

Best **Chocolate**
VINEYARDS **Lover's**
Weekend

Chocolate-Orange Biscotti

- 2½ cup Whole Skin-on Hazelnuts
- 1 cup Homemade Candied Orange Peel
- ¾ lb. High-Quality Bittersweet or Semisweet Chocolate
- 1 cup Unsalted Butter, completely softened at room temp.
- 4 large Eggs
- 1 cup packed Light Brown Sugar
- 1 cup Granulated Sugar
- 2 teaspoons Pure Vanilla Extract
- ½ teaspoon Pure Almond Extract
- 2 tablespoons Finely Ground Espresso
- ¾ cup Dutch Cocoa Powder
- 4 cups All-purpose Flour
- 1 teaspoon Baking Powder
- 1 teaspoon Kosher Salt
- 4 Egg Whites
- 1 teaspoon Orange Extract
- ¾ cup Granulated Sugar



Position oven racks in the middle and top of the oven and heat the oven to 350°F. Toast the hazelnuts until well browned, about 10 minutes. Let cool. Chop the chocolate into slivers about 1-inch long and 1/8 inch wide.

In a large bowl, beat the butter on medium-high speed until light and creamy. Add eggs one at a time. Add the brown sugar and white sugars, vanilla extract, espresso, and cocoa powder, scraping the sides of the bowl as needed. Add the candied orange peel, flour, baking powder, and salt. Add the hazelnuts and chocolate slivers, mixing just to combine. The dough will be stiff and a bit sticky. Let the dough rest for 15 to 30 minutes before shaping.

Line two large baking sheets with parchment paper. Divide the dough into six equal pieces. Using as little flour as possible on the work surface, roll each piece into logs that are 12 to 14 inches long and 1¼ inches wide, working out the air pickets as you go. Transfer the logs to the lined baking sheets, setting the dough about 3 inches apart, patting the sides to smooth and straighten. In a small bowl, beat the egg whites with the orange extract until foamy. Brush the tops and sides of the logs with some of the whites. Sprinkle with ¼ cup of the sugar. Bake until firm in the center, about 35 minutes, rotating the sheets to ensure even baking. Set the sheets on racks until the logs are cool enough to handle and so the dough won't compress when you cut it, about 30 minutes.

Reduce the oven temperature to 350°F and line the baking sheets with fresh parchment, if needed. With serrated knife, saw the strips to ½ inch thick slices, cutting crosswise. Lay the slices flat on the baking sheets. **Brush the tops with the beaten egg white and sprinkle with another ¼ cup of the sugar. Bake for about 15 minutes, rotating the baking sheets as needed. Turn biscotti over and repeat from **. Remove from oven. Set the baking sheets on racks, letting the cookies cool and crisp completely on the sheets. Yields about 10 dozen 2 ½ inch cookies.

Candied Orange Peel

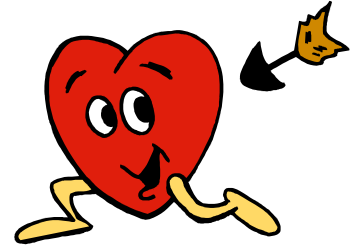
- 6 thick-skinned Valencia or Navel Oranges
- 4 ½ cups Sugar, plus extra for rolling
- 1 ½ cups Water

Cut tops and bottoms off the orange and score the orange into quarters, cutting down only into the peel and not into the fruit. Pell the skin and pith of the orange into large pieces, use the orange for another recipe. Cut the peel into strips about ¼ inch wide. Put the orange peel in a large saucepan with cold water to cover, bring to a boil over high heat. Then pour off the water. Repeat 1 or 2 more times depending on how assertive you want the orange peels to be. Remove the orange peels from the pan.

Whisk the sugar with 1½ cups of water. Bring to a simmer and cook for 8 to 9 minutes (230 to 234°F on candy thermometer). Add the peels and simmer gently reducing heat to retain a simmer. Cook until the peels get translucent, about 45 minutes. Resist the urge to stir the peels or you may introduce sugar crystals into the syrup. If necessary, swirl the pan to move the peels around. Drain the peels. Save the syrup for ices tea. Roll the peels in sugar and dry on a rack for 4 to 5 hours. Store in an air-tight container. Yields about 2 cups of peels. Also try them dipped in chocolate.

Red Velvet Cupcakes

- 2 cups All Purpose Flour
- 1 teaspoon Baking Soda
- 1 teaspoon Baking Powder
- 1 teaspoon Salt
- 2 tablespoon Cocoa Powder
- 2 cups Sugar
- 1 cup Vegetable Oil
- 2 Eggs
- 1 cup Buttermilk
- 2 teaspoons Vanilla Extract
- 1 – 2 oz. Red Food Coloring
- 1 teaspoon White Distilled Vinegar
- ½ cup prepared plain hot coffee



Preheat oven to 325°F. Line a standard cupcake pan with 24 cupcake liners. In a bowl, whisk together flour, baking soda, baking powder, cocoa powder and salt; set aside. In a large bowl, combine the sugar and oil. Mix in the eggs, buttermilk, vanilla and red food coloring until combined. Stir in the coffee and white vinegar. Combine the wet ingredients with the dry ingredients a little at a time just until combined. Fill the cupcake liners 2/3 full. Bake 20-25 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Do not over bake. Remove from pan and let cool on wire rack. Frost with cream cheese icing when cupcakes have cooled completely. Yields 24 cupcakes.

Cream Cheese Icing

- 1 pound Cream Cheese, softened
- 1 cup unsalted butter, softened
- 4 cups sifted Confectioner's Sugar
- 1 teaspoon Vanilla Extract

In a large bowl, beat the cream cheese and butter together. Gradually add the sugar until incorporated. Increase the speed to high and mix until light and fluffy (about 5 minutes). Add the vanilla and mix. Store in the refrigerator until somewhat stiff, before using.

Chocolate Cherry Coconut Macaroons

1 ¾ cups Sweetened Shredded Coconut
2/3 cup Cream of Coconut, such as Coco Lopez (not coconut milk)
1/3 cup unsweetened Cocoa Powder, preferably Dutch-processed
2 large Egg Whites
1 tsp pure Vanilla Extract
Pinch of Table Salt
½ cup dried cherries (preferable tart ones), coarsely chopped

Heat the oven to 325°F. Spread 1½ cups of the shredded coconut on a rimmed baking sheet. Bake, stirring frequently, until some of the shreds begin to turn a light golden brown, 8 to 10 minutes (you're not so much toasting the coconut as you are drying it). Let it cool. Turn off the oven.

In a medium bowl, whisk the cream of coconut, cocoa, egg whites, vanilla and salt until well combined. Stir in the dried cherries and the "toasted" coconut. Cover and refrigerate until thoroughly chilled and firm, at least 2 hours and up to 24 hours. About 20 minutes before you plan to bake the macaroons, heat the oven to 325°F. Line a heavy baking sheet with parchment paper. With damp hands, shape slightly heaping tablespoons of the batter into balls. Arrange on the baking sheet about 2 inches apart (they should all fit on one sheet). Top each macaroon with a pinch of the remaining un-toasted coconut. Bake in the center of the oven until the outsides are no longer sticky but the insides still feel somewhat soft when poked with a finger and the coconut topping is golden brown, about 20 minutes. Let the macaroons cool for 3 minutes on the baking sheet before transferring them to a rack to cool completely. Yields about 20 macaroons.

Chocolate Marshmallows

3 tablespoons Unflavored Gelatin
1 cup Cold Water, divided
¼ cup Boiling Water
¼ cup Cocoa Powder
2 cups Sugar
½ cup Light Corn Syrup
2 egg whites
1 teaspoon Vanilla Extract
1 teaspoon Chocolate Extract
¼ teaspoon Salt
Sweetened Ground Chocolate



Lightly spray a 9x9x2-inch baking pan with non-stick cooking spray. Lightly dust with cocoa; set aside. In a small bowl, combine gelatin and ½ cup cold water; set aside. In a separate small bowl, combine ¼ cup cocoa and ¼ cup boiling water; set aside.

In a small saucepan, combine sugar, corn syrup, and remaining ½ cup cold water over medium-high heat, stirring constantly, until sugar dissolves. Cook, without stirring, until a candy thermometer reaches 240°F. In the bowl of a heavy-duty stand mixer, beat egg whites, vanilla, chocolate extract and salt at high speed until stiff peaks form. In a separate bowl, combine gelatin mixture, cocoa mixture, and hot syrup mixture. Beat at highest speed of stand mixer until mixture is thick and tripled in volume, about 4 minutes. Fold in egg white mixture. Spread mixture evenly into prepared pan. Sprinkle top with sweetened ground chocolate. Chill for 2 hours or until set. Cut marshmallows using a 2-inch square cutter. Yields about 1 dozen marshmallows.

Candied Bacon

5 strips Applewood Smoked Bacon
1 cup of packed brown sugar

Preheat oven to 350°F. Line a baking sheet with foil & place a wire rack across the top. In a bowl, thoroughly coat each slice of bacon with brown sugar. Place each sugared strip of bacon on the wire rack making sure they aren't touching each other. Bake for 20-30 minutes, until the bacon is crispy but not burned. Remove from oven and let cool. Chop into tiny pieces.

Coffee-Cocoa Snack Cake

10 tablespoons very soft unsalted Butter
1 2/3 cups granulated Sugar
2 large Eggs, at room temperature
1 tsp pure Vanilla Extract
½ teaspoon Table Salt
1 ½ cups plus 2 tablespoons unbleached All Purpose Flour
½ cup plus 1/3 cup unsweetened natural Cocoa Powder
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 ½ cups good quality brewed coffee, cooled to warm



Preheat oven to 350°F. Generously butter a 9x9 pan. Line the bottom of the pan with parchment paper, butter the parchment & then flour bottom and side of the pan. Tap out any excess flour.

Cream the butter and sugar until smooth. Add the eggs one at a time. Whisk in the vanilla and salt. Sift the flour, cocoa, baking soda, and baking powder directly into the batter. Pour in the coffee. Gently whisk the ingredient by hand until the batter is smooth and mostly free of lumps. Pour the batter into the pan and spread evenly. Bake for 40 to 43 minutes. Set the pan on a rack to cool for 20 minutes. Carefully run a knife around the edges of the pan, invert the cake onto a tack and remove the pan. Once cooled, top with a warm ganache and sprinkle with candied bacon.

Chocolate Ganache

½ pound semi-sweet Chocolate, finely chopped
1 cup Heavy Whipping Cream

Put the chocolate in a medium heat proof bowl. In a small saucepan, bring the cream to a boil. Pour the hot cream over the chocolate and whisk gently until the chocolate is completely melted and smooth. Pour over cooled cake. Let stand about 1 hour before serving.

