

Celebrate Christmas with these Easy and Tasty Norwegian Cookies

Christmas and cookies go together. We long to have our favorite Christmas cookies, the special ones that we've had each year since we were children. Most of us make traditional chocolate chip or oatmeal cookies all year long, but at Christmas, we make the old family favorites that bring back good memories of the years we celebrated the holidays at Grandma's house.

For those of Norwegian heritage, Christmas just isn't Christmas without Kringla. Anyone who has ever tasted Norwegian Kringla can't wait to have another and another. "These tasty cake-like cookies just melt in your mouth," says Shan Burger, research and development specialist for Pioneer Flour Mills. "Our recipe simplifies preparation by limiting the list of ingredients. Using our convenient baking mix makes the cookie dough easy and quick to prepare."

Once the cookie dough is mixed and chilled, tablespoonfuls of dough are rolled to form pencil-like shapes. Then the "pencils" are formed into figure-eights or pretzel shapes. "It takes a little practice to get the hang of it, but once you get used to working with the dough, it's very easy," explains Ms. Burger.

"Kris Kringla" Cookies are very light and soft in texture. These cookies are a nice complement to other Christmas cookies that are rich and chewy.

"Kris Kringla" Cookies The flavor and texture of these soft, cake-like cookies are adapted from the popular Norwegian Kringla cookies. Don't let the shaping of these cookies scare you. When the cookies are baked, the dough seems to "melt" into perfect shapes. 1 1/4 cups granulated sugar 3/4 cup (1 1/2 sticks) butter or margarine, softened

2 large eggs
1 tablespoon vanilla
1/2 cup buttermilk
5 cups Pioneer Biscuit & Baking Mix
1 cup dairy sour cream
In large mixer bowl, beat sugar, butter, eggs, and vanilla on high speed until light and fluffy, about 3 minutes. With mixer on low speed, add buttermilk, beating to combine. Add baking mix alternately with sour cream, beating until well mixed. Chill at least 4 hours (dough will be very soft). Work with a small amount of dough at a time and keep remaining dough chilled. On a floured* surface, roll rounded tablespoonfuls of the dough into pencil-like strips about 8 inches long and 1/2-inch thick. Shape into a figure-8, a pretzel, or a letter. Place on an ungreased cookie sheet. Bake at 350 for 10 to 12 minutes or until edges are just lightly browned.

Remove cookies to wire rack. Makes 4 dozen cookies.
*Use additional baking mix to "flour" the surface, if desired.
Sweet Option: Just before baking "Kris Kringla" Cookies, sprinkle them with granulated sugar or a cinnamon-sugar mixture.

New York Company Makes Lights Bubble

The first bubble lights were marketed by the NOMA Electric Company of New York in 1945. From 1945 through 1950 the company marketed more than 30 styles of bubble lights for American Christmas trees.

The first bubble lights were filled with methylene chloride which set atop an electric bulb. The heat from the bulb caused the liquid to "boil" or bubble thus came the name "bubble" lights.

Christmas & Candlelight

At no time of the year are there more candles in the house than at Christmas. Candles are included in flower arrangements, holiday centerpieces, and scattered about to add a warm soft glow to family get-togethers.

These tips of how to decorate with candles and how to care for them will help keep your holiday decorations looking pretty and help you enjoy romantic, old-fashioned candlelight.

Candle Decorating Ideas

Burn classic tapers at formal affairs and rounds or votives for more casual parties.

Place long candles on the buffet table; candles on the dining table should be short enough for guests to see each other.

Color coordinate candles with the rest of the table decor. Break the rules. Mix colors and heights instead of using the traditional matched sets. Set candles at each place setting instead of using one large centerpiece.

Candle holders can be as formal as crystal, as casual as small flowerpots. Use whatever is appropriate for the occasion.

Inexpensive red and green stemmed glasses purchased at a discount store make the perfect holders for a multitude of holiday candles. Pick out glasses of various sizes to hold a variety of candles.

Use scented candles to create special effects: Try vanilla and cinnamon at the dessert buffet and berrybary at a traditional meal. Set floating candles in a punch bowl or shallow container filled with water.

Candle Care & Usage

Store candles flat in a dark, dry place to prevent warping. Revive less-than-new candles by rubbing them clean with an old nylon stocking or soft cloth moistened with salad oil. Freeze candles for one hour to make them burn longer and drip less.

Char wicks before the party so they'll light in an instant. Choose dripless candles. If dripless candles are unavailable, set candles in a plate or tray to catch drips and save furniture and tablecloths.

Never leave a candle-lit room unattended. The danger of a tragic holiday fire is simply too great.

If a candle is too small for its holder, wrap the bottom in aluminum foil. If it is too big, gently whittle the bottom down to size with a sharp knife.

To lessen candle wax stains on a tablecloth, lift off as much solid wax as possible, then place the stained area between clean paper towels and press lightly with a warm iron. As wax melts move paper towel so that the wax is not re-absorbed into the cloth.

Place wax-coated candle holders in the freezer for an hour. The wax will peel off.

To remove wax from wooden finishes first soften the wax with a hair dryer and then remove with a paper towel. Wipe off residue with a mixture of vinegar and water.

To remove wax stains from a carpet or rug, scrape off the excess. Cover with several layers of paper towels and carefully press with a warm iron.

Family Conspiracy Creates Special Christmas Memory for One Little Girl

By Ginger Grantham, Editor
The Hanceville Herald
Hanceville, Alabama

The Christmas I remember the most from my childhood was the one we did not spend with my grandparents. We lived in a suburb of Detroit, Michigan, called Lincoln Park and we always traveled back to Alabama to spend Christmas with my father's parents. But not that year.

I don't remember now why we did not make the trip. I just remember that I was greatly worried that Santa Claus would not be able to find me. I knew that Santa always found me with ease in Alabama but how would he know that I had not made the trip that year. And I was having a

little problem believing in Santa anyway. The doubts were beginning to creep in.

In my family, Santa Claus always came on Christmas Eve. My mother's logic was that because he was so busy on Christmas morning, he dropped off my presents early. I was happy with that thought. It had always worked well when I was in Alabama. Still I was worried.

When Christmas Eve arrived, there was a gentle snow falling. The Christmas tree was filled with lights that cast a soft glow around the living room. And I was glued to the floor near the tree watching the door. If Santa was coming, I was going to see him about how things would work out in Michigan.

My mother had been busy in the kitchen and came into the living room to call me to eat. I joined my parents in the dining room and settled down to enjoy the meal. But I kept my ear tuned for strange sounds.

I talked to my father about what he thought was going on at my grandparents' house so far away. I wondered how Santa would be able to leave presents in Michigan and Alabama all on the same night. My father told me not to worry. Santa did that all the time.

When we finished the meal and went back into the living room, I was astonished to see that Santa Claus had sneaked into the house while I was eating. There were my presents under the tree. There was a wet footprint on the carpet. My dog hadn't even barked.

How could Santa Claus have managed to get in and out of the house so easily with me in the next room? I was amazed. It was a long time before I doubted

Santa again.

As I grew older, I wondered just how my parents had managed to pull that off. Yet, I didn't ask. I held on to the illusion until my own daughter was about eight. I asked my mother about that

special Christmas so long ago. Her explanation was simple. When she came into the living room to call me to eat, she had turned on the porch light. That was the signal for my uncle who was waiting in the car outside. He slipped in and put the presents under the tree. To make sure I didn't hear anything he let his car roll down the drive before he started it.

The memory of that one special Christmas is finely etched in my mind. Everything was perfect. The glowing tree, the snow, the good food, and the love of a family that went to so much trouble for a child at Christmas.

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