

Christmas Shortbread

The holidays are approaching and so the annual war starts between your time available and tasks on your To Do list. Don't let cookie baking get shunt to the bottom of the list. Don't stress. This simple recipe can make it all possible. Easy, fast and oh so delicious, your friends and neighbors will love to see you coming if you're bringing these cookies as a gift..

You won't find this recipe in my cookbook because after publishing the book I received a shortbread pan for a gift so I started making these cookies from a recipe which came with the pan. If you have a shortbread pan, by all means use it, but you can make them using a Pyrex or pottery pie plate.

I suggest you make two at a time. I know you will find it easy to fit the baking into your schedule.

What you need:

2 shortbread pans or 8" pie plates, measure across the bottom
1 cup butter at room temperature (splurge with real butter, it's worth it)
2/3 cup powdered sugar (right out of the box or bag)
1/2 teaspoon vanilla
2 cups flour (unsifted)

How to assemble:

Use your Cuisinart on this one
Using short bursts, cream your butter until it's a light color
Add the powdered sugar and use additional bursts until fully mixed
Add the vanilla and continue mixing
Add the flour and mix until dough balls up like a pie crust.

Note: Using a mixer might take a little longer to get the right consistency.

Lightly spray your pans or pie plates with PAM
Divide dough in half
Press each half into a pan or plate so the entire bottom is covered evenly
If you're using a pie plate use a knife to cut dough in eight wedges like a pie (a pizza cutter works well here)
Using an ordinary dinner fork, pierce the dough through to the bottom of the pan or plate numerous times. I usually try to do this in a pattern. This way the steam will be released as the cookie bakes allowing it to remain flat.

Bake the shortbread for 30-35 minutes in an oven pre-heated to 325°

Shortbread is done when the edges turn a light brown.

Remove it to cool in its pan for ten minutes

While still warm cut each shortbread into wedges following the precut lines or the pattern in the shortbread pan. You have to cut the cookies while it's still warm to avoid crumbling the cookies.

When the cookie has completely cooled place a plate on top of the pie plate or pan and flip onto the plate.

Serve as wedges.

Serving Suggestions:

If your family loves nuts you can add 1/4 cup of finely chopped pecans or walnuts when mixing the dough or just check out the Macadamia Shortbread recipe on page 77 of Gayle's Legacy.

If you're giving this as a gift eliminate cutting it into wedges after 10 minutes of cooling, instead invert the entire cookie when cool and wrap it whole for a welcome gift.

Notes: