ounce) white sugar
- 2 tablespoons (⅞ ounce) dark brown sugar
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon ginger
- ⅛ teaspoon cardamom
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
- 1 pinch sea salt

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Prepare an 8x8 baking dish with cooking spray or parchment paper.
2. Microwave the chocolate and 1 stick of butter together for 3 minutes. Stir.
3. Add the rest of the brownie ingredients to the melted chocolate and butter and stir until just combined and no streaks of flour remain.
4. Pour the batter into the prepared dish and place it in the oven. Bake for 15 minutes.
5. Meanwhile, prepare the crumb topping by sifting together all dry ingredients until thoroughly incorporated.
6. Add the melted butter and mix until it comes together as a solid ball.
7. When the brownies have baked for 15 minutes, remove from oven and use hands to break up the crumb topping into pea-sized or larger pieces. Sprinkle them over the top of the brownies, covering the surface completely. Pat them down gently.
8. Sprinkle a pinch of sea salt evenly over the top of the crumbs.
9. Return the pan to the oven and bake for an additional 10-15 minutes, or until a toothpick placed in the center comes out clean. Let cool completely in pan, about 30 minutes, before serving.

COOKIES: ADULT

Caramel Apple Snickerdoodles

By Lois Steindl of Howell, NJ – 1st Place

Prep time: 10 minutes

Cooking time: 10 minutes

Servings: About 30 cookies

Ingredients:

- 2³/₄ cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- ½ teaspoon coarse salt
- 1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, room temperature
- 1½ cups plus 2 tablespoons sugar (for topping)
- 2 large eggs
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1 cup peeled and finely diced apples
- 30 Werther's Soft Caramels (two 4.5 ounces bags)

Instructions:

1. Make the topping by mixing 2 tablespoons of sugar and 2 teaspoons cinnamon together. Set it aside.
2. Preheat oven 350°F. Sift together flour, baking powder and salt into a bowl. Put butter in the bowl or an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment. Beat until light and fluffy. Add 1 ½ cups sugar and mix on medium speed for about 3 minutes. Mix in eggs. Reduce speed to low, gradually mix in flour mixture. Stir in apples until well combined.
3. Using a cookie scoop, scoop out dough and flatten it a little bit with your fingers. Flatten one of the caramels a little and place on top of the dough. Then mold the dough around the caramel and roll it into a ball.
4. Place each ball of dough into the topping mixture and roll around until well coated. Place the cookie dough balls onto a parchment covered cookie sheet. Bake about 10-11 minutes or until the cookies are very lightly browned. Cool for at least 15-20 minutes on baking sheets before moving to a wire rack. Or you can eat them warm with a spoon, and some vanilla ice cream.

Brookie Cookies

By Jackie Galayda of Howell, NJ – 2nd Place

Ingredients for Brownie Cookies:

1¼ cups (175 grams) all-purpose flour
¼ teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon salt
½ cup (110 grams) unsalted butter, melted
½ cup (45 grams) unsweetened cocoa powder
½ cup (120 grams) light brown sugar
⅓ cup (70 grams) granulated sugar
1 large egg (50 grams), room temperature
1 large egg yolk, room temperature
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

Ingredients for Chocolate Chip Cookies:

1⅔ cups (233 grams) all-purpose flour
2 tablespoons (18 grams) corn starch
¾ teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon salt
½ cup (110 grams) unsalted butter, room temperature
⅔ cup (160 grams) light brown sugar
¼ cup (53 grams) granulated sugar
1 large egg (50 grams), room temperature
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 ½ cups chocolate chips

Instructions for Brownie Cookies:

1. Preheat oven 350°F. Line baking sheets with parchment paper to ensure the cookies come off of the pans cleanly after baking.
2. In a medium bowl, whisk all-purpose flour, baking soda, and salt together.
3. In a large bowl, whisk cocoa powder and warm melted butter together. The mixture will have a paste-like consistency.
4. Mix light brown sugar, granulated sugar, room temperature egg, egg yolk, and vanilla extract into the butter and cocoa powder mixture. Whisk until smooth.
5. Carefully, whisk dry ingredients into the rest of the batter. Do not overmix, as doing so could impact the texture of the cookies. Mix until the dry ingredients disappear into the dough.
6. Let the batter rest as you prepare the chocolate chip cookie dough batter.

Instructions for Chocolate Chip Cookies:

1. In a medium bowl, whisk all-purpose flour, corn starch, baking soda, and salt together.
2. In a large bowl with a hand mixer or in the bowl of a stand mixer that is fitted with a paddle attachment (preferred), beat room temperature butter, light brown sugar, and granulated sugar together on high speed until slightly pale in color, puffy in texture, and shiny.
3. Add egg and vanilla extract to the batter and mix on medium speed until smooth. Scrape down the sides and the bottom of the bowl as necessary to ensure the ingredients are dispersed evenly throughout the batter.
4. Slowly, add the dry ingredients to the batter on low speed to prevent the dry ingredients from spilling out of the bowl. Mix until the dry ingredients disappear into the batter.
5. Add chocolate chips to the dough and mix until dispersed throughout the batter.

Instructions for Assembly & Baking:

1. Divide the brownie cookie batter into slightly smaller than 1 tablespoon balls, about 25-30 grams of batter.
2. Divide the chocolate chip cookie dough batter into slightly larger than 1 tablespoon balls, about 30-35 grams of batter.
3. Place one of each dough ball next to each other before squishing the two together and rolling them in one smooth ball.
4. As recommended in “Expert Tips & Tricks” above, stick additional chocolate chips into the tops of the dough ball as desired. Repeat the rolling and decorating process for the remaining dough balls.
5. Place the cookies at least 2 inches apart on a baking sheet, as the cookies will spread and rise as they bake.
6. Bake cookies for 9-11 minutes or until the chocolate chip cookie portion is light golden brown on top, the cookies look slightly shiny on top and soft in the middle, and the bottom of the chocolate chip cookie portion looks golden brown when carefully lifted off of the baking sheet with a spatula.
7. Allow the cookies to cool on the pan for about 5 minutes until they are firm enough to transfer to a wire cooling rack or cool plate. If you have overbaked the cookies, carefully remove them from the pan immediately after removing the pan from the oven to ensure the cookies do not bake any longer.
8. Store at room temperature tightly covered or in an airtight container for up to 4 days after they have completely cooled. Cookies can be frozen in a freezer bag, individually wrapped, or in an airtight container for up to 3 months.

Homemade Fudge Rounds

By Felicia Moran of Howell, NJ – 2nd Place

Ingredients for Cookies:

- 10 tablespoons (142 grams) unsalted butter, cool room temperature
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (150 grams) granulated sugar
- 1 large egg, cool room temperature
- 1 tablespoon light corn syrup
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- $1\frac{1}{4}$ cups (159 grams) all-purpose flour
- 6 tablespoons (32 grams) unsweetened natural cocoa powder
- 1 teaspoon cornstarch
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon baking soda
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon fine salt

Ingredients for Chocolate Drizzle:

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (85 grams) milk chocolate chips
- 1 teaspoon vegetable oil

Ingredients for Filling:

- 1 stick (113 grams) unsalted butter, cool room temperature
- 2 tablespoons (11 grams) cocoa powder, sifted
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups (188 grams) powdered sugar, sifted
- 2 tablespoons warm water (about 100°F)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon vanilla

Instructions for Cookies:

1. Preheat oven 350°F. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper.
2. In the bowl with a stand mixer with fitted paddle attachment, beat the butter and sugar on medium-high speed, scraping down the sides of the bowl a couple times, until light and fluffy, about 2-3 minutes. Beat in egg, corn syrup, and vanilla. Scrape down the bowl.
3. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, cocoa, cornstarch, baking soda, and salt. On low speed, gradually add the dry ingredients. Beat on low until combined. The dough will be soft and slightly sticky.
4. Using a $1\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoon spring-loaded scoop, drop balls of dough on baking sheets and bake until slightly puffed up and the edges are set, about 8-9 minutes. Remove baking sheets to cooling racks and remove cookies after a few minutes to continue cooling. Cookies will flatten as they cool.

Instructions for Chocolate Drizzle:

1. Microwave milk chocolate chips and vegetable oil in a microwave-safe bowl, stirring every 15 seconds until smooth. Drizzle or pipe on top of each cookie. Refrigerate until chocolate is set, at least 30 minutes.

Instructions for Filling:

1. Meanwhile, in the bowl with a stand mixer fitted with paddle attachment, beat the butter on medium speed until smooth. Add the sifted cocoa powder and powdered sugar and beat until light and fluffy, about 3 minutes, scraping down the sides of the bowl as needed. Add warm water and vanilla and beat on medium-high speed for about 2 minutes or until light and fluffy.
2. Pipe or spread filling on the flat side of half of the cookies. Gently press another cookie on top of the filling.
3. Serve or store assembled Fudge Rounds in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 1 day, in the fridge for up to 5 days, or freeze for up to 1 month. The colder the Fudge Rounds are when serving, the more fudgy they will be.

Millionaire's Shortbread

By Mark Galayda of Howell, NJ – 3rd Place

Ingredients for Shortbread:

- 1 cup (226 grams) unsalted butter, softened
- 1/3 cup (70 grams) sugar
- 1/3 cup (70 grams) light brown sugar, packed
- 1 large egg yolk
- 3/4 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 1/4 cups (260 grams) all-purpose flour

Ingredients for Caramel:

- 2 14-ounces (792 grams) cans sweetened condensed milk
- 14 tablespoons unsalted butter cut into tablespoon-sized (198 grams) pieces
- 1 cup (200 grams) light brown sugar
- 1/3 cup (80 milliliters) light corn syrup
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Ingredients for Chocolate Ganache:

- 2 cups (340 grams) semi-sweet chocolate chips
- 1/2 cup (120 milliliters) heavy cream
- Sea salt for sprinkling

Instructions for Shortbread:

1. Preheat oven 350°F (177C) and line a 13x9 baking pan with parchment paper.
2. Using an electric mixer, beat butter until well creamed.
3. Add sugar and beat until light and fluffy, about 30 seconds.
4. Add egg yolk and vanilla extract and stir well, pausing to scrape down the sides and mixing until ingredients are well-combined.
5. Slowly add the flour, pausing to scrape down the sides of bowl. Halfway through the addition of the flour, sprinkle in the salt with the beater still running. Don't over-beat the dough, you want it to be slightly crumbly to make it easier to press into the pan.
6. Drop dough over prepared pan and gently, firmly, evenly, press dough into the bottom of the pan. To make it easier, lay a piece of wax paper over the dough and the palm of hand to smooth the surface (and then discard wax paper).
7. Bake 350°F (177C) for 20-25 minutes, edges should be lightly golden brown.
8. Allow to cool while preparing the caramel topping.

Instructions for Caramel:

1. Combine condensed milk, butter, brown sugar, corn syrup, and salt in a medium-sized saucepan over medium heat.
2. Stir frequently until butter is melted and ingredients are well-combined. Continue to stir constantly until mixture begins to boil (this could take several minutes, don't need to increase the heat).
3. Once mixture comes to a boil, reduce heat to a simmer (slowly bubbling), still stirring constantly. Continue to stir 10-15 minutes until mixture turns a rich caramel color and thickened (should begin pulling away from the sides of the pot). If using a candy thermometer, the caramel should reach 225°F (107C).
4. Remove from heat and immediately stir in the vanilla extract.
5. Pour evenly over prepared shortbread, use a knife to spread evenly.
6. Allow to cool at room temperature for several hours or in the refrigerator for 1 hour before topping with chocolate.

Instructions for Chocolate Topping:

1. Combine chocolate chips and heavy cream in a small saucepan over low heat.
2. Stir frequently until chocolate is melted and mixture is smooth.
3. Remove from heat and allow chocolate to cool just slightly, about 5 minutes, and then evenly spread over prepared caramel layer. Wait several minutes until chocolate begins to set and then sprinkle with sea salt.
4. Allow chocolate to harden, place in refrigerator for about 30 minutes, before cutting and serving.

Browned Butter Chocolate Chunk Cookies

By Katie Ursino of Freehold, NJ – 3rd Place

Ingredients:

- 1¼ cups all-purpose flour
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 stick butter, browned in pan
- ½ cup sugar
- ¾ cup dark brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 large egg
- 1 5-ounces chopped milk chocolate bar
- 1 5-ounces chopped dark chocolate bar

Instructions:

1. Sift and whisk dry ingredients (flour, salt, baking soda).
2. Beat together sugar and butter.
3. Add and mix vanilla and egg until mixed completely.
4. Add dry mixture slowly until combined.
5. Mix/fold in chocolate.
6. Form 2.2 ounces balls of dough.
7. Chill for 2 hours.
8. Bake at 350°F for 10-12 minutes (top with sea salt, if desired)
9. Enjoy your gooey cookies.

Yield 1 dozen large cookies.

Peanut Butter Cookies

By Michele Miranda of Matawan, NJ – Honorable Mention

Everyone's favorite cookie gets a double hit of cinnamon. Cinnamon is added to the dough and the balls of cookie dough are rolled in a cinnamon-sugar mixture before they are flattened with the traditional crisscross pattern.

Prep time: 15 minutes

Cook time: 8 minutes

Ingredients:

- 1¼ cups flour
- 1 tablespoon plus ¼ teaspoon McCormick® Ground Cinnamon, divided
- ¾ teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon baking powder
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ½ cup (1 stick) butter, softened
- ¾ cup granulated sugar, divided
- ½ cup firmly packed light brown sugar
- ½ cup creamy peanut butter
- 1 egg
- 1 teaspoon McCormick® All Natural Pure Vanilla Extract

Instructions:

1. Mix flour, 1 tablespoon cinnamon, baking soda, baking powder, and salt in medium bowl. Set aside.
2. Beat butter, ½ cup granulated sugar, brown sugar, peanut butter, egg, and vanilla in large bowl with electric mixer on medium speed until well blended.
3. Gradually beat in flour mixture on low speed until well mixed.
4. Refrigerate for 2 hours or until firm.
5. Preheat oven 375°F. Mix remaining ¼ cup granulated sugar and remaining ¼ teaspoon cinnamon in small bowl.
6. Shape dough into 1-inch balls. Roll in cinnamon sugar mixture to coat. Place about 3 inches apart on ungreased baking sheets. Gently flatten with fork, pressing a crisscross pattern onto tops of cookies.
7. Bake 8 to 10 minutes or until lightly browned. Cool on baking sheets for 1 minute. Remove to wire racks to cool completely.

Yield 18 cookies.

Nostalgia Lane: Oatmeal Sandwich Cookies With Marshmallow Buttercream Filling

By Annabelle Zasowski of Colts Neck, NJ – Honorable Mention

Ingredients for Cookies:

- ½ cup (113 grams) unsalted butter, softened
- ½ cup (92 grams) vegetable shortening
- 1 cup (210 grams) light brown sugar, packed
- 2 large eggs
- 2 tablespoons unsulphured molasses
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1½ cups (195 grams) all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1½-2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 3 cups (267 grams) quick cooking oats

Ingredients for Marshmallow Filling:

- 7 ounce jar (198 grams) marshmallow fluff (I always use more, I can never get enough fluff)
- ½ cup (92 grams) vegetable shortening
- ½ cup (60 grams) confectioners sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1-2 tablespoons of hot water if needs thinning out a bit

Instructions for Cookie:

1. Preheat oven 375°F. Line baking sheets with parchment paper or a silicone mat.
2. In large mixing bowl, either with a paddle attachment or handheld mixer, cream together the butter and shortening until well combined. Add the brown sugar until fluffy. Add eggs one at a time, until just combined. Beat in vanilla and molasses.
3. In a separate bowl, combine flour, baking soda, cinnamon, and salt. Whisk together until combined. Add half of the flour mixture to the butter mixture on low speed until just combined, then add the other half. Add the oats and stir by hand with a silicone spatula until evenly combined.
4. With a 1.5-2 tablespoon sized cookie scoop, scoop out the dough and place them 2 inches apart onto the prepared pans.
5. Bake for 10-12 minutes until just set around the edges. (They can still look slightly gooey in the middle, they're best that way!) Cool on the cookie sheets for a few minutes, then transfer to wire racks to cool completely.

Instructions for Marshmallow Filling:

1. Combine all the ingredients in a large bowl until fully combined and fluffy. Add in the hot water for a thinner consistency. I usually taste once or twice with a disposable spoon to see if I need more fluff, the amount always varies!
2. Once the cookies are cooled, spread, or pipe the filling onto one cookie, then top with another to form a cute little sandwich! I sometimes have some frosting leftover and I use that to dip my cookies into.

COOKIES: CHILD

Pecan Tassies

By Anna Massa, Age 9 of Brielle, NJ – Honorable Mention

Ingredients for Tart Shells:

- ½ cup butter, softened
- 3 ounces cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup all-purpose flour

Ingredients for Filling:

- 2 tablespoons butter, melted
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup brown sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup pecan halves, finely chopped

Instructions for Tart Shells:

1. Preheat oven 350°F.
2. Beat the butter and cream cheese in a bowl until well blended. Add flour, mix until a soft dough forms.
3. Shape the dough into 1-inch balls. Place the dough balls into the ungreased mini muffin pan. Press with finger to create a cup shape.

Instructions for Filling:

1. Placed the melted butter in bowl. Stir in brown sugar, egg, and vanilla. Add the finely chopped pecans and mix well.

Instructions for Assembly:

1. Spoon the filling mixture into each tart shell. Do not overfill.
2. Bake for 20-25 minutes or until the cookies are light golden brown. Remove the pan from the oven, let cool in the pan for 3 minutes. Remove the cookies from the pan and let them cool completely.

DONUT: ADULT

Caramel Coconut Pretzel Doughnuts

By Felicia Moran of Howell, NJ – 1st Place

Ingredients for Glaze:

- 1/3 cup butter or margarine
- 2/3 cup packed brown sugar
- 1/4 cup milk
- 1/2 cup powdered sugar

Ingredients for Donut:

- 2 cups Bisquick mix
- 2 tablespoons granulated sugar
- 2/3 cup milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 egg
- 2 tablespoons butter, melted

Ingredients for Topping:

- 1 cup small pretzels broken
- 1/3 cup flaked coconut

Instructions:

1. Heat oven to 425°F. Spray doughnut pan with cooking spray.
2. (Brown sugar mixture for Glaze). In 2-quart saucepan, melt 1/3 butter over medium heat. Stir in brown sugar. Heat to boiling, stirring constantly. Stir in 3 tablespoons milk, return to boiling. Remove from heat, cool to room temperature.
3. Meanwhile, in medium bowl stir in Bisquick mix, granulated sugar, 2/3 milk, vanilla, and egg until blended. Stir in melted butter. Spoon batter into resealable food-storage plastic bag, seal bag. Cut off small corner of bag, squeeze bag to pipe batter into pan, using 1/4 cup for each doughnut.
4. Bake 7-9 minutes or until a toothpick inserted near center comes out clean. Immediately remove doughnuts from pan to cooling rack, cool completely.
5. Gradually beat powdered sugar into brown sugar mixture with whisk until smooth, adding remaining 1 tablespoon milk if needed. Glaze doughnuts, sprinkle with pretzels and coconut.

GLUTEN-FREE COOKIES: ADULT

French Macarons with Vanilla Buttercream and Strawberry Center

By Annabelle Zasowski of Colts Neck, NJ – 1st Place

Ingredients for Macaron Cookies:

- 1½ cups (140 grams) almond flour
- ½ cup (90 grams) confectioners sugar
- ½ cup (90 grams) cup granulated sugar
- 3 large (100 grams) egg whites, room temperature
- ¼ teaspoon (800 milligrams) cream of tartar
- 1 teaspoon (5 milliliters) vanilla extract

Ingredients for Vanilla Buttercream:

- 1 cup (230 grams) unsalted butter, softened to room temperature
- 2-3 cups (224-336 grams) confectioners sugar
- 2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
- salt, to taste
- splash of milk or heavy cream

Ingredients for Homemade Strawberry Preserves:

- 4 cups packed fresh strawberries, hulled and cut in half
- ½ lemon, juiced
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch
- 2 tablespoons cold water

Instructions for Strawberry Preserves:

1. Make the preserves first so they have time to cool completely and set.
2. Mash strawberries in a medium pot with a potato masher to desired consistency.
3. Stir in lemon juice, sugar, and salt.
4. Bring mixture to a boil over high heat. Once boiling, turn heat to medium and add cornstarch mixed with cold water. Stir, let simmer over medium heat for 7 minutes, stirring every minute.
5. Remove from heat and let preserves cool in a large bowl at room temperature for 30 minutes before cooling completely in the refrigerator.
6. Once cooled, transfer preserves to mason jars or other airtight containers.
7. The preserves will last 6-8 weeks in the fridge.

Instructions for Macarons:

1. Sift dry ingredients (confectioners sugar and almond flour) into a bowl, and set aside.
2. Using an electric mixer, or stand mixer with whisk attachment, whisk egg whites at medium low speed. Once they begin to foam, add cream of tartar, and then slowly add granulated sugar a little at a time. Turn up the mixer to a medium high speed and whisk until soft peaks form.
3. Add food coloring (if desired) and vanilla, continue to beat until stiff peaks form.
4. Once the meringue is ready, begin folding in $\frac{1}{3}$ of the dry ingredients with a silicone spatula. Slowly fold until nearly combined.
5. Add about another half of the dry ingredients and fold gently. Finally add the rest of the dry ingredients.
6. The final mixture should look like flowing lava and be able to fall into a figure eight without breaking. Gently press the mixture against the sides of the bowl to remove some of the air bubbles. Spoon into piping bag with a medium round piping tip.
7. Pipe one-inch dollops onto a baking sheet lined with parchment paper, about one inch apart, hold the bag straight above the pan. Tap on counter several times to release air bubbles. Allow to sit for about 40 minutes before placing into oven. Preheat oven 300°F.
8. Bake at 300°F for 12-15 minutes, rotating tray after 7 minutes. Allow to cool completely before removing from baking sheet.

Instructions for Buttercream:

1. With a handheld or stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, beat the butter on medium low speed until creamy and lighter in color, about 8 minutes.
2. Add 2½ - 3 cups of confectioners sugar, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup at a time. Then add heavy cream/milk (if desired), and vanilla extract. Beat on low speed for 30 seconds, then increase to medium high speed and beat for about 2 minutes. Add a pinch of salt if frosting is too sweet.
3. Use immediately or cover tightly and store for up to 1 week in the refrigerator or up to 3 months in the freezer.

Instructions for Assembly:

1. Pipe a boarder of buttercream on one side of macaron shell, then place a small amount of strawberry preserves in the center. Place another macron shell on top to create a sandwich.
2. Place macarons in an airtight container in the fridge for 24-48 hours before serving. Enjoy!

Gluten-Free Sugar Cookies

By Jillian Gletow of Old Bridge, NJ – 2nd Place

Ingredients:

- 8 ounces gluten-free flour
- 4 ounces almond flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon xanthan gum (omit if it's in flour blend)
- 8¾ ounces sugar, plus ⅓ cup for rolling
- 3 ounces cream cheese, softened and cut into 8 pieces
- 8 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted and still warm
- 1 large egg
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract

Instructions:

1. Adjust the oven rack to the middle position. Preheat oven 350°F. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper.
2. Whisk together gluten-free almond flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, and xanthan gum (if using) in a medium bowl, and set aside.
3. Place 8¾ ounces of sugar and cream cheese in a large bowl. Pour melted butter over sugar and cream cheese and whisk to combine.
4. Whisk in egg and vanilla until smooth.
5. Stir in flour mixture with a rubber spatula and mix until soft, homogeneous dough forms.
6. Cover bowl and refrigerate until chilled (about 30 minutes). The dough will be sticky and soft).
7. Place ⅓ cup of sugar into a shallow dish.
8. Using about 2 tablespoons of dough, roll into a ball. Roll each ball into the sugar and place on the baking sheet. Space 2 inches apart. Press each ball down until about ½ inch thick and sprinkle the tops of the cookies with sugar.
9. Bake cookies 1 sheet at a time until edges are set and just begin to brown 12-14 minutes, rotating halfway.
10. Let cookies cool on the sheet for 5 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack.