

Andover Cooks Share Favorites: Valentine's Day Cookie Ideas

There are quick, easy ways to be creative

Shelley Geoghegan, *Beacon* staff

Decorating cakes and cookies for special holidays has always been a favorite part of my busy schedule, but sometimes I simply don't have the time to go to all that trouble. Over the years, I have picked up many ideas to easily bake and decorate goodies that look like they took lots of time.

During my six years of working for *The Andover Beacon*, and finding little time for time-consuming and artistic baking projects, I have put these ideas to good use. The following is one way you can bake up some Valentine's Day treats that look gorgeous, with minimal effort. They taste great, too!

Heart-Shaped Linzer Cookies

For the Cookies: Make a batch of your favorite rolled sugar cookie recipe. Divide the dough into two pieces, place each piece between two sheets of waxed paper, and roll out to 1/8 inch thick.

(If you haven't already discovered this, you can buy bands of varying thicknesses that are placed on the ends of the roller. They take the guesswork out of rolling dough to an even thick-

ness of your choosing.)

Refrigerate the rolled dough on a cookie sheet for at least an hour, more if possible (or according to your recipe).

Baking and Cutting: Preheat the oven



This "Linzer" type Valentine's Day cookie is very easy to make using shortcuts.

Photo: Shelley Geoghegan

according to your recipe. Meanwhile, remove the rolled-out cookie dough from the fridge and start cutting out heart shapes. For the pictured clone of a Linzer Cookie, you will need to cut out an even number of hearts for the top and for the bottom.

From the batch of top cookies, use a smaller heart-shaped cutter to cut out the middle section. Save the small hearts to bake later in their own batch.

Bake the bottom cookies in a separate batch from the top cookies with the heart cut-out. This will ensure they bake evenly. Follow your recipe's baking instructions for timing.

Decorating: When the cookies are done, and cooled, thoroughly cover the top heart cookies, with the cutout, with a liberal sprinkling of confectioner's sugar using a shaker or a small fine-mesh strainer. Set aside.

For the bottom heart cookies, spread a thin layer of seedless raspberry or strawberry jam almost to the edge. Then, place the top sugared hearts carefully onto the bottom hearts.

That's it. You now have a very pretty tray of cookies. Place them on a red doily on a special dish to show them off.

Other Ideas: These cookies can be made using other shapes for the top cut-out. Also, you can use your same cookie recipe to cut out heart shapes that can then be coated with colored sugar or sprinkles before baking for a very easy but pretty cookie, or you can dip them halfway into melted chocolate and then sprinkle on some colored sugar or nonpareils.

Pair them with some strawberries dipped in chocolate, and you have an easy dessert ready to be gobbled up.

Note to Our Readers: Please share your favorite recipes and food photos with us. Each month we will publish at least one. Start it off by telling us something about the recipe and why it's a favorite.

How about sending us something related to St. Patrick's Day for the March issue, or a favorite spring or Easter recipe for April?

The monthly deadline is the 15th of the month prior to the next issue. Send your recipes and/or questions to Articles@AndoverBeacon.com. Thank you for your contributions. This is your community newspaper!

Andover Cooks Share Favorites: Drake's Place Breakfast Casserole

Quick, yet delicious and hearty!

Nate and Shelby Nagy
Drake's Place

During the busy holiday season, we may have many people to feed and little time to do so. This recipe came together for Christmas morning breakfast. It was quick and easy to put together, yet delicious and hearty! Top it with sour cream, salsa, sauce.

Drake's Place

Breakfast Casserole

- 1 lb Maple Breakfast Sausage
- 1 Onion, chopped
- 3 large or 6 small shredded potatoes



Drake's Place's breakfast casserole is a quick and easy, yet hearty, breakfast dish for a crowd.

Photo: Nate Nagy

- 1 cup cheese, shredded
- 1 dozen eggs
(Try Emily's Eggs!)
- ¼ cup milk or water

1) Pre-heat oven to 350°.
2) Cook sausage with chopped onions ahead of time and cool.

3) Beat eggs with milk or water. Combine shredded potatoes, cheese, sausage, and onion.

4) Bake for 45 minutes to 1 hour. Test if done by poking knife into the center. If it comes out clean, then it's done. If not, cook 10 to 15 minutes more.

Serves 8 to 10 people. You can even portion it out and freeze and reheat for an easy breakfast.

If you are looking for ingredients locally, they are available at Drake's Place, located next to Bear Hollow Trading Post and Naughty Nellie's Ice cream, open Thursday through Sunday, 11 AM to 7 PM.



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