

Sweets & Treats Cookie Swap!



Ring in the holidays with all the smells, tastes and sounds of Christmas. What says holidays better than cookies! There are so many kinds that we could never make all of these cookies and still enjoy all the other pleasures of the season. A cookie swap can be lots of fun, plus you end up with a multitude of cookie varieties, even though you only had to bake one kind. What a great way to discover new cookie recipes, short cut your holiday baking, and have fun with friends! It's like having your own cookie elf!

A cookie swap isn't only about the cookies. It is a way to take a break from the hustle and bustle of the holidays and share some tasty treats, humorous stories and laughter with other cookies lovers. And who doesn't love a cookie?

You can use all or parts of the party box, or even mix and match from other party boxes, to create a customized Cookie Swap in your own home. So let's get baking!



Sweets & Treats Cookie Swap!

Invitations



Who's at the Party?

A Cookie Swap is no ordinary party! No one arrives or leaves a cookie swap party empty handed. In fact you leave with more than you came with because there's more to this party than just cookies. As if cookies aren't a good enough reason to have a party!

However you let people know about your party be sure your invitations include at least the following information:

1. Date
2. Time
3. Location
4. Dress Code –RSVP by date (usually 1 week before the party)

Send your invites a month to three weeks before your event so people have plenty of time to respond. Here is a detailed **Cookie Swap Invitation** for you to use. The ideal time for a Cookie Swap is a weekday, early evening. This gives you enough time to socialize with drinks and appetizers and then launch into the Cookie Swap!



Sweets & Treats Cookie Swap!

Menu



The smell of freshly baked cookies greets your guests as they enter your door. The halls are decked and Christmas music fills the air. 'Tis the Season to be Jolly, especially with all the snacks and beverages we have created for you to share with friends.

We have a savory menu that is easy to make yet interesting and flavorful. Who needs to go into a sugar coma just as the holidays are about to kick into full swing? You have a step by step plan of how to pull it all together with ease right here in the party plan.

Cocktails

Red & Green Martinis

Or

Mulled Wine

Savory Snacks

Mini Mushroom Tartlets

Shrimp Wonton Cups

Mini Holiday Cheese Balls with Crudités

Pizzettes



Sweets & Treats Cookie Swap!

Recipes



Cocktails

Grinch Martini



Ingredients:

1 ounces Midori melon liqueur

2 ounces Vodka

1 ounce Cointreau Orange Liqueur

1/2 ounce lemon juice

1 teaspoon simple syrup

1 maraschino cherry

Directions:

Pour the ingredients into a martini shaker with ice. Shake well. Strain into a chilled martini glass. Garnish with a Maraschino cherry.



Red Apple Martini (Rudolph's Apple)



Ingredients:

- 1.5 ounce sour apple schnapps (Pucker)
- 1.5 ounce Canadian whiskey (Crown Royal)
- 1.5 ounce cranberry juice
- 1 Red Apple, thinly sliced
- 1 can of Sprite (not diet)

Directions:

Slice apple down the center to make a large slice to put in the glass or cut the apple in thin wedges to place on the rim of the glass. Place the cut apple in a bowl of Sprite to keep it from turning brown. Fill a shaker can with ice, and pour in the sour apple schnapps, whiskey, and cranberry juice. Shake well, then strain into a chilled martini glass.

Mulled Wine



The drink originated in older times when wine would often go bad or just didn't come out right. It was discovered that when bad wine was mixed with spices, fruits and honey it was possible to drink again. Pick up an inexpensive bottle of red wine or if you have a



bottle or two of wine that just doesn't get finished.... if that is possible.....and brew up a batch of Glühwein, picturing yourself in the snowy German countryside at Christmastime. You will love the smell throughout your home!

Ingredients:

Serves 8-10

2 (3-inch) cinnamon sticks

5 cardamom pods

3 black peppercorns

4 whole cloves

1/2 cup sugar

1 1/2 cups water

1/2 cup brandy

1 (750-ml) bottle dry red wine such as Côtes du Rhône (inexpensive wine is perfect for this)

1 vanilla bean, halved lengthwise

1 small orange, thinly sliced

1 small lemon, thinly sliced

Directions:

Wrap cinnamon sticks, cardamom pods, peppercorns, and cloves in cheesecloth and tie with string. Bring sugar and water to a boil in a 5-quart heavy (non aluminum) pot, stirring until sugar is dissolved, then add spice bag, wine, vanilla bean, and fruit. Simmer, uncovered, stirring occasionally, 30 minutes.



Savory Snacks

Mini Mushroom Tartlets

Inspired by Martha Stewart



Ingredients:

1 sheet frozen puff pastry, thawed and cut into 1-inch rounds

1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for muffin pan

1 large shallot, diced small

1 pound cremini mushrooms, large chop

1/3 cup Port wine

Coarse salt and ground pepper

2 teaspoons fresh rosemary leaves, plus more for serving, finely chopped

3/4 cup grated Gruyere cheese (2 ounces)

Directions:

Preheat oven to 375 degrees.

Place cut puff pastry rounds in a single layer on a parchment-lined baking sheet and refrigerate while mushrooms cook.



In a large skillet, heat oil over medium-high. Add shallot and cook, stirring, until soft, 3 minutes. Add mushrooms and cook, stirring, until soft and browned, 10 minutes. Add port and cook until liquid is absorbed into the mushrooms. Season with salt and pepper. Stir in rosemary and remove skillet from heat.

Lightly oil mini muffin cups. Divide mushroom mixture among cups, then top each with cheese and a chilled pastry round. Bake until pastry is golden brown and puffed, about 25 minutes, rotating pan halfway through.

Run a small knife around cups to loosen tartlets. Place a rimmed baking sheet or large plate over pan and invert to release tartlets. Sprinkle with more rosemary. Serve warm.

Shrimp in Wonton Cups



Ingredients:

1 package of square wonton wrappers

Olive Oil Spray

1/3 cup mayonnaise

2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro

5 teaspoons fresh lime juice

1/2 of a red bell pepper, finely diced

1/2 mango, finely chopped

3/4 teaspoon Sriracha (more or less depending on heat desired)



12 ounces peeled cooked medium shrimp, coarsely chopped

Fresh cilantro leaves

Directions:

Preheat oven to 325°F. Place wonton squares on work surface and lightly spray them with olive oil. Press each into miniature muffin cup, oiled side down. Bake until wonton cups are golden brown, about 10 minutes. Cool completely in tins. They can be made 3 days ahead. Remove cups from tins and store airtight at room temperature.

Whisk mayonnaise, chopped fresh cilantro, lime juice, red bell pepper, mango, and Sriracha in medium bowl to blend. Stir in shrimp. Season salad to taste with salt and pepper. Salad can be prepared up to 1 day ahead. Cover and refrigerate.

Place wonton cups on serving platter. Spoon 1 teaspoon shrimp salad into each cup no more than 45 minutes before party starts or they can lose their crunch. Garnish with cilantro leaves.

3 Festive Cheese Ball Flavors



Base Recipe:

1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, softened

3 packages cream cheese (8 ounces each)

2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice

1/2 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce

5 dashes hot sauce (such as Tabasco)

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/4 teaspoon freshly ground pepper



BACON CHEDDAR AND CRANBERRY:

1 pound extra sharp cheddar cheese, finely shredded

1/4 cup apricot pineapple preserves

8 slices bacon, cooked crisp & crumbled

3/4 cup dried cranberries, finely chopped

GOAT CHEESE AND SUN DRIED TOMATO:

8 ounces goat cheese

2 tablespoons sun dried tomatoes, finely chopped

1/2 cup fresh chives, finely chopped

ROQUEFORT AND PECAN:

6 ounces Roquefort cheese

1 shallot, minced (about 1 tablespoon)

2 teaspoons brandy

1 cup toasted pecans, coarsely chopped

Directions:

Put butter, cream cheese, lemon juice, Worcestershire sauce, hot sauce, salt, and pepper into the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment; mix on medium speed until combined. Divide equally among 3 medium bowls.

Flavor #1 - Stir cheddar cheese, bacon and apricot preserves with base mixture in the first bowl. If not using immediately, refrigerate up to 3 days or freeze up to 1 month. Form into mini balls. Roll cheese ball in cranberries to coat before serving.

Flavor #2 - Stir goat cheese and sun dried tomatoes with base mixture in remaining bowl. If not using immediately, refrigerate up to 3 days or freeze up to 1 month. Form into mini balls. Roll in chives to coat before serving.

Flavor #3 - Stir blue cheese and shallot with base mixture in second bowl; add brandy. If not using immediately, refrigerate up to 3 days; freeze up to 1 month. Form into mini balls. Roll in pecans to coat before serving.



Serve on a 3 tier stand with an assortment of crackers and vegetables.



Pizzettes with Caramelized Onions, Goat Cheese & Prosciutto

Recipe Courtesy of Giada de Laurentiis

Ingredients:

3 tablespoons olive oil

3 large onions, sliced (about 4 cups)

1 teaspoon kosher salt

1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

1 teaspoon herbs de Provence

1 teaspoon sugar

1 ball purchased pizza dough (about 12 to 16 ounces)

3 ounces goat cheese, crumbled (about 1/2 cup)

2 to 3 ounces prosciutto (about 5 large slices), cut into 2 by 2-inch pieces

Parsley or rosemary sprigs, for garnish

Special equipment: 2 1/2-inch round cookie cutter



Directions:

In a large, heavy skillet, heat the oil over low heat. Add the onions, salt, pepper, herbs de Provence, and sugar. Stir to combine. Continue cooking over very low heat, stirring occasionally, until the onions are caramelized and dark golden brown, about 45 minutes to 1 hour.

Preheat the oven to 475 degrees F.

Roll out the pizza dough into a 1/4-inch-thick round. Using the cookie cutter, cut out 24 dough circles. Arrange the circles on a large heavy baking sheet. Place a small spoonful of the caramelized onions on each dough circle. Top with a small amount of goat cheese. Bake until golden and bubbly, about 10 minutes.

While still hot, top each pizzette with a piece of prosciutto. Arrange on a serving platter and garnish with sprigs of parsley or rosemary. Serve immediately.

Fast and Easy Pizzettes

Just roll out some pizza dough, cut out rounds with a 2-3 inch cookie or pastry cutter. Place on greased baking sheet, top with your favorite ingredients, bake at 475 F till crispy and golden, around 10 minutes. Serve all the Pizzettes on a Pizza Peel (paddle) for a creative presentation. Let your imagination take you away!

Some favorites:



Fig Jam, Goat Cheese and Prosciutto

Artichoke Hearts and Gorgonzola

Tomato, Pesto and Fresh Mozzarella



Other ideas:



Cut Pizzettes circles, prick with fork tines to keep dough from rising too much and bake.

Top with Mascarpone cheese mixed with dill and lemon zest, smoked salmon, and chives.

Sweets & Treats Cookie Swap!

Decorations



Creating the Mood

Set the mood from the minute your guests reach the front door by decorating the door with wreath that has cookie cutters and baking items hanging from it. Tie a festive bow at the top and add a “Cookie Swap” gift tag to dangle from it. This is no ordinary Cookie Swap and your guests will know it!





Décor is easy with all your own Christmas decorations. You are ready with most of the decorating because you have decked your halls with all your favorite holiday lights and sparkles, glitters and ornaments. You will just add to the look with a statement of cookie wonderland!

Colorful Tablescapes

All of the cookies should be on one big table. You can spread the appetizers throughout the room on separate tables, coffee table, buffet table and end tables. This does encourage mingling and that is good!



The cookie table can be draped in a solid color and then wrap empty boxes in holiday wrapping paper that will be used to create height and drama for the table. Some of the cookies will be on platters and in baskets right on the table.



Elevate other platters on top of the wrapped “gifts” and still other plates of cookies on 3 tier cake stands. Around the cookies add bits of décor like pine boughs with ribbons, candles in glass vases with cranberries, or glittery ornaments.



Sweets & Treats Cookie Swap!

How To's



If you have never tried this, here are 5 steps to a successful Cookie Swap:

1. Plan early. People are more likely to attend if you give as much advance notice as possible and schedule your party early in the season so that cookies can be enjoyed throughout the month or close to Christmas so that the cookies can be part of the holiday dessert menu. Personally, I think half the fun is getting those creative juices flowing so I always make up my own invitations.





2. Determine the number of cookies. Ask each guest to bring three to six dozen cookies from a single recipe - about one to three batches of an average cookie recipe. Each guest should leave with 3-6 dozen cookies, no matter how many people attend. For example you bring 3 dozen of the same cookies and you leave with 3 dozen of a variety of cookies.

3. Variety Patrol. Invite friends, relatives, neighbors, coworkers, or anyone who loves cookies. The more the merrier and you'll have that many more kinds of cookies to swap. Ask your guests to let you know what kind of cookies they will bring when they RSVP so that you avoid duplications. On the invitation, ask them to have several options in mind in case someone is already making their cookie and they can switch to next choice. Good reason to RSVP early!



4. Get copies of the recipes. Each guest should go home with a copy of all of the cookie recipes. Ask guests to bring enough copies of their recipes for all. If you are feeling creative and have the time, ask each guest to email you a copy of his or her recipe a few days ahead of time. Compile the recipes and make a mini Christmas Cookie recipe



book. Add some festive pictures from the party and email the collection back to them after the cookie swap. This becomes an annual book that they can cherish and reflect back on for years to come. A Party Favor!

5. Prepare some savory snacks. As the host, you want to make sure that you have a dining room table or a table big enough to hold the **plates** of cookies that your guests will be bringing. Since it is a party and the guests will be planning on taking the cookies home, you'll want to serve some refreshments. You and your guests will be sampling lots of cookies, so it's nice to offer some savory snacks and drinks to balance the sweets. Coffee, tea or mulled cider is perfect. Veggies platter with some cheese and crackers will offset the sweets. Use our recipes to help you plan a great menu. Who needs to go into a sugar coma in the middle of a party!



FYI – For all the busy business women who think they don't have time for all the domestic shenanigans, this is a great networking party and you will meet new people. Many of these women work and/or own their own businesses. You always meet the best people when you are having fun and sharing ideas!

Rules – I personally hate rules but there is one rule that is a must!

No Store Bought Cookies Allowed! Christmas cookies for the exchange must be homemade. So no boxes of biscotti and bags of Chips Ahoy!! You don't want your friends to be disappointed taking home store-bought cookies in exchange for the fresh-baked gourmet cookies they worked so hard to create.

Include this one rule in the invitation. Here's a sample invitation or be creative with one of your own. Ground rules help everyone know what to expect and make for a smoother, more enjoyable party.



Sweets & Treats Cookie Swap!

Music



‘Tis the Season! What’s a Cookie Swap without great music! Part of the holiday fun is the traditional favorites we all grew up with. This festive music will get everyone in the mood for a party and the holiday season! Mix up the music with Traditional, Pop, Classical and Just Fun Christmas tunes. Target has a selection of Upbeat Festive music CDs to pick from. They are very reasonably priced and we have never been disappointed by their quality. Some other favorites are listed below to inspire you or you can always check iTunes. Start a playlist on Pandora you can revisit whenever you are in a holiday mood!

Traditional

1. Frank Sinatra Christmas Album
2. Nat King Cole – The Christmas Song
3. Bing Crosby Christmas Classics
4. Ann Murray – Christmas Wishes

Pop

1. Christmas with the Puppini Sisters
2. Chris Isaak Christmas



3. Mariah Carey – Merry Christmas II You
4. Wilson Phillips – Christmas in Harmony

Classical

1. Ottmar Liebert – Poets and Angels
2. Mannheim Steamroller – Christmas Song
3. Josh Groban - Noel
4. John Tesh – A Romantic Christmas

Just Fun

1. Billboard Greatest Christmas Hits 1955
2. Christmas with the Beach Boys
3. Elvis Presley – If Every Day Was Like Christmas
4. A Charlie Brown Christmas



Sweets & Treats Cookie Swap!

Activities



The Giving Spirit is what this season is all about. Have guests to bring an unopened package of store-bought cookies or canned food. You can then collect the packaged food and bring them to a homeless shelter or food pantry in your community. *Include this in the invitation if you are going to have this at the party.*

Cookie Stories about the history of each person's cookie recipes or a funny story tied to that cookie can be told while nibbling on the appetizers. This is a great way for people to get to know each other is a more personal way. Set aside the trials and tribulations of daily living and enjoy each other from a fresh perspective!



Sweets & Treats Cookie Swap!



Twelve Days of Cookies Ideas

#1 Chocolate Crinkle Cookies



#2 Praline Pecan Cookies



#3 Snowflake Sugar Cookies



#4 Peppermint Whoopie Pies



#5 Gingerbread Men



#6 Linzer Raspberry Cookies



#7 Lemon Sables



#8 Magic Cookie Bars



#9 Raspberry Almond Shortbread



#10 Peppermint Pinwheels



#11 Chocolate Raspberry Tassies



#12 Vanilla Half Moons



Sweets & Treats Cookie Swap!

Ready, Set, Go



The best way to have a stress free party and feel like a guest at your own party is to plan ahead. Here is a step by step party plan that will have you confident and excited about your own party. Remember, you are the Life of the Party and your guests will follow your lead.

One Month Before

1. Choose the date for your party. Make your guest list and send out invitations. Our **Party Planner** will help you get all your ideas for the party together.
2. Decide what items you have on hand and what items you will need to purchase. Use our **Party Plan Menu** to help you plan. If they are custom items, order them now.
3. Consider the areas for the party and any touch ups that may be needed. Poinsettia plants for outdoors porch, a little tidying up indoors.
4. Decorate for this party early since the decorations will be for your Christmas holidays and the Cookie Swap too!

One Week Before

1. Decide where you will place the appetizers around the room, the cocktail area and how you are going to set up the Cookie table. Make a list of all accessories, serving pieces and tableware you will need.
2. Make sure your music sound system is in good working order and make your playlist/burn CDs and load iPod.
3. Shop for any non-food type items.



4. Wrap all the “gifts” that you will use for the Cookie table display.
5. Make sure all guests have called with their RSVP and what kind of cookies they are bringing. Remind guests to bring their cookie recipe on cards to share.(if not doing recipe book)
6. Ask each guest to email you a copy of his or her recipe a few days ahead of time. Compile the recipes and make a mini Christmas Cookie recipe book. Take pictures of the cookies at the party and include with each recipe. Email the recipe book as gift back to the guests after the party. (if you decide to make recipe book, if not guests bring recipe cards to share)

1-2 Days Before

1. Shop for all food items (2 days before). Create a shopping list that will make it so much easier to plan and shop for your party. Our customized **Shopping List** will help you get organized.
2. Make Mulled Wine and reheat before party starts. (if not serving this then use mulling spices to make a potpourri with water or apple juice so that the house will smell like the holidays.
3. Pre-make the Martinis in larger batches and chill if you are serving these and not mulled wine. This will make serving them so much easier at the party. You just have to garnish and serve.
4. Make Cheese Balls and keep chilled.
5. Caramelize the onions for the Pizzettes. Refrigerate and reheat before using.
6. Make Wonton Cups and store in air tight container.
7. Cut Veggies for Cheese Ball platter and put in storage bags for ready use.
8. Pick up pizza dough form local Italian restaurant or store.
9. If possible, decorate the cookie table.

Day of the Party

1. Pick a time you must begin getting yourself ready and stick to it.
2. Set up the food area with the plates, utensils, napkins and glasses.
3. Make Shrimp filling and chill.



4. Set up Veggie and Cracker platters for Cheese Balls. Bring cheese Balls to room temperature.
5. Make Mushroom Tartlets. Serve warm/room temperature.
6. Assemble the Shrimp Wonton Cups 45 minutes before guests arrive so they stay crunchy.
7. Make Pizzettes as the last item before guests arrive.
8. Review lists to make sure everything is ready.
9. Get dressed in your party outfit.
10. Begin the festive music and have music playing the entire time.

Once Guests Arrive

1. Greet them with a welcoming cocktail.
2. Show them where to place the cookies and create a beautiful display. Take pictures of cookies as they arrive (especially if making the recipe book)
3. Remember to mingle with your guests letting them know how much you appreciate them as friends. Don't forget to take pictures of the party and guests!
4. Gather the bag cookies and canned foods for the shelters if you have included in your party plan.
5. Enjoy the appetizers and tell cookie stories.
6. Explain how the Cookie Swap works and start the Cookie Swap!
7. Guests leave knowing that they have so much more than cookies to enjoy throughout the holiday season!

