

Here are the recipes for most of the sweets mentioned in *Don't Drop Dad*. These pastries and cookies have been part of our family's holiday celebrations for generations. And to ensure the traditions will continue, I have already started baking some of these yummy treats with my dear Grands: Cora (age 6), Eliza (age 4), and Toby (age 2). They enjoy making these goodies with Gran...but the real joy is in eating them!

Happy baking!

Dena

Cannoli

Many older Italians use a thin broomstick cut into 6" lengths for cannoli tubes...or you can purchase stainless steel tubes! My Great Aunt Mary also used a length of broomstick for her rolling pin, which I now have displayed in my kitchen and proudly use when I'm baking! It brings the pastry-making magic!

For Shells:

3 c flour

3 T white sugar

2 oz butter, melted

3 egg yolks

1 t lemon juice

1 glass table wine (That's helpful, right?! Use 5 oz of red wine or marsala.)

1 egg white (to seal dough edges)

Vegetable oil for deep frying

Mix flour and sugar then make a well in the center. Add butter, egg yolks, lemon juice, and wine. Gradually incorporate the dry ingredients to form the dough. Divide the dough into 4 pieces and cover with a kitchen towel to prevent drying. Using a pasta roller or a rolling pin, roll the dough thin, until the second-to-last setting if using a pasta roller. Sprinkle with flour when needed to prevent sticking. Roll out all 4 pieces and cover with a kitchen towel to prevent drying. Cut into 4" circles using a cookie cutter, soup mug, or whatever you have available! Wrap the circles around the sticks (or stainless tubes), using the beaten egg white to seal the ends. Fry shells in 2" of oil until golden and bubbly. You may need to hold them down to ensure that all sides are evenly fried. Place onto a paper-towel-lined tray. Using paper towels, carefully remove the hot shells from the tubes and continue frying the remaining shells.

For Filling:

1# whole milk ricotta

2 t vanilla

½# powdered sugar

Dark chocolate mini morsels (optional)

Combine ricotta, vanilla, and powdered sugar and whisk until smooth (though ricotta will remain grainy). Taste the mixture and adjust to taste, adding more vanilla and powdered sugar as desired. Fill the shells once completely cooled. Use a pastry bag with a round tip or a freezer bag with the corner cut off. Be sure to pipe in the filling from both ends so that the cream reaches the center of the shell. Top the cannoli ends with chocolate morsels, if desired. Dust with powdered sugar before serving. (Fill cannoli shells up to 2 hours before serving and refrigerate filled cannoli.)

Sfogliatelle

A little labor intensive but SO worth the effort...and the calories!!

For Dough:

4 c flour
1 pinch salt
 $\frac{3}{4}$ c water
3 $\frac{1}{2}$ T honey

For Brushing:

10 T unsalted butter or lard
Powdered sugar

Combine flour and salt in large mixing bowl. Add honey and mix, then gradually add water to create a stiff dough. Place dough on board or counter and knead until smooth and manageable. Wrap dough in plastic wrap and refrigerate for 30 minutes. When chilled, divide the dough into 4 pieces. Roll first piece through a pasta machine using the thickest setting, fold in half, and roll again. Repeat this process, gradually decreasing the setting until 1mm thick, then lay flat and apply thin layer of lard or butter. Repeat with each piece of dough. Roll up the first thin sheet of dough to create a tight sausage shape (roll from narrow end). Then wrap the next thin sheet around that sausage shape, and continue with the other two sheets until all four sheets are wrapped together into a single cylinder. Wrap in plastic wrap and chill 2 hours.

For Filling:

1.9 c (450 ml) whole milk
 $\frac{1}{2}$ c white sugar
1 pinch salt
1 c semolina flour
2 c whole milk ricotta
1 large egg
 $\frac{1}{2}$ t vanilla extract
1 pinch cinnamon
 $\frac{2}{3}$ c candied orange peel, finely chopped

Combine milk, sugar, and salt in a saucepan and bring to a boil. Add semolina flour and stir until it thickens and is smooth. Cool then transfer to a bowl and add remaining ingredients, stirring until smooth and thick. Place bowl in fridge to chill.

Preheat oven to 375 degrees.

Place pastry roll on board or counter and slice into 1cm thick pieces. Grease fingers with lard or butter and make impression in center of slice to create a cone shape. Place a spoonful of filling into the hollow area and press the edges together (close like a clam shell) to lock. Place on baking tray and repeat with remaining slices. Bake for ~30 minutes. Remove from oven and let cool 2 minutes then dust with powdered sugar. Best when served immediately!

Italian Almond Cake

15 oz whole milk ricotta
½ c butter, softened
¾ c white sugar
4 eggs, separated
Zest of 1 large lemon
2 t vanilla extract
¼ t almond extract
2 c almond flour
¼ t salt
½ c *finely* slivered almonds
Powdered sugar

Drain ricotta for 15 minutes until some of the liquid pulls away. Grease 9” springform pan and cut a circle of parchment paper to line the bottom of the pan. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Using a mixer, cream butter and sugar. Add egg yolks one at a time (saving egg whites for later), incorporating each yolk before adding the next. When yolks are well mixed in, add ricotta cheese and beat vigorously until there are no lumps. Add the zest of one lemon, vanilla extract, and almond extract and mix until combined. Add almond flour and salt and mix until there are no dry flour lumps remaining. Set batter aside and whisk egg whites until there are firm peaks. Add 1/3 of egg whites to batter and mix well by hand until completely incorporated. Then add remaining egg whites and *gently fold* them into batter until egg whites have disappeared. Spread mixture into prepared springform pan in an even layer and top with a healthy sprinkling of slivered almonds. Bake for 55-60 minutes—there should still be a little wiggle in the center of the cake. Once cooled, sprinkle powdered sugar over the top. Enjoy for dessert or for breakfast...just like any of these delicious sweets!

Grandy’s Meringue Kisses

Folks tend to eat these like peanuts, so make sure you make a few batches!

2 egg whites
½ c white sugar
½ t vanilla extract
1 c semi-sweet mini morsels
Pinch salt
Non-stick foil

Preheat oven to 300 degrees. Beat egg whites stiff and dry. As you continue beating, add sugar a little at a time and then add vanilla and a pinch of salt. With fork, fold in mini morsels. Using a teaspoon, drop on foil-covered cookie sheet ~2” apart. Bake for 20-25 minutes and remove when *just beginning* to color. Let cool, then carefully remove from foil. Store in air-tight container. Best when eaten within 3 days! Makes approximately 24 cookies.

Grandma's Pizzelles

For Vanilla, Almond, Lemon, or Anise Pizzelles:

3 eggs
¾ c sugar
¾ c butter, melted
1 ½ - 2 c flour (depending on thickness desired)
1 t baking powder
2 t vanilla extract, *or* almond extract, *or* lemon extract, *or* anise

For Chocolate Pizzelles:

3 eggs
¾ c sugar + 3 T
¾ c butter, melted
1 ½ - 2 c flour (depending on thickness desired)
1 t baking powder
2 t vanilla
3 T cocoa

Beat the ingredients in order. Drop rounded spoonful into center of pre-heated pizzelle iron griddle. Close lid, click handles together, and allow to cook until steaming stops, approximately 30 seconds. Remove with fork. Cool on rack. Store in air-tight container.

Great Aunt Mary's Butter Horns

2 c flour
½# butter
¾ c sour cream
1 egg yolk
3 c white sugar
4 t cinnamon
3 c finely chopped walnuts (or pecans!)

Blend flour and butter with pastry blender until mixed well. Add sour cream and egg yolk and stir until mixture leaves side of bowl. With hands, form dough into a ball. Flour the ball lightly and chill in refrigerator for 2 hours. When chilled, cut ball into 4 equal pieces and roll each into a ball. On well-floured board, roll out one ball into a 14" circle. Mix ¾ c sugar and 1 t cinnamon and sprinkle on rolled-out dough. Then sprinkle ¾ c chopped nuts. Press sugar, cinnamon, and nuts into dough with rolling pin. Cut circle into 12 pie-shaped pieces and roll each piece from wide end—like a croissant. Place on ungreased cookie sheet. Repeat this process with 3 remaining balls. Bake at 375 degrees for 15-20 minutes. Remove to cool on wire rack. Makes 48 horns.

Almond Biscotti

As with any biscotti, best when dunked in coffee...or wine, like our ancestors used to do!

4 c flour
4 t baking powder
 $\frac{2}{3}$ c butter, softened
 $1\frac{1}{3}$ c white sugar
4 eggs
2 t vanilla extract
2 c slivered almonds, chopped
1 egg yolk, beaten
1 T whole milk

Stir together flour and baking powder and set aside. In large bowl, beat butter for 30 seconds. Add sugar and beat until fluffy. Add 4 eggs and vanilla and beat until combined. Add half of flour mixture and beat until combined. Using a wooden spoon (preferably one passed down to you from an amazing grandma or auntie!), stir in remaining flour and almonds. Divide dough into 4 pieces and shape each piece into a 9x2x1½" log. Place logs 4" apart on 2 lightly greased cookie sheets. Sitr together 1 beaten egg yolk and 1 T milk and brush egg mixture over the logs. Bake first sheet of logs at 375 degrees for 25 minutes (cover and chill other sheet of logs). Cool on sheet for 30 minutes. Repeat with second sheet of logs. Cut each log diagonally into ½" thick slices. Lay slices cut side down on ungreased cookie sheet. Bake at 325 degrees for 8 minutes. Turn slices over and bake another 8-10 minutes until crisp and dry. Cool on wire rack. Makes 60, which can be stored in air-tight container for 1 week or frozen in moisture-proof container up to 3 months.

Double Chocolate Chunk Biscotti

A delicious variation of the Almond Biscotti recipe!

$\frac{1}{3}$ c butter
 $\frac{2}{3}$ c white sugar
 $\frac{1}{4}$ c unsweetened cocoa powder*
2 t baking powder
2 eggs
 $1\frac{3}{4}$ c flour
4 oz white baking bar*, coarsely chopped
3 oz semi-sweet chocolate*, chopped

*I use the best chocolate I can find so these will taste like heaven in your mouth!

In a large mixing bowl, beat butter on medium speed for 30 seconds. Add sugar, cocoa powder, and baking powder and beat until combined. Beat in the eggs and then as much of the flour as you can. By hand, stir in any remaining flour, white baking bar, and semi-sweet chocolate. Divide dough into 4 pieces and shape each piece into a 9x2x1½" log. Continue following the directions as above in Almond Biscotti recipe.

Kolache Rolls (Fruit)

One of my family's favorite treats at the holidays...especially good on Christmas morning when brunch isn't quite ready!

For Dough:

4 c sifted flour

½# butter

1 t salt

4 T white sugar

2 egg yolks (place the egg whites in small bowl)

2 cakes of yeast

1 scant c lukewarm water

Crumble yeast into lukewarm water, add sugar, and let stand. In large bowl, mix butter, flour, and salt. Make a well in center and drop in unbeaten yolks. Add yeast to same. Mix with wooden spoon till dough leaves side of bowl, approximately 5 minutes. Place dough on floured board and cut into 4 pieces. Form each piece into a ball, cover with dry kitchen towel, and let rest while making the fillings.

For Fruit Fillings:

These are the fillings my family enjoys but feel free to substitute your favorite fillings—just make sure you cook them down until they are thick and spreadable!

12.5 oz can Solo Poppy Seed Cake & Pastry Filling

15 oz bag frozen raspberries

15 oz can sliced peaches in heavy syrup

16 oz cannister or bag of pitted prunes

Place raspberries, peaches, and prunes in separate saucepans. Add water to just cover the prunes. Bring pans to a boil then reduce heat to maintain low boil. Stir frequently to prevent burning and use potato masher to mash the fruit as it softens. If desired, add sugar to taste to the prunes and raspberries. When fruit has reduced (no liquid runs when moving the fruit in the pan) and appears spreadable, place in bowls and let completely cool.

Roll first dough ball into large ~14" circle on well-floured board. Spread poppy seed filling almost to the edge of the circle, being careful not to tear the dough. Slowly roll the circle into a tube and press the ends to seal so the filling won't ooze out during baking! Place lengthwise on large ungreased baking sheet. Repeat process with the remaining dough balls and fillings. (Hint: I use the poppy seed can to measure the exact amount of fruit needed for the remaining rolls.) Bake two rolls, set a few inches apart, on each baking sheet. Before baking, add a few drops of water to the egg whites that were set aside and mix with fork. Using a pastry brush, brush the egg white wash over the pastries, then bake at 425 degrees for 15 minutes. Reduce heat to 400 degrees for 15 minutes, covering loosely with foil if browning too fast. Let cool completely on baking sheets then carefully remove and wrap in foil. When ready to serve, cut into ½" slices.

Kolache Rolls (Nut)

For Dough:

4 c sifted flour

½# butter

1 t salt

4 T white sugar

2 egg yolks (place the egg whites in small bowl)

2 cakes of yeast

1 scant c lukewarm water

Crumble yeast into lukewarm water, add sugar, and let stand. In large bowl, mix butter, flour, and salt. Make a well in center and drop in unbeaten yolks. Add yeast to same. Mix with wooden spoon till dough leaves side of bowl, approximately 5 minutes. Place dough on floured board and cut into 4 pieces. Form each piece into a ball, cover with dry kitchen towel, and let rest while making the filling.

For Nut Filling:

8 c finely ground walnuts

1 c whole milk

1 c sugar

2 T vanilla extract

Heat milk (do not boil), then add ground nuts and stir until milk is absorbed. Remove from heat, add sugar and vanilla, then mix. Let cool.

Roll first dough ball into large ~14" circle on well-floured board. Spread ¼ nut filling almost to the edge of the circle, being careful not to tear the dough. Slowly roll the circle into a tube and press the ends to seal. Place lengthwise on large ungreased baking sheet. Repeat process with the remaining dough balls and nut filling. Bake two rolls, set a few inches apart, on each baking sheet. Before baking, add a few drops of water to the egg whites that were set aside and mix with fork. Using a pastry brush, brush the egg white wash over the pastries, then bake at 425 degrees for 15 minutes. Reduce heat to 400 degrees for 15 minutes, covering loosely with foil if browning too fast. Let cool completely on baking sheets then carefully remove and wrap in foil. When ready to serve, cut into ½" slices.

Nonna's Gianetti Cookies

If you've ever been to an Italian wedding, odds are good you've had these cookies! Thus the reason they're also called Italian Wedding Cookies. But we also enjoy them at Christmas and Easter!

Beat the following ingredients:

6 eggs
1 c vegetable oil
1 ¼ c white sugar
1 c whole milk
4 T lemon extract

In a separate bowl, combine the following:

6 c flour
6 t baking powder
Pinch of salt

For Icing:

1 c powdered sugar
2 t lemon extract
Water

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Make a well in the flour mixture and add the beaten wet ingredients and mix until a dough forms. The dough will be very soft. Using a tablespoon, roll the dough into balls and place 1" apart on baking sheet. Bake for 12-15 minutes. **DO NOT OVERBAKE!** Cool completely on rack. For icing, mix powdered sugar, lemon extract, and a few drops of water (until thick glaze forms), then dunk the top of the cookie into the mixture. Immediately sprinkle with pastel sprinkles.

Italian Hot Chocolate

This is not your typical cup of hot cocoa! It is thick and rich and best when kicked up a notch with a splash of Amaretto!

2 T butter
2 t to 1 T cornstarch
2 c milk
4 T white sugar
1 c chopped chocolate or chocolate chips*

*The better the chocolate you use, the tastier the treat! I prefer semi-sweet or dark chocolate.

Melt butter in medium saucepan over low heat. Whisk in cornstarch until combined (use 1 T if you desire thicker hot chocolate). Add milk and sugar. Increase the heat gradually to medium high. Bring to a boil, stirring constantly. When mixture begins to thicken, reduce heat to low and add in chocolate. Stir constantly until the chocolate is melted, then serve. Add a splash of Amaretto liqueur into each cup for the adults!