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## Aled Jones' Gingerbread Snowpeople



## You'll need:

$350 \mathrm{~g} / 12 \mathrm{oz}$ plain flour, plus extra for rolling out

1 tsp bicarbonate of soda
2 tsp ground ginger
1 tsp ground cinnamon
$125 \mathrm{~g} / 41 / 20 z$ butter
$175 \mathrm{~g} / 6$ oz light soft brown
sugar
1 free-range egg
4 tbsp golden syrup
To decorate the
Snowpeople
Writing icing (optional)
Cake decorations (optional)

## Method

1. Sift together the flour, bicarbonate of soda, ginger and cinnamon and pour into the bowl of a food processor.
2. Add the butter and blend until the mix looks like breadcrumbs
3. Stir in the sugar.
4. Lightly beat the egg and golden syrup together, add to the food processor and pulse until the mixture clumps together. Tip the dough out, knead briefly until smooth, wrap in cling film and leave to chill in the fridge for 15 minutes.
5. Preheat the oven to $180^{\circ} \mathrm{C} / 160^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ Fan/Gas 4. Line two baking trays with greaseproof paper.
6. Roll the dough out to a $0.5 \mathrm{~cm} / 1 / 4$ in thickness on a lightly floured surface. Using cutters, cut out the gingerbread people shapes and place on the baking tray, leaving a gap between them.
7. Bake for $12-15$ minutes, or until lightly golden-brown.
8. Leave on the tray for 10 minutes and then move to a wire rack to finish cooling.
9. When cooled decorate with the writing icing and cake decorations, if using.
10. Finally... make a pot of tea or coffee or pour a glass of your favourite tipple and sit back and enjoy!


Aled Jones is a popular television and radio presenter and singer. He currently presents BBC series Songs of Praise and presents the Sunday morning breakfast show on Classic FM.

Aled rose to fame in 1985 when his cover of Walking In The Air, from The Snowman, reached number five in the UK singles chart.
Aled has been kind enough to share his favourite Christmas biscuit recipe, for Snowpeople.


## Coinneach MacLeod's Empire Biscuits



For a dozen biscuits, you'll need:
For the biscuit:
450 g (1lb) plain flour
250 g ( 9 oz ) softened butter
$100 \mathrm{~g}(31 / 20 z)$ caster sugar
1 egg
$1 / 2$ teaspoon vanilla extract
For the topping:
250 g (9oz) icing sugar
3 tablespoons milk
Raspberry jam, for spreading
Jelly Tots

## Method

1. Cream together your butter and sugar, then mix in the egg and vanilla extract. Sift in the flour in batches and mix well until combined.
2. Lightly flour a work surface and roll out the dough to a $1 \mathrm{~cm}\left(1 / 2{ }^{\prime \prime}\right)$ thickness. Use a cutter on the biscuits. Place on a baking tray, leaving a bit of space between biscuits to spread. Pop in the fridge for at least an hour to firm up.
3. Preheat the oven to $160^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ fan $\left(350^{\circ} \mathrm{F}\right)$ and bake for 10 minutes, or until baked but still light in colour. Leave to cool completely on a wire rack.
4. To make the topping, place the icing sugar in a bowl and gradually mix in the milk. Spread the icing on half of the biscuits and spread one tablespoon of jam on each of the remaining biscuits. Place the iced biscuits on top of the biscuits with jam. Top each biscuit with a Jelly Tot and share!

Coinneach MacLeod from the Isle of Lewis rose to fame as 'The Hebridean Baker' on the social network TikTok.

Here, he shares his recipe for a Scottish favourite. He says: "Originally known as the Linzer Biscuit, these have become an iconic part of any Scottish teatime.
"Also popular in Northern Ireland, where they are named German Biscuits, these melt-in-the-mouth shortbread biscuits are traditionally sandwiched with raspberry jam and topped with a thick icing.
"The most important question is - what do you top yours with? A glacé cherry or a Jelly Tot? For me there is no doubt!"


Ellie Taylor is a comedian and actress from Essex.
She has been a familiar face on UK television for over a decade, appearing on The Mash Report, Live at the Apollo, the comedy-drama Ted Lasso and the 2022 series of Strictly Come Dancing.

She loves a chocolate chip cookie and kindly shared this recipe with Mary's Meals.

You'll need
300 g plain flour
50g fine oatmeal
175 g soft brown sugar
100 g unsalted butter
1 egg
4 tbsp golden syrup
1 tsp bicarbonate of soda
2 tsp ground ginger
This recipe works just as well with gluten free flour and non-dairy butter.

## Method

1. Preheat the oven to $180^{\circ} \mathrm{C} / 350^{\circ} \mathrm{F}$.
2. Sieve the flour, ground ginger and bicarbonate of soda in mixing bowl
3. Add the fine oatmeal, next dice the butter and rub in to the flour mix until crumbly.
4. Next add the soft brown sugar, golden syrup and egg, mix well until it forms a firm doughy mixture.
5. Roll out the dough on a floured surface to about $1 / 2 \mathrm{~cm} 1 / 8$ inch thick.
6. Cut to your required size and place onto a non-stick tray.
7. Pop the tray into the preheated oven.
8. Remove after 7 to 10 minutes or when golden.
9. Cool and then serve.


Gary Maclean is the first ever National Chef of Scotland and Executive Chef at the City of Glasgow College. He opened his first restaurant 20 years ago and has run the kitchens of Glasgow's Gallery of Modern Art and the Burrell Collection.
Back in 2016, Gary was crowned champion of MasterChef: The Professionals, bringing his fantastic dishes to a whole new audience.
An multi award winning chef, in 2021 Gary opened a seafood restaurant, Creel Caught, within Edinburgh's Bonnie and Wild Marketplace.

A supporter of Mary's Meals for many years, Gary has kindly supplied this recipe for tasty ginger snaps.

## Gary Maclean's

 Perkins Biscuits

## Method

1. Pre-heat oven to $180^{\circ} \mathrm{C} / 350^{\circ} \mathrm{F}$.
2. Take the flour, bicarbonate of soda/baking powder, ginger, cinnamon and spices and sift them into a large bowl.
3. Add the butter and rub until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs.
4. Add the oats, sugar, and mix.
5. Take a small pan and warm the golden syrup until it is of a pouring consistency, try not to heat it too much.
6. Pour the golden syrup into the bowl and mix to form a stiff dough.
7. Line two baking trays with parchment paper.
8. Split the mixture in half and roll into a long sausage shape.
9. Cut the sausage shape into 12 equal parts, do the same with the other half of the dough, you should end up with 24 pieces.
10. Roll each piece up into a ball, split the balls between the two trays leaving a gap between each.
11. Gently press the tops of your biscuits with your thumb and top each with a blanched almond.
12. Bake in your oven for 10 minutes, until the biscuits have spread and are golden.
13. Leave to cool on the tray until cool enough to touch before transferring to a wire rack to cool completely.

Gary says of his Perkins biscuits:
"Perkins biscuits are not to be confused with the Yorkshire biscuit called Parkins. They are similar, but not the same. Perkins are worth a go if you like your biscuits with an oaty texture. This is my type of biscuit, another very easy one to make and I think they look amazing. You could also add your own twist by topping them with some dark chocolate."

## Method

## Almond

 Shortcrust BiscuitsTo make 32 biscuits, you'll need:

370 g soft wheat 00 flour (or plain flour)

120 g ground almonds
200 g diced unsalted butter, cold

150 g icing sugar, plus extra for dusting

2 medium eggs, cold
zest of 1 unwaxed organic lemon
zest of 1 unwaxed organic orange

1 tsp vanilla bean paste (or seeds scraped off 1 vanilla pod)

1/8 tsp salt

1. Place the flour and almonds in a large bowl and add the diced butter. Work the mixture by pinching the pieces of butter with the tips of your fingers to break them into very small lumps, fully coated in flour. Keep working the mixture quickly without crushing it until it resembles fine, loose breadcrumbs.
2. Make a well in the sandy mixture and add the icing sugar, egg, citrus zests, vanilla and salt. Mix the egg and sugar with your hands first, then gradually incorporate the flour mixture by scooping it up from the bottom of the bowl and folding it over, rather than crushing it together: this will create large, well separated flakes of pastry rather than a single homogeneous mass.
3. When the mixture has incorporated the eggs, turn it on to the worktop and flatten it down with the palm of your hands. It will be rather sticky, so I recommend using a scraper to handle it. Lift one side of the flattened dough with the scraper and fold it in half. Repeat the flattening and folding three to four times, or until the dough forms a roughly homogeneous mass.
4. Flatten the dough one last time, wrap it in clingfilm and chill it in the fridge for at least 30 minutes, or ideally for a couple of hours. The dough can be prepared up to two days in advance and stored in the fridge until needed.
5. When ready to bake, place two shelves close to the middle of the oven and preheat it to $160^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ fan. Line two baking trays with baking paper.
6. Remove the pastry from the fridge, unwrap it and roll it to a 5 mm thickness on a floured worktop. Use the pastry cutter to cut the biscuits and arrange them over the lined baking trays. Rework and roll any offcut, and cut more biscuits until you have used the whole batch of pastry.
7. Bake both trays of biscuits together for 13-15 minutes, or until the edges of the biscuits just start to turn golden. After the first seven minutes, swap top and bottom tray to ensure an even bake. Remove the biscuits from the oven and let them cool for five minutes before taking them off the baking paper and letting them cool completely on a cooling rack.
8. Decorate the biscuits with a light dusting of icing sugar once they have cooled down to room temperature.


Giuseppe Dell'Anno shot to fame after winning the 2021 series of The Great British Bake Off.

He says: "These biscuits are based on a staple Italian shortcrust recipe. In my version, delicate almonds are combined with lemon and orange zest, to make a crumbly yet snappy biscuit with a sweet and subtle tanginess.
"They are a great accompaniment to an afternoon tea, but are sturdy enough to be dunked in a caffè latte for an indulgent breakfast or coffee break.
"These biscuits can also be paired up and sandwiched with a raspberry or apricot jam filling."

## Judy Murray's Scottish Shortbread <br> You'll need: <br> Method



8 oz butter
2 oz margarine
2 oz cooking fat
6 oz caster sugar
4 oz cornflour
8 oz plain flour
2 oz self raising flour

1. Mix all ingredients together - mixture will be quite wet.
2. Divide into two or three round or oblong loose-bottomed cake tins.
3. Bake in a pre-heated oven on $150^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ for an hour or until lightly browned.
4. Cut into fingers while still warm and leave to cool.

Judy Murray, a long-time supporter of Mary's Meals, is a tennis coach and mother to champion tennis stars Andy and Jamie Murray.

She appeared on Strictly Come Dancing in 2014 and Celebrity Masterchef in 2020. Here, she shares her classic Scottish shortbread recipe.

## Lizzie Acker's Biscuit Sandwiches

## Method

1. Zest your orange.

To make 10 biscuits, you'll need:
250 g unsalted butter
160 g icing sugar
Zest of one orange
2 egg yolks
1 tsp vanilla bean paste
325 g plain flour
For the jam:
75 g jam sugar
Juice of the zested orange
70 g raspberries
2. Cream orange zest, butter, sugar and vanilla bean into a mixing bowl until pale.
3. Add the two egg yolks and mix.
4. Fold in the flour.
5. The dough will be sticky. Wrap in cling film and put in the fridge overnight.
6. In a pan add the raspberries, orange juice and jam sugar, mash with a potato masher and bring to $105^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$. Then take off heat and allow to set.
7. Set your oven to $160^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$.
8. Roll dough out and use cutter to cut out 20 biscuits.
9. Bake for $12-15$ mins.
10. Allow to cool.
11. Place a spoonful of jam on one biscuit, and place another biscuit on top.


Lizzie Acker is a baker from Liverpool who reached the quarter finals of the 2021 series of The Great British Bake Off.

Since her appearance on the programme, Lizzie and her fellow baker Freya Cox have become flatmates and are a popular pair on social network TikTok.

# Rosemary Shrager's Oaty Biscuits 

## Method

You'll need:
150 g unsalted butter, softened

150 g golden caster sugar
1 tbsp honey or maple syrup
150 g self-raising flour (you can use gluten free selfraising)
120 g porridge oats
2tbsp milk
1tsp bicarbonate of soda

1. Cream the butter and sugar together.
2. Add the honey, mix well, then add the flour, oats, milk and bicarbonate of soda.
3. Mix again until a dough forms.
4. Roll the dough into walnut-sized pieces and place them on a parchment-lined baking tray, spacing them at least 2.5 cm apart, and flatten them with the palm of your hand.
5. Bake in an oven preheated to $180 \mathrm{C} /$ Gas Mark 4 for 15 minutes. Bake for 12-15 mins.
6. Clap down the biscuits with the bottom of a saucepan to flatten them a bit, then allow to cool on a wire rack.


Rosemary Shrager is a chef and television personality. She first came into the public eye in 2000 with the TV series Rosemary: Castle Cook, which followed her as head chef of Amhuinnsuidhe Castle on the Isle of Harris.

Since then, Rosemary has been a beloved presence on our screens, appearing on programmes including Rosemary Shrager's School for Cooks, The Real Marigold Hotel, I'm a Celebrity... Get Me Out of Here! and Cooking With the Stars.

Here she shares her tasty oaty biscuit.

## Stephen Fry's

Lemon Biscuits


## You'll need:

100 g caster sugar
130 g unsalted butter
(block butter only - at room temperature)
Zest of three lemons (finely grated)

Pinch of salt
1 large egg
200 g plain flour

## Method

1. Place the sugar, butter, lemon zest and salt in a large mixing bowl and cream together until light and fluffy.
2. Add in a beaten egg and stir well to combine, before adding the flour and mixing to a stiff dough.
3. Place the dough on a sheet of baking paper, it will be a little sticky. Use the baking parchment to help you to form the shape of a log. Roll into a biscuit sized oblong shape, approximately 5 cm in diameter and wrap up in the baking paper.
4. Place the dough in the fridge for one to two hours, until it has formed a solid block that you can slice. Or store in the fridge overnight to preparing in advance.
5. Preheat the oven to $180^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ Fan $/ 200^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ and line a baking sheet with baking paper.
6. When ready to bake, remove the dough from the fridge, remove the paper and cut into 1 cm slices. Alternatively roll out and use a cookie cutter. Place the biscuits onto the lined baking tray.
7. Place the tray into the hot oven and bake biscuits for 10 minutes until lightly golden. Once baked, place the biscuits on a wire rack to cool.


Photography by
Elliot Spencer


Stephen Fry is an actor, broadcaster and writer. Stephen is known for hosting the panel show QI, appearing in TV shows A Little Bit of Fry and Laurie and Blackadder, and reading the Harry Potter audiobooks.

Here he shares his favourite recipe for lemon biscuits.

## Tamzin Outhwaite's Cherry Cookies



1. Preheat oven to $190^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$.
2. Place butter and sugar in a large bowl and beat together until light and fluffy.
3. Add vanilla essence and beat until combined.
4. Sift in the flour and salt in batches, mixing well between each addition.
5. Stir in the cherries and mix well.
6. When the mix is quite firm, take a spoon and make even piles of mixture, depending on how big you want your cookies to be. Using a spoon, slightly flatten the mixture You may need to dip your spoon in some water to stop it sticking.
7. Pop in the oven and bake for $8-10$ minutes, or until cooked and golden brown and smelling delicious.
8. As an extra, I like to melt chocolate and dip in the cookies so half are covered in chocolate. A bit sinful but the cherries and the chocolate go so well together. You could also add chopped almonds to the tops of the cookies prior to baking. Sprinkle over generously. Or even better, melt the chocolate and then dip in the almonds!


Tamzin Outhwaite is an actress and television personality from London.

She is best known for playing Mel Owen in TV series EastEnders. Tamzin has also appeared in much-loved TV programmes including Doctor Who, Death in Paradise and New Tricks.

Tamzin says: "This is a simple recipe and one I often make with the children."

## Val McDermid's Sunday Shortbread



## Method

## You'll need:

For shortbread:
140 g unsalted butter softened

60 g golden caster sugar
180g plain flour, sifted
20 g ground rice
1/2 tsp ground cinnamon
1/2 tsp ground nutmeg
$1 / 2$ tsp ground cardamom (Or you can just use $11 / 2$ tsp mixed spice)

For the salted caramel:
$1 \times 397 \mathrm{~g}$ tin condensed milk
150 g unsalted butter
2 tbsp golden syrup
A few drops of vanilla extract
$1 / 2$ tsp sea salt flakes
For the topping:
250 g dark chocolate (or milk if you prefer, broken into pieces)

A pinch of salt flakes

1. Preheat the oven to $180^{\circ} \mathrm{C} / 350^{\circ} \mathrm{F} /$ gas mark 4 . Line a swiss roll tin (roughly $30 \mathrm{~cm} \times 20 \mathrm{~cm}$ ) with baking paper
2. Cream together the butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Mix the flour, ground rice and spices evenly. Fold this dry mixture into the creamed butter mix until it resembles breadcrumbs.
3. Tip the shortbread mixture into the tin and press flat. Bake until it's pale golden (about 15 mins).
4. While it's cooling, put the condensed milk, butter, golden syrup, vanilla extract and salt into a pan. Stir continuously till it boils then let it simmer. Keep stirring till it changes colour to caramel and starts to thicken. That should take about five minutes, maybe a few minutes longer. Let it cool a little, then pour it over the shortbread.
5. While the caramel is cooling on the shortbread, melt the chocolate and salt in a bowl over a pan of simmering water. Then pour the melted chocolate over the caramel shortbread and leave it to set in the fridge for a couple hours. Slice into bars.
6. You can store them in an airtight container if you must, but they generally don't survive for long in our house.


Photography by


Val McDermid is a Scottish crime writer from Kirkcaldy. She released her first novel, Report for Murder, in 1987 and has since sold more than 17 million books across the world. A TV series, based on her novel, The Distant Echo, recently aired on ITV and STV.
Val's Sunday shortbread recipe makes 12 pieces and she describes it as ‘a spiced shortbread, finished off with salted caramel and chocolate.'

## Wilf Scolding's Peanut Butter Cookies

## You'll need:

2 1/2 cups (318 grams)
all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon fine sea salt
1 stick (110 grams) unsalted butter

3/4 cup (200 grams) peanut butter
1/2 cup (100 grams) granulated sugar
1 cup (200 grams) packed dark brown sugar

2 large eggs plus 1 egg yolk, at room temp

2 teaspoons vanilla essence

2 cups ( 340 grams) milk choc chunks (break up some green and blacks in a tea towel with a rolling pin)

## Method



1. Preheat oven to $180^{\circ} \mathrm{C} / 350^{\circ} \mathrm{F}$. Line baking sheets with parchment paper.
2. In a medium bowl mix the flour, baking soda, baking powder, and salt.
3. In a large heat safe bowl, microwave the butter until melted. Stir the peanut butter into the hot butter until well combined. Add in the granulated sugar and brown sugar and stir until well combined.
4. Add the eggs and yolk, one at a time, stirring well after each addition. Then add the vanilla essence and stir in the flour mixture gradually. Stir in the chocolate chunks. Add a splash of milk if dough is a bit crumbly.
5. Divide into desired size cookies, pop on baking parchment lined trays and bake for 12 mins. Deelish!



Wilf Scolding is a Welsh actor who has supported Mary's Meals for a number of years.

He played Rhaegar Targaryen in Game of Thrones and appeared in the blockbuster film, Fantastic Beasts: The Secrets of Dumbledore. Most recently he starred in the Star Wars TV series, Andor.

A keen baker, Wilf says: "Over the last few years l've really become a peanut butter man so my recipe reflects that!"

## Dame Joanna Lumley's Savoury Cheese Straws

## Method

You'll need:
200g plain flour
100g butter
120 g cheddar cheese
20 g parmesan cheese
Pinch of salt
Pinch of mustard powder
Pinch of black pepper
1 egg yolk

1. Sift the flour in a large mixing bowl and add in the salt, black pepper and mustard powder.
2. Mix in the butter and remove all lumps.
3. Add in the cheddar and parmesan and the egg yolks.
4. Add two tablespoons of cold water and make the mix into a dough.
5. Line a baking tray with baking paper and heat the oven to $190^{\circ} \mathrm{C} / 375^{\circ} \mathrm{F} / \mathrm{Gas} 5$.
6. Roll out the dough and cut into straws.
7. Cook in the preheated oven for 10-15 minutes and then leave to cool.


For those of you who prefer a savoury treat, why not try out this recipe from Dame Joanna Lumley.

An award-winning actress, she has starred in On Her Majesty's Secret Service, Paddington 2, The New Avengers, and of course Absolutely Fabulous.

She says she is not one for biscuits or cookies, but she was delighted to share this tasty cheese straw recipe, for those without a sweet tooth.


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