



## ***Tips--Techniques-- Chemistry--Notes***

Use the best ingredients available: fresh eggs, pure flavorings or extracts, all vegetable shortening, real margarine, fresh all-purpose flour, fresh bulk shredded coconut, fresh leavenings, etc. What you use will make the difference between a successful tasty goody and seagull food.

Should you use butter or margarine? A few of the recipes in this booklet specify using butter. It is important for the success of those recipes that you do. If you use margarine, the cookies will be soft and won't taste as rich.

Other recipes require margarine. If you use vegetable spread instead of real margarine, your cookies will not turn out as they should. I learned this the hard way.

Last year, I bought my regular brand of "margarine" and made a batch of "Toll House" Chocolate Chip cookies. When Lindsey ate one, he complained that it tasted "off" and he didn't eat any more cookies from that batch, quite odd. After checking the flour and the other ingredients, I discovered that my "margarine" was really vegetable spread. The packages looked very much alike. But, the result was very different! Cold eggs fresh from the refrigerator should be coddled. Place the uncracked eggs in very warm (almost hot) water and let them set for a few minutes.

Always crack your eggs into a bowl, then pour them into your mixing bowl. Occasionally, I have come across bloody eggs and I was glad that they did not get mixed in my dough. Also, it is hard to pick egg shells out of your mixed ingredients.

It is important to not over beat your dough. But, you do need to mix it thoroughly. I add the dry ingredients 1/2 cup at a time. Blend in, then add the next 1/2 cup.

I photocopy most recipes so I can write on them. I especially like to do this when I am trying a new recipe. I am able to keep my cookbooks clean and I have an accurate record of what was created. Be sure to jot down the specific ingredients used and any tips that you want to remember. You will have a better chance of recreating your successful recipe.

I recommend buying a few good quality stainless steel serving scoops in various sizes. My favorite scoops are a 1 and a 1 1/2 tablespoon size. I refer to these as 2-bite and 3-bite scoops. I have found them invaluable and cannot think of a better way to evenly shape and quickly measure out cookie dough. Your results will be great looking cookies.

To make the Spritz cookies, you will need a cookie press with changeable stamped plates. I have learned that the metal manual press with the screw type plunger works best and lasts longer.



Occasionally, a recipe will call for you to use parchment or baking paper. This will seem like an extra expense but you will be glad you used the parchment when you make "Easy Sticky Buns".

The type of mixer you use does not matter. My previous mixer was a small hand-held 5-speed mixer. I used it for many years before I finally wore it out making biscotti. Now, I have a large capacity KitchenAid mixer. You just need to be aware of how long it takes for your particular mixer to properly blend the ingredients.

Several years ago I invested in air bake baking sheets. There was a definite improvement in the quality of my finished cookies. You will need to experiment to learn how to get the best results. Watch for sales and pick up at least two. I have six sheets. Now, I don't have to wait for the baking sheet to cool before I am able to set up the next batch for the oven

If you do not have air bake baking sheets, you could stack two single layer sheets on one another. I recommend placing a smaller one upside down on top of a larger one. This way you will create an air space between the sheets

I have a conventional electric oven and through trial and error have learned that my cookies turn out better when baked one sheet at a time. Consequently, I have more time during the baking cycle to do other things. Usually, I'll set up the next baking sheet for the oven, remove the cooled cookies from another sheet, and do some cleanup. When the timer sounds, I'll pull the hot sheet out of the oven, slip the next one in, set the timer, and then, prepare the next baking sheet

Sometimes, the baking instructions will direct you to move your semi-cooled cookies to cooling racks. I do use them occasionally. However, my cookies are usually eaten (snatched) before they have a chance to cool

I hope you find the above information helpful. Have fun making and sharing these recipes with your family and friends

Now, it's time to get baking.