

# Christmas Cookies

RITA THOMPSON

1/2 c. butter, softened    1/2 c. granulated sugar    1 lg. egg  
1 1/2 tsp. vanilla    2 c. flour    1 tsp. baking powder  
1/2 tsp. salt

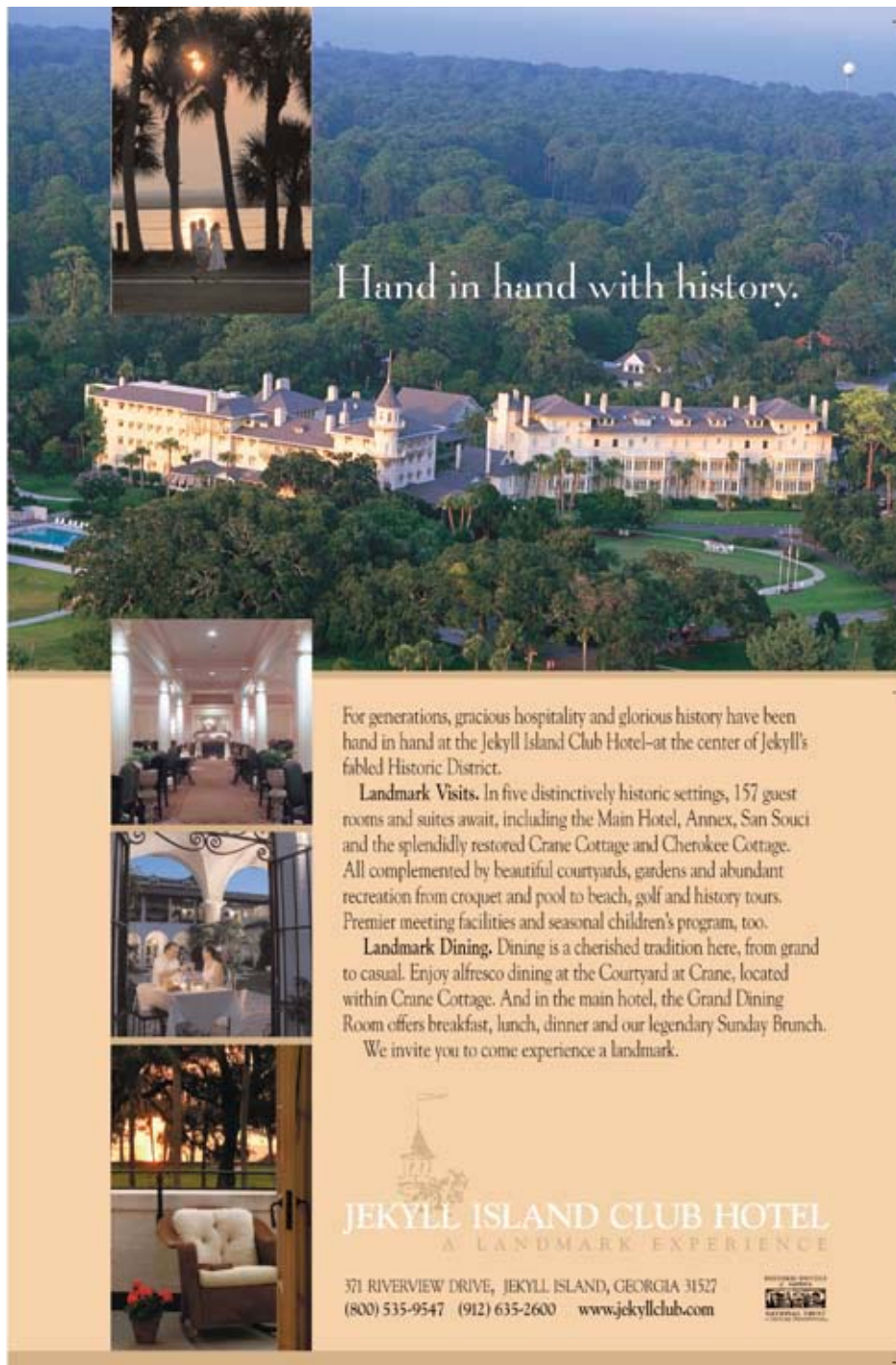
Beat butter, sugar, egg and vanilla until fluffy. Combine flour, baking powder and salt. Gradually add the flour mixture into the butter mixture on low speed. Refrigerate for 1 hour.

Using about 1/4 of the dough at a time (leaving the rest in the refrigerator), roll to about 1/4 inch with a floured rolling pin. Cut with cookie cutters. Bake at 375° for 6 to 7 minutes. When edges are barely brown, take out of oven. Cool on wire rack.

**Frosting** - I cheat here. I buy pre-made vanilla icing at the store and add enough cornstarch to make the icing very thick. I divide the icing into two bowls, and add a couple drops of red food coloring to one and a couple drops of green food coloring to the other and mix to have a couple different colors.

Spread icing on cooled cookies and add any sprinkles, etc. that you like. The icing will harden on the cookies and it makes for easier packaging in your Christmas tins to distribute to family and friends. I tie the recipe card on the top of the tins as an extra personal touch.

These cookies are an important part of Rita's family's Christmas traditions. This is her mother's recipe and Rita "cheats" by taking the time-saving step of buying pre-made icing instead of making her own. Her daughters, now adults, still go to their grandmother's house to make and decorate these cookies each year.



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# Pumpkin Drop Cookies

CINDY MANN HENDLEY

1 1/2 stick butter -- at room temperature  
2/3 c. packed light brown sugar  
2 eggs  
1 1/2 tsp. vanilla  
1 c. canned or cooked fresh pumpkin puree  
2 c. all-purpose flour  
1/2 tsp. baking powder  
1/2 tsp. baking soda  
1 pinch salt  
2 1/2 tsp. pumpkin pie spice  
1 c. chocolate chips  
1 c. chopped walnuts or pecans

Preheat oven to 375°. In a large bowl, beat together butter, brown sugar, eggs and vanilla until light. Beat in pumpkin. Add flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt and pumpkin pie spice, beating until blended. Stir in chocolate chips and walnuts. Drop teaspoonfuls of batter 2 inches apart on ungreased baking sheets. Bake until edges are golden, 10-12 minutes. Transfer cookies from baking sheets to a wire rack and cool. Yield 6 to 7 dozen 1 1/2-inch cookies.

Cindy claims her middle name is "Betty Crocker," but in all honesty, she admits that she found this recipe on the Internet while searching for a neat treat to whip up for her stepchildren at Halloween. These cookies also make a nice change from pumpkin pie at Thanksgiving. (Cindy is in possession of a lip-smacking good recipe for peanut brittle, but won't divulge the details.)

# Bessie's Strudel

JULIE CUSTER ALTMAN

2 c. flour  
1/2 lb. butter  
1 c. sour cream

Cut butter into flour. Add sour cream. Wrap in waxed paper and refrigerate overnight.

## Filling:

1/2 lb. shredded coconut  
1/2 lb. golden seedless raisins  
3 c. broken walnuts  
1 lb. maraschino cherries, cut in half and drained  
8-10 oz. apricot jam (can use strawberry or cherry for variation)  
juice of 1 lemon  
(Bernice adds butter and 1 tsp. of cinnamon)

Mix the above ingredients together. Divide into eight parts. Work with one part at a time, refrigerating the rest. Take one half of the dough and make a circle. Roll it out to be 8 inches long and 12 inches wide on a floured pastry board. Place filling along one thin side. Roll up. Carefully lift strudel and place on a greased cookie sheet. Tuck ends under. Bake at 400° for 10 minutes. Reduce to 350° and cook 35 minutes until golden brown.

Julie's husband's great-grandmother, Bessie Altman, who was born in the late 1800s in Russia, made this delicious pastry during the holidays. Julie keeps the family tradition alive by making it for breakfast every Christmas morning.