

Edible Peanut Butter Fondant

Your kids will love this!

¼ lb. butter at room temperature
10 oz. confectioner's sugar
1 Tablespoon white corn syrup

1 ½ teaspoon vanilla
1 cup creamy peanut butter

Mix all ingredients except sugar; add sugar a little at a time. Knead until smooth and doesn't stick to hands. Dust molds with confectioner's sugar. Press fondant into molds and scrape excess with dull side of knife. Carefully unmold fondant. Store fondant in refrigerator.



house on the hill

Elmhurst, IL

Too Pretty To Eat

house on the hill creates resin and wood composite replicas of historic cookie molds that allow all of us to bake beautiful cookies that are reminiscent of family, history, tradition and culture. The original presses, now in museums or private collections, were carved in clay, wood or metal and are as old as 500 years. The "picture cookies" cast from these molds were used to tell stories visually when most people were unable to read or write and to celebrate weddings, births, victories and holidays. Today, contemporary methods have enabled us to replicate the historic molds and produce copies for your enjoyment and use.

Both functional and beautiful, these charming cookie presses (or molds) are used to make elegant Springerle cookies, spicy Gingerbread or Dutch speculaas. Bolder designs may be used for shortbread. They may also be used for marzipan, fondant and other moldable confections. As pretty as they are, go ahead and eat the cookies—they will be as delicious as they are lovely.

Don't stop at cookies though! Use your imagination and create beautiful castings in paper, paperclay, and beeswax. Decorate cakes, design cards, or personalize invitations. The molds themselves are too pretty to hide, so display them on a wall or easel.



Too Pretty To Eat



the recipes and how to bake them
house on the hill

General Directions For Printing Cookies

Size and liquidity of eggs, flour, and weather can affect your dough. Use your senses to decide if the dough will print well without sticking. You may need to use less or more flour than the recipe states.

To prevent sticking:

Method #1: Brush confectioner's sugar or flour (use flour for cookies and confectioner's sugar for candy) over mold with a clean, dry pastry brush to prevent sticking.

Method #2: In some instances you may prefer to spray mold with non-stick spray or lightly coat with cooking oil (wiping with a paper towel); for example, to avoid a "floury" look on dark gingerbread. Do not grease and flour molds, as the combination will plug the details.

Printing cookies:

Method #1- For most cookies

Roll the dough approximately 3/8" to 1/2" thick, (deeper molds need thicker dough). Brush confectioner's sugar or flour on the mold image, then imprint with your press (mold), cut out shape with knife, pastry wheel, or shaped cutter, dry and bake. If you press a cookie adjacent to another cookie, you may distort the first image, so, remember to "press and cut, press and cut" as you go along.

Method #2- For very deep or large cookies

Roll out dough to desired thickness and, using a dry, clean pastry brush, apply flour or sugar and cut a piece of dough the approximate size needed for the mold. Press dough into the mold with fingers, working from center outward. You may lightly roll the back side of the cookie to smooth before turning out of the mold. Trim, dry and bake. To check your print, use light from the side - daylight or light from a floor lamp - so the shadows let you see if your prints are good.

Drying

Most printed cookies are dried 2-24 hours before baking (depending on your schedule, humidity, etc.) Drying preserves the image during baking.

Baking

Test bake one cookie of each size first! It saves grief!

Baking Temperatures: Ovens vary widely! If your test cookie "over puffs" or tilts, reduce heat, put an empty cookie sheet on bottom oven shelf, or prop the oven door slightly ajar with handle of a wooden spoon to wick off heat. For tiny cookies, you may need the temperature set as low as 200 degrees. In general, the smaller the cookie, the lower the temperature. The larger the cookie the higher the temperature.

Bubbles: Flat areas of larger cookies are vulnerable to "bubbles" while baking. Simply press them down manually and finish baking.

Hartshorn

(Ammonium Carbonate or Baker's Ammonia)

Hartshorn is an old-time leavening unexcelled for cookies and produces an especially light, delicate texture. Hartshorn can be substituted for baking powder proportionately one-to-one in cookie or cracker recipes. Do not use for cake or bread. Hartshorn is not affected by age, but it will evaporate so keep it tightly sealed. Doughs made with hartshorn store well, as its leavening action is only triggered by heat, not moisture. There will be an ammonia smell during baking, but it will be baked out of your cookies. Do not eat raw cookie dough made with hartshorn.

Flavoring Oils

Flavoring oils are more pure and more intense than extracts or flavorings. They are a superior choice for your cookie baking. Don't be alarmed if anise oil crystallizes or congeals. Place the bottle in warm water until it is liquified and shake.

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depending on size of cookie. Store in airtight tin containers. They keep for months, and improve with age.

Yield 3 to 12 dozen, depending on size.

**Important - see Baking Temperatures page 3.

Softening Cookies

Should your cookies accidentally harden, put slices of apple on firm bread in with them for a day or more. Watch and change apple slices if needed to prevent mildewing.

Variations

- Chocolate Springerle

Simply add 1 cup cocoa to recipe and 2 teaspoons vanilla or chocolate extract in place of other flavorings. For a lighter colored chocolate Springerle, use chocolate flavor confectioner's sugar available in 1 lb boxes, plus 2 teaspoons vanilla or chocolate extract.

- Cocoa-Mocha

2 tablespoons powdered (pulverize granules if needed), instant coffee added to milk, plus either of the chocolate formulas given above.

- Other flavors

* Oil of lemon, orange use 2-3 teaspoons of these oils or 1 teaspoon oil and grated rind of 3 oranges or lemons

* Oil of cinnamon, almond, peppermint use 1/2 teaspoon

* Vanilla flavor is good - use 3 or 4 teaspoons extract.

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Nini's Perfection Springerle Cookies

These dense cake like delicacies date back to at least the 1600's and originated in Bavaria, Switzerland and the Alsace area of France. For eating quality, ease and quality of prints, this recipe is just perfection!

1/2 teaspoon baker's ammonia (hartshorn) or baking powder

2 Tablespoons milk

6 large eggs, room temperature

6 cups confectioner's sugar (1-1/2#)

1/2 cup unsalted butter, softened but not melted

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/2 teaspoon oil of anise (see variations*)

2 lb. box sifted cake flour (Swansdown or Softasilk)

Grated rind of orange or lemon, optional (enhances flavor of the traditional anise or citrus flavors)

More flour as needed

Springerle Recipe Directions

Dissolve hartshorn in milk and set aside for 30-60 minutes. Beat eggs until thick and lemon-colored (10-20 minutes). Slowly beat in the confectioner's sugar, then the softened butter. Add the hartshorn and milk, salt, preferred flavoring, and grated rind of lemon or orange, if desired. Gradually beat in as much flour as you can with the mixer, then stir in the remainder of the 2 lbs. of flour to make a stiff dough. Turn onto floured surface and knead in enough flour to make a good print without sticking. Follow general directions for imprinting and drying cookies. Bake on greased or baker's parchment-lined cookie sheets at 225 to 325 degrees** until barely golden on the bottom, 10-15 minutes or more,

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Speculaas or Spekulaits

A holiday tradition in Holland ("windmill cookies"), Belgium, Northern Germany, and Scandinavia. They can be printed with Springerle molds that are of a low and even depth.

3/4 cup softened butter, preferably unsalted

2 cups brown sugar (spooned, not packed)

1 egg

1 cup ground almonds

2 teaspoons cinnamon

1/2 teaspoon each of salt, cloves, ginger, cardamom, and mace

2 teaspoons cocoa

grated rind of one lemon

3 cups flour

4-6 Tablespoons milk

shaved or sliced almonds for undersides and milk for the tops

Cream butter and brown sugar together; add egg, almonds, then salt and flavor ingredients, and finally work in flour. Add 4-6 tablespoons milk to make a stiff dough. Refrigerate 30-60 minutes. Roll, print and cut out as in General Directions on pages 2-3 or if you have wooden Speculaas molds - prepare by spraying with non-stick spray or oiling and wiping off excess (done once for the whole batch). Flour molds (for every use), knocking out excess. Press dough into mold, then cut excess dough off flush with back of mold with a wire or knife. Unmold carefully onto greased or parchment-lined baking sheet which is sprinkled with the shaved almonds. Brush with milk. No drying is needed before baking. Bake at 350 degrees for 10-12 minutes.

Yield- 30-90 cookies depending on size.

Note - if you seem to have some "fading" of pattern during baking try chilling the molded cookies a few minutes before baking.

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Gingerbread

A sturdy spicy cookie that keeps well. Try mild and spicy versions and anything in between to fit your personal palate.

Mild

Mix together :

- 1 c. molasses
- 1 c. honey
- 1 c. butter, softened
or vegetable oil

Mix together :

- 6 -1/4 c. unbleached white flour
- 3 teaspoons ground ginger
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1 teaspoon salt

Spicy

Mix together :

- 2 c. molasses
- 1 c. vegetable oil

Mix together :

- 6 1/4 c. unbleached white flour
 - 4 teaspoons ground ginger
 - 3 teaspoons ground cinnamon
 - 1-1/2 teaspoon ground cloves
 - 1-1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg
 - 1 teaspoon salt
- (optional, if you like it hot-
1 teaspoon dry mustard powder
1 teaspoon ground white pepper)

Combine both mixtures together and knead well. Don't refrigerate - mold after mixing. Follow general directions for molding. It is not necessary to dry gingerbread cookies before baking. Bake at 350 degrees for 10-12 minutes. Cool on wire rack. Store in tightly covered tins. If needed, soften cookies with slices of apple on firm bread (rye) for a day or two. Keeps well.

Here's a tender sugar cookie that holds the patterns of the cookie molds quite well.

Vanilla Sugar Cookie

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| 1 cup + 2 Tablespoon sugar | 1/4 lb butter +1 Tablespoon Crisco |
| 6 Tablespoons water | 1 1/2 teaspoon baking soda |
| 1 Tablespoon vanilla | 1 Tablespoon water |
| | 4 cups flour |

Combine sugar and water in saucepan. Stir over moderate heat until sugar is dissolved. Remove from heat, add butter, Crisco and vanilla. Stir until cool.

Disolve soda in 1 tablespoon water and add to sugar mixture. Add flour gradually and work until dough is firm.

Form cookies by rolling dough out with plain rolling pin. Press cookie mold that has been brushed with flour into dough. Cut cookies and place on cookie sheet. Be sure to flour mold before every pressing.

Bake in a 350 degree oven for 10 minutes. You may have to adjust time based on cookie size. Ten minutes is good for a basic 2" cookie. These cookies will keep for 1 week in a tightly sealed container. We suggest metal tins.

Do you like nutmeg? Try adding 1 teaspoon of freshly ground nutmeg with vanilla. Yum!

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Shortbread

A buttery year round favorite. Select a boldly carved mold as tender shortbread will not hold details when baked. Try your favorite shortbread recipe or this one.

- 1/2 cup butter at room temperature
- 1/3-1/2 cup confectioner's sugar (unsifted)
- 1/4 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 cup flour (unsifted) or 2/3 cup of flour and 1/3 cup cornstarch
- pinch of salt

Wisk together sugar, flour and salt. Cut butter in to small pieces and add to flour mixture. With your hands work butter into flour until thoroughly mixed. Knead the dough on an unfloured board until nice and smooth.

Dust the mold with flour. Press dough into the mold. Gently release dough from mold by prying edges loose. Place on parchment lined cookie sheet. Bake at 325 degrees for 20 minutes. (Longer for large cookies) Yield 8-16 cookies depending on size.

Chocolate Backing for cookies

- 6 ounces of semi sweet or dark chocolate
- 2 Tablespoons high quality vegetable shortening
- 1 1/2 Tablespoons light corn syrup

Melt the ingredients in the top of a double boiler over low heat, being careful not to get any water into the mixture. Stir gently to blend.

Remove top of double boiler from heat and place on towel. Dip cookies into chocolate or brush chocolate on backs of cookies. Place cookies on wax paper to set.

Marzipan

An almond based confection that is moldable and can be shaped as candy or as a decorative addition to cakes or cookies

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 3 cups whole blanched almonds | 1/2 cup light corn syrup |
| 2-1/2 cups confectioner's sugar | 1/2 cup water |
| 3-2/3 cups sugar | 1/2 teaspoon almond oil |

Process almonds and confectioner's sugar in a food processor until almonds are finely ground.

Combine in a large, heavy-bottomed saucepan the sugar, corn syrup and water. Over low heat, gently stir with a wooden spoon until the sugar is dissolved. Dip a pastry brush in warm water and brush down the sides of the pan. Place a warmed candy thermometer in the pan, raise the heat to medium, and cook, without stirring, until it reaches 244 degrees F. The mixture should be a firm-ball.

Remove from the heat, turn on the food processor, and immediately pour the sugar syrup through the feed tube into the almond mixture. Grind to a fine paste, then add the almond oil.

Pulse to blend in the almond oil. Place the paste in a medium size bowl lightly coated with vegetable spray. Cover the bowl with a damp dish towel (to keep the paste from drying out) and let cool. The marzipan is ready to use when it cools to room temperature. Food coloring or flavoring oils may be added at this time. Store at room temperature, tightly wrapped in plastic wrap and placed in an airtight container for up to 3 months. (Marzipan can also be frozen for up to 6 months. Thaw and bring to room temperature before using.)

Pinch off a piece of marzipan. Knead the marzipan until it becomes

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pliable and smooth. Dust with confectioner's sugar and press it into the mold. Use a small, sharp knife to trim away any excess. The marzipan should be level with the surface of the mold. Gently release from the mold by prying it away from the edges.

For a special presentation:

Roll out marzipan into a thick round (Thickness will vary depending on the depth of the mold you wish to use.) Dust the mold with confectioners sugar and press into marzipan. Cut out molded marzipan with round, rectangular, or oval cutter. Use the same cutter to cut brownies or cookies and place molded marzipan on top of brownie.

Edible Chocolate Modeling Clay

12 ounces semi-sweet, milk or white chocolate, or confectionary coating
3/8 cup or 6 Tablespoons light corn syrup
Unsweetened cocoa powder

Place the chocolate in the top pan of a double boiler or medium bowl. Place the pan or bowl over a saucepan that contains hot, but not boiling, water. Make sure the water doesn't touch the pan's or bowl's bottom. Melt the chocolate, making sure that its temperature doesn't go over 100 degrees. Add the corn syrup. Stir with rubber spatula, folding and mixing until no shiny syrup is visible.

Turn the clay out onto a sheet of wax paper. Dust molds well with cocoa. Push chocolate into mold, using edge of spatula to scrape chocolate flat across top of mold. Carefully tap mold to release chocolate.

Let stand at room temperature about 2 hours, or until firm. Use at once, or store in an air-tight container at room temperature up to one month.

for extra "white space" around image. This will allow space for a deckled edge.

3. Extract the water:

Gently push pulp into the carving with fingers. Cover pulp with toweling and continue to blot excess water. Make sure to press firmly over the detailed areas of your mold to ensure they will appear on your casting. Use dry toweling as needed.

4. Remove the casting:

When toweling no longer soaks excess moisture, gently turn mold over onto a dry surface. Slide a sharp knife down the sides to release any pulp that may have been pushed down the sides of the mold. Use the knife to gently release the sides and corners of the casting, careful not to tear into the casting or scratch the mold.

5. Deckling the edges:

At this stage, the casting is very fragile and will tear very easily. However, controlling the tear of "deckled edge" can be tricky. To help control the tear, try this tip: Apply gentle pressure to the area you wish to retain with a dull knife as you use a tweezer to pull away tiny pieces of pulp to create a deckled edge. Remember, you can always remove a tiny bit more pulp, but once you pull off a section too big, it can be difficult to put back. Go slowly and gently.

6. Drying the casting:

Allow the casting to dry completely overnight. Drying time may vary depending on humidity or temperature. A cookie cooling rack works well for this by allowing air to flow on both sides.

If you are not happy with the casting simply place it back in the blender!

Papercasting

Our instructions are general. In time you may find your own techniques which work better for you. Don't be afraid to experiment with different kinds of paper. Water based liquid such as teas can add color to your castings. Do not add paint to the pulp as it will discolor your mold. Food coloring tends to fade in the sunlight. Always remove the casting from the mold to dry. Do not expose the mold to prolonged moisture.

Materials	Mold release spray
Cookie Mold	(optional, highly recommended)
100% Cotton Paper or Cotton Linters	Clean absorbent towels
Water	Tweezers
Blender	
Strainer	

Preparing the mold:

Make sure the mold is clean and dry. Spray mold with release spray (read directions before spraying). We recommend spraying the mold every 3rd or 4th time it is cast. Place your mold face up on a clean absorbent towel or cloth on a firm surface.

1. Prepare the pulp:

With practice you will have a better idea of how much pulp you will need for the mold you have chosen to cast. Tear paper into small squares approximately 1 inch square and put in a blender. We suggest using 1 small handful to start with. Fill blender 3/4 full of hot water. Soak for 5 minutes. Chop or puree until you have a fine pulp. Pour into strainer to drain off excess water. Do not squeeze pulp. If the pulp is too dry, it will not cast the delicate details of your mold.

2. Fill the mold:

Place a "pancake" of pulp on mold. Be sure to cover carving and allow

These are recipes that have been created specifically for use with cookie molds. Not all cookie doughs work well in cookie molds. Only stiff doughs with relatively low sugar and fat content will retain the details of the molds.

Try our tested recipes for cookies too pretty to eat.

Care of your house on the hill molds:

To clean your molds, brush with a soft bristled brush (our mushroom brush works well) but never soak the molds in water. Treat them as you would fine woodenware.

Made in the U.S.A.
Hand crafted and hand finished

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Elmhurst, IL