

Extension

Seasonal Eating Whitney Danhof, Extension Agent

Baking for the Holidays December 2012

One of my favorite things at the holidays is walking into the house after baking cookies and cakes and breads. The smell of cinnamon and cloves and yeast just fills your heart with holiday joy and says welcome to the season! My Mom always made several different kinds of cookies and put them in the freezer. She would spend a whole day baking cherry winks and pecan sandies and sugar cookies and toffee bars. The house smelled like heaven. My Dad would take a tray of cookies to work and we'd take a tray to church and the family would enjoy them on Christmas eve. Another day she would make quick breads of all kinds. My favorite is pumpkin bread. My Mom always loved cranberry bread. My grandmother loved banana.

I'm sure every family has their favorite baked goods that show up around the holidays every year. We would have the old standards, but then we would see new recipes come and go. Some made it into the holiday standards while others just made sporadic appearances (or maybe just a year if they weren't popular!). So what will you bake for your family this holiday season?

Fresh, dried or candied fruits are welcome additions to baked goods at the holidays. Try adding some dried cherries and white chocolate chips instead of semi-sweet to your favorite chocolate chip dough.

Dried cranberries are great in scones. Raisins in the oatmeal cookies are a standard. Try chopped dried apricots in your quick bread batter or in cookies with macadamia nuts and white chocolate. Dried apricots, cherries, pineapple or cranberries can be added to melted white chocolate along with nuts. Spread out the mixture on parchment paper and cool, then break into pieces for bark candy.

Below is a great recipe for a quick loaf bread that uses fresh cranberries. It is a pretty bread for the holidays, studded with the bright red berries, and tasty with the addition of almond extract, which makes it a little different from other quick breads. Many places are selling the disposable paper pans that are great for giving home baked loaves as gifts. The pans are coated with silicone making them perfect for baking and not sticking. When cool just wrap with plastic and tie on a bow!

I wish you all a Happy Holiday and encourage you to bake up something special for your family this holiday season.



For more ideas on using seasonal produce, visit the Bedford County Extension website (<https://utextension.tennessee.edu/bedford>) and click on Seasonal Eating.

Cranberry Almond Bread

- 1 1/2 cups fresh or frozen cranberries
- 2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup buttermilk
- 1/3 cup butter, melted
- 1 1/2 teaspoons almond extract
- 2/3 cup toasted, chopped almonds
- 1/4 cup white chocolate pieces
- 3 tablespoons powdered sugar
- 1 tablespoon French vanilla liquid coffee creamer

Rinse cranberries in cold water; drain and coarsely chop. Grease bottom and 1/2" up the sides of a 9"x5" loaf pan. Line bottom of pan with waxed paper or parchment paper; grease. Set aside. In a large bowl, combine flour, sugar, baking powder and salt. Make a well in center of flour mixture and set aside. In a medium bowl, combine eggs, buttermilk, melted butter and almond extract. Add egg mixture all at once to flour mixture. Stir just until moistened (batter will be lumpy). Fold in cranberries and almonds. Spoon batter into prepared pan, spreading evenly. Bake at 325 degrees for 60-70 minutes or until a wooden skewer inserted near center comes out clean. Cool in pan on wire rack 10 minutes. Remove from pan and cool completely on wire rack. Wrap and store overnight before slicing.

For glaze, melt white chocolate pieces in microwave. Stir in powdered sugar and creamer. Add additional creamer until glaze reaches drizzling consistency. Drizzle over bread and sprinkle with additional almonds.