

BEST vineyards

winery & distillery Candied Orange Peel

6 thick-skinned Valencia or Navel Oranges
4 ½ cups Sugar, plus extra for rolling
1 ½ cups Water

Cut tops and bottoms off the orange and score the orange into quarters, cutting down only into the peel and not into the fruit. Peel the skin and pith of the orange into large pieces, use the orange for another recipe. Cut the peel into strips about ¼ inch wide. Put the orange peel in a large saucepan with cold water to cover, bring to a boil over high heat. Then pour off the water. Repeat 1 or 2 more times depending on how assertive you want the orange peels to be. Remove the orange peels from the pan.

Whisk the sugar with 1½ cups of water. Bring to a simmer and cook for 8 to 9 minutes (230 to 234°F on candy thermometer). Add the peels and simmer gently reducing heat to retain a simmer. Cook until the peels get translucent, about 45 minutes. Resist the urge to stir the peels or you may introduce sugar crystals into the syrup. If necessary, swirl the pan to move the peels around. Drain the peels. Save the syrup for iced tea. Roll the peels in sugar and dry on a rack for 4 to 5 hours. Store in an air-tight container. Yields about 2 cups of peels. Also try them dipped in chocolate.

White Chocolate Chip-Blueberry Cookies

1 stick (8 tablespoons) unsalted butter, at room temperature
1/3 cup packed light brown sugar
1/3 cup granulated sugar
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
1 large egg
1 cup white chocolate chips
1 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon fine salt
1/2 cup dried blueberries

Beat the butter, brown sugar and granulated sugar with an electric mixer in a large bowl until fluffy. Add the vanilla and egg and beat to combine. Whisk together the flour, baking soda and salt in a medium bowl. Add the flour mixture to the butter mixture and beat until just combined. Stir in the white chocolate chips and dried blueberries.

Scoop slightly mounded tablespoons of the dough and roll into balls. Arrange about 2 inches apart on parchment lined baking sheets. Position oven racks in the top and bottom thirds of the oven and preheat to 350 degrees F. Bake until the cookies are set and golden on the bottom, 12 to 15 minutes. Let cool on the baking sheets for 10 minutes, then transfer to racks to cool completely.

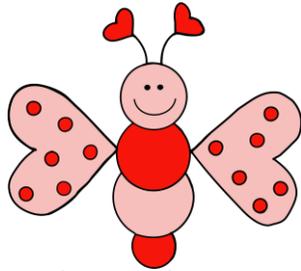
Chocolate Amaretti (GF)



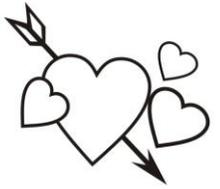
1-1/4 cup almond paste (maybe purchased or you can make it, recipe follows)
¼ cup sugar
½ cup confectioners' sugar
2 large egg whites
¼ cup baking cocoa

In the bowl of a stand mixer, crumble the almond paste into small pieces. Add remaining ingredients; mix on low until combined. Beat on medium until well combined and mixture is smooth, 2-3 minutes. Drop by tablespoonfuls 2 in. apart onto parchment-lined baking sheets. Bake at 350° until tops are cracked, 17-20 minutes. Cool for 1 minute before removing from pans to wire racks. Store in an airtight container.

Chocolate Lover's Weekend



Ruby Truffles (GF)



1 lb Ruby Callets (Callebaut Ruby Chocolate)
4 oz. heavy cream (high fat content recommended)
1-1/2 lbs white chocolate (chips are OK)
½ lb red chocolate chips (to decorate, if desired)
1 to 2 tablespoons vegetable oil

Prepare the Chocolate: Place the ruby chocolate callets or finely chopped chocolate in a medium-sized heatproof bowl. Set aside. Heat the Cream: In a small saucepan, heat the heavy cream over medium heat until it just begins to simmer around the edges. Look for small bubbles; do not let it come to a rolling boil. Boiling can cause the ganache to separate.

Create the Emulsion: Pour the hot cream directly over the ruby chocolate. Let it sit, untouched, for 5 minutes. This allows the heat from the cream to gently melt the chocolate without scorching it. Whisk the Ganache: Starting from the center of the bowl, begin whisking in small, tight circles. The mixture will look broken at first, but keep whisking. As the chocolate and cream emulsify, it will transform into a smooth, glossy, vibrant pink ganache.

Chill the Ganache: Press a piece of plastic wrap directly onto the surface of the ganache to prevent a skin from forming. Refrigerate for at least 2 hours, or until firm enough to scoop (up to overnight). Scoop and Roll: Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Use a small cookie scoop or a teaspoon to portion the chilled ganache. Quickly roll each portion between your palms to form a smooth ball. If the ganache becomes too soft, return it to the refrigerator for 15-20 minutes.

Coat the Truffles In a double boiler, slowly melt the white chocolate over medium high heat. Once melted, remove from heat and fold in the vegetable oil. Drop each truffle in the white chocolate using 2 forks to evenly coat each truffle. Remove the coated truffles and place on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Final Chill & Storage: Refrigerate the finished truffles for at least 30 minutes to set completely. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to two weeks. For the best flavor and texture, let them sit at room temperature for 10-15 minutes before serving.

Chocolate Gingersnaps (Egg free)

½ cup butter, softened
½ cup packed light brown sugar
¼ cup molasses
1 tablespoon water
2 teaspoons minced fresh gingerroot
1 tablespoon baking cocoa
7 ounces semisweet chocolate, finely chopped
¼ cup coarse sugar
1-1/4 teaspoon ground ginger
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg
¼ teaspoon ground cloves
1-1/2 cups AP flour

In a large bowl, cream butter and brown sugar until light and fluffy, 5-7 minutes. Beat in the molasses, water and gingerroot. Combine the flour, cocoa, ginger, baking soda, cinnamon, nutmeg and cloves; gradually add to creamed mixture and mix well. Stir in chocolate. Cover and refrigerate until easy to handle, about 2 hours. Preheat oven to 350°. Shape dough into 1-in. balls; roll in sugar. Place 2 in. apart on greased baking sheets. Bake until tops begin to crack, 10-12 minutes. Cool for 2 minutes before removing to wire racks.

Easy Veggie Dip Recipe

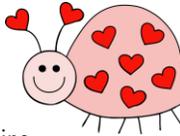


1 cup mayonnaise
1 tablespoon dried parsley
¼ teaspoon ground black pepper
½ teaspoon garlic powder
2 teaspoon lemon juice
1 tablespoon fresh dill, finely chopped (or 1 teaspoon dried dill)
2 tablespoon chives, finely chopped (or 2 teaspoons dried chives)
1 cup sour cream
½ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon paprika
¼ teaspoon dried onion powder
¼ teaspoon cumin

In a bowl, whisk together all the ingredients until creamy. Refrigerate until ready to use. Serve with your favorite fresh vegetables.

Old-World Style Almond Paste

250 grams whole, blanched almonds (approx.. 1-2/3 cup)**
125 grams unrefined cane sugar (approx.. 9 tablespoons)
37 grams honey or agave nectar (approx.. 2 tablespoons)
45 grams water (approx.. 3 tablespoons), more as needed
2 teaspoons almond extract or cherry extract (optional)



NOTE: If possible, use weight measurements for this recipe.

If your almonds aren't pre-blached, blanch them (see directions below). Place the almonds in a food processor and grind until they are the size of very coarsely ground coffee. Let sit until the sugar mixture is ready. ** Option: You can use almond flour in place of the blanched almonds to reduce the wear & tear on your food processor. Just reduce the grinding below in the food processor to 2 minutes.

Place the sugar, honey, and water in a medium saucepan and bring to a full, rolling boil over medium-high heat. While it's still boiling, pour the syrup over the ground almonds (or almond flour) in the food processor, then process until smooth, which usually takes 5-10 minutes. At some point in the first few minutes of grinding, add the almond extract through the feed tube so that it gets thoroughly worked into the dough. If the dough isn't cohesive after processing for several minutes, add more water 1 teaspoon at a time, letting each addition get fully worked into the dough before adding more. Remove the almond paste from the processor and wrap it tightly in plastic wrap or a damp tea towel (although it will likely stick a bit to the tea towel - be forewarned). Place in the refrigerator until fully chilled, then use as desired. Makes about 1-1/2 cups.

How to Blanch Almonds: Bring a large saucepan of water to a boil, then add any amount of raw almonds. Let the almonds simmer for about 60 seconds, then drain them and run them under cold tap water to stop the cooking process and completely cool them. Pour them out onto towels and pat them dry. At this point, you should notice the skins beginning to shrivel, so at that point, squeeze and rub each almond gently until the skins begin to peel off. Use the blanched almonds immediately or store them in an airtight container in the freezer for up to 6 months.

FYI: Using whole blanched almonds is very hard on your food processor.



Mocha-Walnut Macarons

2 large egg whites
1/3 cup superfine sugar
1 cup confectioners' sugar
1/2 cup chopped walnuts, toasted
1 tablespoon instant coffee granules
2 tablespoons baking cocoa

Dash of salt



Place egg whites in a large bowl; let stand at room temperature 30 minutes. Preheat oven to 275°. Place confectioners' sugar, walnuts, cocoa and coffee in a food processor; process until finely ground.

Add salt to egg whites; beat on medium speed until soft peaks form with a wire whisk attachment. Gradually add superfine sugar, 1 tablespoon at a time, beating on high after each addition until sugar is dissolved. Continue beating until stiff glossy peaks form. Carefully fold in walnut mixture until blended. Pipe or drop by rounded teaspoonfuls 1 in. apart onto parchment-lined baking sheets. Air-dry for 30 minutes before baking. Bake for 18-20 minutes. Remove parchment from baking sheet to a wire rack; cool completely. Remove from parchment; store in an airtight container.

Greek Yogurt Cream Cheese Fruit Dip

1 - 8-ounce block cream cheese
1 cup Greek yogurt, *plain or vanilla*
pinch of salt
1/4 cup honey (or Agave syrup)
2 teaspoon vanilla extract

Soften cream cheese by resting on countertop or microwave for 20-30 seconds. Use a whisk attachment to mix cream cheese, yogurt, honey (or agave syrup), vanilla and salt until smooth and creamy with little to no lumps of cream cheese. Mix for several minutes until you get desired consistency. Store in an airtight container in the fridge for 5-7 days. Serve with fruit of choice.



Coconut Chocolate Slices

3 ounces cream cheese, softened
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 cup sweetened shredded coconut
1/3 cup sugar
1/2 cup finely chopped nuts

cookie dough:

6 tablespoons butter, softened
1 large egg, room temperature
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
2 ounces semisweet chocolate, melted and cooled
1-1/2 cups all-purpose flour
1 cup confectioners' sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/2 teaspoon salt

Beat cream cheese, granulated sugar and vanilla until smooth. Stir in coconut and nuts. Refrigerate until easy to handle.

Meanwhile, cream butter and confectioners' sugar until light and fluffy, about 5-7 minutes. Beat in egg, chocolate and vanilla. Combine flour, baking soda and salt; gradually add to creamed mixture and mix well. Refrigerate until easy to handle, about 30 minutes. Once chilled, roll dough between waxed paper into a 14x4-1/2-in. rectangle. Remove top piece of waxed paper. Shape coconut filling into a 14-in. roll and place on dough, 1 in. from a long side. Roll dough around filling and seal edges. Wrap and refrigerate 2-3 hours or overnight. Preheat oven to 350°. Unwrap chilled dough and cut into 1/4-in. slices. Place 2 in. apart on greased baking sheets, reshaping if necessary. Bake until set, 8-10 minutes. Cool 1 minute before removing to wire racks.

Gluten-Free Chocolate Crinkle Cookies

1/2 cup butter, softened
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 cups superfine almond flour
1/4 cup coconut flour
1/8 teaspoon salt
1 cup sugar
2 large eggs, room temperature
1/2 cup baking cocoa
1/4 teaspoon baking soda
1/4 cup confectioners' sugar

Preheat the oven to 350°. In a large bowl, cream butter, sugar, and vanilla until light and fluffy, 5-7 minutes. Beat in eggs, 1 at a time. In another bowl, whisk almond flour, baking cocoa, coconut flour, baking soda and salt; gradually beat into creamed mixture. Shape dough into 1-in. balls. Roll in confectioners' sugar. Place 2 in. apart on parchment-lined baking sheets. Bake until set, 8-10 minutes. Remove to wire racks to cool.

