

“Family Fun in the Kitchen for the Holidays” *by Amber D. Huett*

The **HOLIDAYS** bring an eagerness for baked goods and tasty recipes, but especially those that can grow the family's waistline. The good news is that there are ways to have fun baking as a family and keep it healthy too.

Before You Start Baking: Introduce and Prepare Your Space

Before introducing the kitchen to the kids, be sure to review all the materials and equipment you'll be using. This will keep them and the family safe and get the kids excited and invested about the process. If you have

the space, consider making a “Young Bakers” section of the **KITCHEN** to give them even more ownership in the process. This may include “kid sized” bowls, whisks or other materials as well as commonly used items within reach. Creating a space just for them will help keep them safe as they will be less tempted to reach for tools that might put them in danger.



Finally, review all directions and explain what they do not understand. This includes instructions on packaging, how to properly use utensils, any equipment they might use such as the range, stove, blender or **MIXER**, and how to handle hot items. Use your best judgment in determining what tools are age-appropriate. Having an adult present while handling equipment or knives is strongly recommended!

Search by Flavor

Most people think of **FLUFFY** cakes and crisp cookies when you talk about **BAKING** for the holidays. Talk to your kids about what flavors, **FRUITS** or textures they like most and start your search with that information. If they aren't sure what they like, suggest flavors of snacks they typically enjoy, such as **BANANA**, peanut butter, oatmeal, **CHOCOLATE** or any other naturally sweetened fruits. This will give you a great starting point to search online, talk with other parents, and increase your chances of happy little holiday bakers!

Chocolate and Peanut Butter Lovers

Not only does chocolate taste delicious, but studies have shown that it may improve or reduce stress and make us feel better! It may be why we crave it especially around the holidays! Peanut butter recipes can also have an added bonus of extra **PROTEIN**. An easy way to reduce the **CALORIES** and fat with peanut butter-based recipes is to use a natural peanut butter. It's not surprising that these holidays favorites have many recipes available online, which can satisfy your cravings, but still be health-conscious in moderation.

Here is a recipe that keeps calories low and combines both ingredients. Keep in mind that the number of steps and tools needed will help you choose the best one to prepare with children.

Peanut Butter and Chocolate Cookies

(www.CalorieKing.com)



What you need:

- 1 cup creamy peanut butter
- 1 cup Equal® Sugar Lite (or 24 packets of Equal)
- 1 egg
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 1 cup mini semi-sweet chocolate pieces (or mini M&Ms)

Directions: Preheat **OVEN** to 350°F. Beat peanut butter and Equal® Sugar Lite until blended. Mix in egg and vanilla until combined. Stir in chocolate pieces until well **BLENDED**. Shape dough into one-inch balls. Place on an ungreased cookie sheet. Bake in preheated oven 10 to 12 minutes or until firm to the touch. Cool slightly on cookie sheet. Remove and cool completely on wire rack. **COOKIES** best stored in an airtight container at room temperature.

Yield: 36 cookie balls at approximately 86 calories each. (For 25 slightly larger cookie balls, it would be approximately 125 calories each.)

Sweet Treats: No Oven Needed

For families wanting to keep the smallest of chefs involved, consider a sweet treat that does not require a stove range or oven. To put a holiday twist, add holiday appropriate food coloring, colored sprinkles, crushed nuts or look for holiday versions of typical snacks, which usually come in special colors. The following recipe could have any of the holiday sprinkles, nuts or colorings!

Low-Sugar Pudding and Cream Sandwiches

What you need:

- Approximately 30 graham crackers, broken in half
- 1 large box of sugar-free instant pudding (your choice of flavor, but the variety of flavors include: vanilla, chocolate, white chocolate, pistachio, lemon, butterscotch, cheesecake, banana cream)
- 8 ounces sugar-free or lite whipped topping
- 2 cups skim milk
- Sprinkles and nuts (optional)

Directions: Prepare instant pudding with milk, according to package directions. Whip or stir in whipped topping and blend until smooth. Place a large spoonful on a graham cracker and top with another. Dip each side into **SPRINKLES** or nuts if desired. Place in individual zipper seal sandwich bags and freeze until firm.



Quick Tips and Reminders for Cutting Calories in Recipes

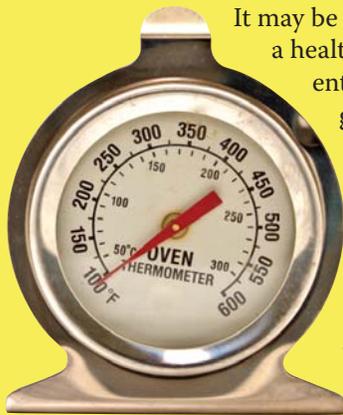
- ✓ Be sure to use measuring tools for all ingredients in a recipe. Small amounts of extra sugar, butter, oil or other fats will add up quickly so it is important to be exact.
- ✓ Beware that flour should not be scooped from a bag or container, but stirred and spooned into a measuring cup and a level top.
- ✓ Check the weighted measures because some flour cups may be as light as three ounces and some more than five ounces, which could nearly double the amount of flour.
- ✓ Try substituting sugar for sugar-substitutes, applesauce with reduced amounts of oil, cooking spray instead of butter to grease pans and dishes and skim for whole milks.
- ✓ Be sure to check the cook time, which may be less with different ingredients.
- ✓ Of course, for recipes that have fewer reasonable substitutions (ones that won't drastically change the taste and texture), try to reduce the portion size and consumption.
- ✓ With cakes, try using cupcake papers to have pre-made, smaller portions.
- ✓ If you're borrowing a recipe, ask the creator how their altered recipes turned out.

KID'S Corner

Bonus Points in Baking

Depending on the age and grade level, take the brainstorming of **FLAVOR** ideas as an opportunity to go over academics, but specifically organizing your thoughts. Your child's teacher may have graphic organizers, charts or Web site database builders that could make the search a chance for learning, not to mention the non-fiction practice of reading a recipe and sequencing events in a logical order. Also, don't forget the math involved in baking! Children will use measurements such as cups, ounces and pounds to fractions, volume and **TEMPERATURE**. Math practice is everywhere in the kitchen! Some teachers may also be willing to give extra credit if children share their experience with baking and what they learned in writing!

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It may be a difficult task to find a healthy treat to satisfy the entire family, but there is great opportunity for holiday fun and bonding time. The togetherness of the kitchen will keep the children during holiday breaks excited to help out around the house and may just reveal a new, special baking talent!

About the Author:

Amber D. Huett is a member of the OAC National Board of Directors and a gastric-banding patient. She is a third grade teacher in Memphis, Tenn. with Teach for America. She has a bachelor's degree in political science and journalism from Bradley University in Peoria, Illinois and a master's degree in Public Administration from the University of Illinois-Springfield.

Pumpkin Pies and Cookies, Oh My!

With the leaves in piles and turkeys on our tables, the natural sweet treat is **PUMPKIN** themed. While pumpkin pie is the traditional favorite, there are many options that include this holiday flavor. Many pumpkin recipes also have an added bonus of mixing well with extra protein. Online searches will show many muffin and pie recipes, but something the kids could enjoy and pack for **SCHOOL** parties (parents can also take to holiday potlucks or just to keep for after-dinner treats) are pumpkin cookies. Here is one recipe that includes a quick cook time and extra protein!

Pumpkin Protein Cookies

(www.yummly.com)



What you need:

- 3/4 cup of granular Splenda®
- 1 cup rolled oats
- 1 cup wheat flour
- 1/2 cup soy flour
- 1 3/4 tsp baking soda
- 1/2 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 2 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp ground nutmeg
- 1/2 cup pumpkin puree
- 1 tbsp canola oil
- 2 tsp water
- 2 egg whites
- 1 tsp molasses
- 1 tbsp flax seeds (optional)

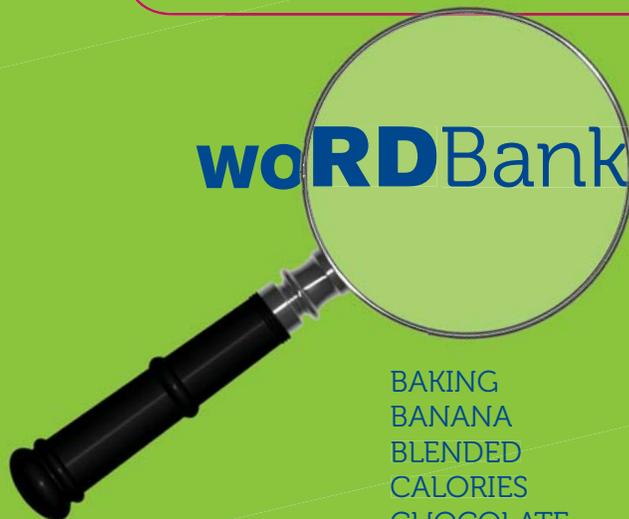
Directions: Preheat oven to 350°F. In a large bowl, whisk together Splenda®, oats, wheat flour, soy flour, baking soda, baking powder, salt, cinnamon and nutmeg. **STIR** in pumpkin, canola oil, water, **EGG** whites and molasses. Stir in flax seeds, if desired. Roll into 14 large balls and flatten on a baking sheet. Bake for 5 minutes in preheated oven. Be careful to not over-bake as the cookies may come out dry.

Yield: 14 cookies at approximately 110 calories, 3 grams fat, and 5 grams protein each.

WORD Search!

In the story you just read, you may have noticed certain words in all caps and bolded. These words are important terms for having fun baking this holiday season while staying healthy. Below, you will see a word search. See if you can find all the words! Happy Holidays!

B S Y W M B R R S O T S Q S N
N G E I Q O A E I E N Y A C Z
V G X L V M I N M T B A S H R
G E U A K R P P A L S D T O P
R N L O O N E R E N F I I O U
X F I L X R I N O Y A L U L M
D C A K A P D R F T K O R L P
Q C H T A E B E P N E H F O K
S B U H D B Z H C S J I M V I
K R Q K K I T C H E N D N M N
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wo**R**D**B**ank

BAKING
BANANA
BLENDED
CALORIES
CHOCOLATE
COOKIES

EGG
FLAVOR
FLUFFY
FRUITS
HOLIDAYS
KITCHEN
MIXER
OVEN
PROTEIN
PUMPKIN
SCHOOL
SPRINKLES
STIR
TEMPERATURE



ABOUT THE OBESITY ACTION COALITION (OAC)

The Obesity Action Coalition (OAC) is a National non-profit organization dedicated to giving a voice to individuals affected by obesity and helping them along their journey toward better health. Our core focuses are to elevate the conversation of weight and its impact on health, improve access to obesity care, provide science-based education on obesity and its treatments, and fight to eliminate weight bias and discrimination.



VIBRANT COMMUNITY



NATIONAL AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS



ANNUAL CONVENTION



ADVOCACY



PUBLIC EDUCATION

LEARN, CONNECT, ENGAGE

The OAC knows that the journey with weight can be challenging but we also know that great things happen when we learn, connect and engage. That is why the OAC Community exists. Our Community is designed to provide quality education, ongoing support programs, an opportunity to connect, and a place to take action on important issues.

Through the OAC Community, you can get access to:

- Weight & Health Education • Community Blogs
 - Community Discussion Forum
 - Ongoing Support • Meaningful Connections
- AND MUCH MORE**



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