

## **Baking with your children**

For many years I worked as a nanny and always enjoyed baking with the children I cared for. I have many great memories of sitting down to choose the recipe, assembling the ingredients, baking equipment and then putting on our aprons to get started.

There are many varied benefits to baking with your children. Baking is full of learning opportunities and can be a time to slow down and spend some quality time together. With every recipe you will be teaching valuable reading and math skills. They get to measure, pour, stir, taste, feel, and smell which involves all of our senses. Another great benefit is that baking encourages family members to work together, fostering teamwork.

Life is busy and it may be hard to find the time to bake together. Nevertheless it is good to remember that when you bake with your children you are doing more than creating delicious treats, you're also creating fond family memories.

Before you get started set up some kitchen rules for the children to follow. As the parent you will be the best judge of when your child is ready to participate in the kitchen and when they can be allowed to use the oven, microwave, and sharp utensils. Plan to bake with your family when you are not pressed for time as that will make it more enjoyable. Another good thing to remember is that the recipe may take a bit longer to prepare and may be a little messier when you have little hands helping.

Here are two recipes that I made frequently with the children I cared for:

### **Tea Biscuits**

½ cup butter or margarine

3 cups flour

1 ½ Tbsp Baking powder

1 tsp Salt

3 Tbsp Sugar (I used less not more)

1 cup milk

Place flour, baking powder, salt, and sugar into a bowl and mix. Cut in the butter or margarine and combine until crumbly. Make a well in the center and add the milk. Mix well and then knead for a short time.

Roll out onto a floured surface and cut into shapes. Bake at 400°F for 15 to 20 minutes until golden brown.

Variations: Add shredded cheese, herbs or spices before the milk.

### **Triple Chocolate Chip Cookies**

1 cup flour

½ tsp baking soda

¼ tsp salt

½ cup unsalted butter, slightly softened

¼ cup granulated sugar

½ cup brown sugar, firmly packed

1 egg

1 tsp vanilla

¾ cup pecans (optional)

½ cup semi sweet chocolate chips

¾ cup milk chocolate chips

½ cup white chocolate chips

Cream butter in a large bowl. Add sugars and beat until smooth. Add vanilla and egg and beat until very smooth. Using a wooden spoon stir in sifted dry ingredients until blended. Stir in nuts and chocolate pieces. Drop by teaspoonfuls onto greased baking sheets, about two inches apart. Bake on center rack of oven at 375°F for about 10 minutes or until browned around the edges and nearly set, but soft to touch in center. Carefully transfer cookies to cooling rack or counter to cool. This recipe yields about 4 dozen depending on how much raw cookie dough your helpers eat.

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