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# A simple, tasty holiday treat

Baking is a holiday tradition in many families. Gingerbread cookies may be the first baked goods that come to mind when people envision the holiday season, but celebrants need not limit themselves when preparing special treats for their families. Macaroons are one beloved baked good that busy holiday hosts may believe are too time-consuming to prepare. However, the following recipe for "Coconut Macaroons with Dried Cherries" from Laurey Masterton's "The Fresh Honey Cookbook" (Storey) is easy to whip up and makes for a tasty holiday treat.

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## Gingerbread goodness



Gingerbread is a broad term that can describe anything from a firm and crispy cookie to a moist, soft cake.

Gingerbread is a broad term that can describe anything from a firm and crispy cookie to a moist, soft cake. Traditionally, gingerbread is seasoned with ginger, cloves, nutmeg, and other aromatic spices. Molasses and brown sugar counteract the spice with sweetness. North Americans have been baking gingerbread in various shapes or forms for more than 200 years, and the recipes even pre-date the American revolution. However, gingerbread dates back even further to the Shakespearean era, with The Bard having mentioned it in one of his plays. Gingerbread's name can be traced to medieval England and once referred to

any kind of preserved ginger. The term went on to reference ginger-flavored cakes in the 15th century, and gingerbread eventually became popular throughout the world. Even though gingerbread cakes and cookies have been made for centuries, Germans are often credited with creating gingerbread houses, according to Smithsonian. They were probably modeled after the witch's candy cottage in the German fairy tale, "Hansel and Gretel." Even though gingerbread can be made any time of year, it is particularly associated with the Christmas season, with gingerbread men and other fanciful shapes turning up on cookie platters.

### GINGERBREAD COOKIES

- 3/4 cup butter, softened
- 1 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 large egg, room temperature
- 3/4 cup molasses
- 4 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons ground ginger
- 1-1/2 teaspoons baking soda
- 1-1/2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 3/4 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- Vanilla frosting of your choice
- Red and green paste food coloring

In a large bowl, cream butter and brown sugar until light and fluffy. Add egg and molasses. Combine the flour, ginger, baking soda, cinnamon, cloves and salt; gradually add to creamed mixture and mix well. Cover and refrigerate until easy to handle, about 4 hours or overnight.

Preheat oven to 350°. On

a lightly floured surface, roll dough to 1/8-in. thickness. Cut with floured 2-1/2-in. cookie cutters. Place 1 in. apart on ungreased baking sheets.

Bake until edges are firm, 8-10 minutes. Remove to wire racks to cool. Tint some of the frosting red and some green; leave remaining frosting plain. Decorate cookies.

## A tasty take on turkey just in time for Thanksgiving



Secret family turkey recipes may reign supreme in some households, but holiday hosts with no such resources can consider this unique recipe for "Holiday Turkey" from Andrew Schloss' "Cooking Slow" (Chronicle Books).

Perhaps no day is more synonymous with a certain dish than Thanksgiving is with turkey. As tasty as turkey can be, this flavorful fowl doesn't find its way onto many families' dinner tables unless it's Thanksgiving day.

Secret family turkey reci-

pes may reign supreme in some households, but holiday hosts with no such resources can consider this unique recipe for "Holiday Turkey" from Andrew Schloss' "Cooking Slow" (Chronicle Books). By slow cooking the turkey, cooks can ensure it's evenly cooked

### HOLIDAY TURKEY

Makes 15 servings

- 1 fresh turkey, about 15 pounds, preferably free-range
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 quart apple cider
- 2 teaspoons dried poultry seasoning
- Coarse sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

Remove the giblets from the turkey and discard (or save for another use). Rinse the turkey inside and out and pat dry with paper towels. Rub it all over with salt and pepper. Refrigerate, uncovered, for at least 12 hours and up to 24 hours. During that time, the surface of the turkey will become visibly dry and the skin will tighten; this encourages a nice crisp skin on the finished bird.

Remove the turkey from the refrigerator 1 hour before you plan to start roasting. Preheat the oven to 450 F.

Put the turkey on a rack set in a large, flameproof roasting pan. Drizzle the oil over the top.

Roast for 1 hour. Reduce the oven temperature to 175 F. Pour the cider into the roasting pan and sprinkle the poultry seasoning in the liquid. Continue roasting until an instant-read thermometer inserted into the thickest part of a thigh (but not touching bone) registers to 170 F.

Transfer the turkey to a carving board, tent loosely

with aluminum foil, and let rest for about 15 minutes (see tip). Meanwhile, skim the fat from the surface of the liquid in the pan. Put the roasting pan over two burners and bring the pan drippings to a boil over high heat. Cook until the juices reduce and thicken slightly, enough to coat a spoon, about 10 minutes. Taste for seasoning. Carve the turkey and serve with cider pan juices.

Resting tip: Slow-roasted meats need far less resting time (pretty much none) than those that are traditionally roasted. The reason for resting meat that has been roasted at a high temperature is to allow juices that have collected in the cooler center time to migrate back into the dryer (hotter) exterior sections after it comes out of the oven. Because slow-roasted meats are cooked evenly and a temperature that keeps most of the juices in place, a resting period is largely unnecessary. A brief resting time does allow the meat to become a little firmer as it cools, making it easier to carve.

### COCONUT MACAROONS WITH DRIED CHERRIES

Makes 25 to 30 small cookies

- 1 cup unsweetened flaked coconut
- 1 cup sweetened flaked coconut
- 8 egg whites
- Salt
- 1/4 cup dried cherries
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 tablespoon honey, preferably orange blossom honey

1. Preheat the oven to 350 °.  
2. Combine the unsweetened and sweetened coconut on a baking sheet. Lightly toast in the oven for 5 to 10 minutes. Keep close watch so the mixture does not burn, though you do want a nice toasted golden brown color. Remove from the oven and set aside to cool.  
3. Reduce the oven temperature to 325 F. (If using a convection oven, leave at 350 F.)  
4. Whip the egg whites with a pinch of salt in a medium bowl until the whites stiffen into firm peaks.  
5. Fold the toasted coconut into the egg white mixture.  
6. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Drop table-

spoon-size rounds, perhaps using a small ice cream scoop, of the coconut mixture onto the baking sheet. Press one or two dried cherries into the top of each macaroon.

7. Melt the butter and honey together in a microwave on high for 20 seconds. Drizzle the mixture over the top of each macaroon. Sprinkle with a tiny pinch of salt.

8. Bake the macaroons for 20 to 25 minutes, until lightly browned (watch carefully to avoid burning), or for 8 to 10 minutes if using a convection oven. The macaroons should be dry to the touch. You may need to bake them longer if it is a humid day. If you live in a dry area, these will keep well for a week.

Chef's note: If you want to be really fancy, melt some chocolate and dip each one halfway into it.

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