# GIFTGUID Christmas cookies made simple · Use a cookie mix. These mixes already have most of the dry cookie ingredients sifted together, including flour, baking soda, baking powder, salt, and sugar. All you have to do is add the wet ingredients and any extra embellishments to make the mix your own. If mixes are too much work, purchase refrigerated or frozen cookie dough. Include your own add-ins, such as nuts, white chocolate chips, bits of dried fruit, or crumbled candy canes, to give the premade dough a unique flavor. · Prepare ahead. Many cookie dough recipes can be made and

- **Prepare ahead.** Many cookie dough recipes can be made and stored for later use. In fact, refrigerating a log of cookie dough can make it easier to cut or handle later on. Spread out the bulk of your baking over two days and you might feel less taxed.
- Try a no-bake recipe. No bake cookies come together in a matter of minutes, but still employ a host of delicious ingredients. Recipes frequently feature similar ingredients to traditional cookies, but rely on chocolate, honey or peanut butter as the setting agent to keep them together.
- Recycle leftover cookies. If you have a fair amount of cookies remaining or several that broke apart or do not look good enough to serve, never fear. Such cookies can be used as part of another delicious dessert. Grind cookies into crumbs that can serve as a pie crust for pudding pies or no-bake cheesecakes, or mix cookie crumbs with cake frosting or a nut butter and roll into balls. Dunk the balls into melted chocolate, add a lollipop stick and make delicious cookie pops.

# Easy Christmas morning breakfast

aving a fast and easy breakfast at the ready on Christmas morning allows families to jump right into the festivities rather than spending too much time in the kitchen.

This recipe for "Spiced Yogurt Muffins," courtesy of the National Dairy Council, Dannon and McCormick, can be made in advance. This big-batch recipe is ideal for feeding a houseful of overnight holiday guests. Or it can be prepared in advance and doled out as needed throughout the week or a treat for holiday office luncheons. Cut the recipe in half for smaller yields.



#### **Spiced Yogurt Muffins**

(Yield: 50 servings)

6 1/2 cups Dannon plain fat-free Greek yogurt

4 cups water, room temperature

1 box (5 lbs) Gold Medal® Muffin Mix, Whole Grain Variety

3 tablespoons McCormick pumpkin pie spice

2 tablespoons McCormick

Chipotle cinnamon

Combine yogurt and water in mixing bowl. Whisk until blended. Set aside.

Add spices to dry muffin mix in a large bowl. Add yogurt and water mixture to the muffin mixture. Mix until just blended. Don't overmix.

Using a scoop, portion into greased or lined muffin pans. Bake at 350 F for 24 minutes, or 17 to 20 minutes in a convection oven, until the tops are golden brown.

## George Washington's Christmas eggnog recipe

"One quart cream, one quart milk, one dozen tablespoons sugar, one pint brandy, ½ pint rye whiskey, half pint Jamaica rum, ¼ pint sherry

mix liquor first,

then separate yolks and whites of 12 eggs,

add sugar to beaten yolks, mix well.

Add milk and cream, slowly beating.

Beat whites of eggs until stiff and fold slowly into mixture.

Let set in cool place (refrigerate) for several days.

Taste frequently."





Jears in Business

# Give A Cup of Holiday Cheer

By Lisa lannucci CTW Features

If you're looking for the perfect holiday gift and your recipient loves coffee, tea or something a little stronger, there are plenty of ideas you from which you can choose.

#### For the Coffee Lover

When it comes to coffee, forget the big companies and support the smaller, local businesses - you should buy from a smaller company for several reasons, including customization, speed and freshness.

Coffee is at its peak for flavor within 21 days of roasting; most coffee you buy at the grocery store was roasted 6-9 months earlier and has a "best if used by" date of 18 months out."

Not sure what flavor your recipient will like? If they prefer milder coffees, try medium roast coffees from central or South America. For bolder coffees, African or Indonesian coffees, which typically are roasted darker are best.

Coffee is best when it is fresh, so it's best to buy it whole bean and grind it just before brewing. That is because oxygen is the enemy of freshness. If the person you're buying for is a caffeine addict, there's actually more caffeine in medium roasts than dark roasts.

Pair the coffee with something else they'll enjoy. Such as a gift basket with coffee and a new book from their favorite author, a mug with a great saying on it, a

gourmet pastry or other treat, a snuggly robe, a scented candle, a new pair of jammies or whatever you think they might enjoy.

#### For the Tea Drinker

If your recipient prefers a nice cup of tea, find out if they like herbal tea, loose tea or black tea. Buy them some of their favorites and then branch out.

Pairing the tea in a basket with scones from a local bakery, cookies or crackers. Add honey from a local company, too, as well as a nice sturdy mug, tea infuser or tumbler. A book to read with the tea should be in your basket, too.

Every tea lover should have a special teakettle. Aside from design, you want to look for kettles with a wide base design for a quick boil.

#### For something with more of a kick

You can infuse vodka with your favorite teas or make your own coffee liquor and then put it in gift bottles

For those who prefer a straight cocktail, a good shaker and even more important - a jigger that has clearly designated measurement markings inside.

With so much to choose from, it will be hard to narrow it all down for your favorite beverage hot-beverage aficionado.









## Winter entertaining ideas

inter entertaining need not end once Christmas and New Year's Day have come and gone. Getting together with friends and family is still possible even if the weather outside is frightful.

- Invite people over for a dessert pot luck party, everyone brings a favorite decadent dessert. Serve alongside tea, coffee and hot chocolate.
- Spending a day cooped up inside when the roads are covered is a great time to

invite a mix of friends and neighbors who live nearby over. Ask guests to bring one food item or beverage.

- Handpick some favorite films and invite everyone over for a movie marathon. These events help squash cabin fover
- Cooking can certainly pass the time, and it can be even more enjoyable when done in the company of others. Send out an invitation for friends to stop by for a meal or plan a meal prep party.







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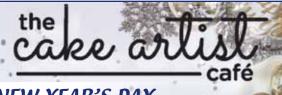


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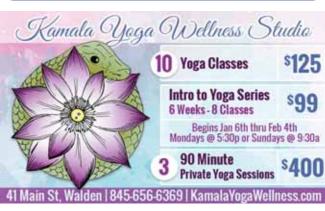
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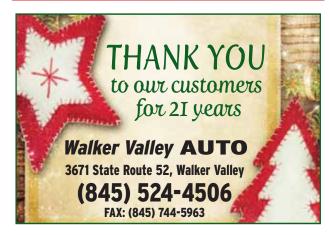


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