

Candy Cane and White Chocolate Cookies

Makes 12

Ingredients

180g white chocolate chunks
3-4 red and white peppermint candy canes
1 medium free range egg
2 tsp vanilla bean paste
180g plain flour
120g softened unsalted butter
95g soft light brown sugar
55g caster sugar
1/2 tsp bicarbonate of soda

Method

To make these delicious festive cookies, line 2 baking trays with greaseproof paper. First of all lightly crush the candy canes in a sealed sandwich bag and set aside. Using an electric whisk, whisk the butter and both of the sugars together in a large mixing bowl, then crack in the egg and beat well. Mix in the vanilla bean paste, then the flour and bicarbonate of soda and finally the chocolate chunks. Then mix in 3/4 of the candy canes.

Now divide the cookie dough into 12 balls and roll between the palms of your hands. Place on the 2 lined baking trays, spaced apart, and freeze for 30 minutes. This helps them to keep more of their shape when cooking. If you don't have freezer space then don't worry. Preheat your oven to gas mark 4, 350 degrees fan. Bake for 15-18 minutes until lightly golden brown. As soon as they come out of the oven, sprinkle over the remaining candy canes and leave to cool completely. Serve with a delicious hot chocolate for a yummy festive treat.

Cheesy Brussels Sprouts Gratin

Serves 6-8

Ingredients

900g halved brussels sprouts
3 tbsp butter
2 large sliced shallots
175ml double cream
175g grated extra mature cheddar cheese
260g grated gruyere cheese
8 slices unsmoked back bacon
Black pepper

Method

To begin this delicious recipe, preheat your oven to gas mark 5, 375 degrees fan. Place the butter in a large saucepan and heat gently until melted. Add the brussels sprouts, shallots, bacon and season with black pepper and sauté for 5-8 minutes until they have lightly browned. Take the saucepan off the heat and pour in the cream, then mix well. Add in half of both cheeses and stir well.

Transfer to an ovenproof dish and sprinkle over the remaining 2 cheeses. Season again with black pepper and cook for 12 minutes until golden and bubbling. Remove from the oven and serve either as a side to your Christmas dinner or just as a delicious festive side and enjoy.

Christmas Flavoured Butters

Makes 4 flavoured butters

Ingredients

x1 block 250g unsalted butter-cut into 2 pieces

x1 block 250g salted butter-cut into 2 pieces

2 tbsp runny honey

1 tsp ground cinnamon

2 tbsp dried cranberries-diced

1 clementine-zested

1 tbsp rosemary-chopped

1 tbsp thyme-chopped

Method

Using 4 separate bowls, cream the butter until pliable. In the first unsalted butter bowl, beat in the honey and ground cinnamon and set aside. In the second unsalted butter bowl, mix in the dried cranberries and clementine zest and set aside. In the first salted butter bowl, mix in the chopped rosemary and season with black pepper then set aside. In the second salted butter bowl, mix in the chopped thyme and season with black pepper then set aside.

Cut out 4 8x9 inch rectangles of greaseproof paper, leaving enough at each end to twist. In your hands, roll out each flavoured butter into a log shape and then place in the middle of a sheet of greaseproof paper. Make sure you wash your hands between sweet and savoury butters. Roll up each butter in the greaseproof paper and twist each end to seal the butters. Place in the fridge for at least an hour to allow the butters to firm up again. These sweet butters are perfect for panettone and fruit toast, and these savoury butters are perfect for basting turkeys and frying steaks.

Savoury Cheese and Rosemary Shortbread

Makes 30

Ingredients

170g extra mature cheddar-grated

115g unsalted butter

155g plain flour

1.5 tbsp rosemary-finely chopped

1.5 tbsp thyme-finely chopped

1-2 tsp black pepper

1/2 tsp sea salt

Method

To make these delicious savoury shortbread rounds, in a large bowl add the grated cheddar, butter, rosemary, thyme, black pepper and sea salt. Beat with an electric whisk for about 2 minutes until creamy. Add the flour and mix until combined. Place on a work surface and form into a log. Wrap in clingfilm and place in the fridge for 30 minutes until firm.

Preheat your oven to gas mark 4, 350 fan. Line a baking tray with greaseproof paper. Take the dough out of the fridge and unwrap it. Slice into 30 rounds and place on the baking tray. Bake for 15-18 minutes until golden and leave on the baking tray for 5 minutes then transfer to a cooling rack to cool completely. Serve with your favourite cheeses and chutneys for a delicious addition to your Christmas cheese board.

Shopping list for all 4 recipes

Check your cupboards first as you may have a lot of these already

180g white chocolate chips
Red and white candy canes
1 free range egg
Vanilla bean paste
335g plain flour
3 x 250g blocks unsalted butter/1 x 250g block salted butter
95g soft light brown sugar
55g caster sugar
Bicarbonate of soda
900g brussels sprouts
2 large shallots
175ml double cream
345g extra mature cheddar
175g gruyere cheese
8 slices back bacon
Fresh rosemary/fresh thyme
Runny honey
Ground cinnamon
2 tbsp dried cranberries
1 orange
Black pepper/sea salt