



# MARY'S MEMO

*Recipes • Shopping • Cooking • Health Tips*

Memo No. 2296 December 17, 2012

Chief and Rays Supermarkets

## COUNTDOWN IS ON!

I do envy younger Chief and Rays shoppers who seem to have unlimited energy getting ready for Christmas. With me the "spirit is willing but the flesh is weak!" With four children and working I learned early on about time management but I still "burned the midnight oil" some nights before Christmas. I gave away trays and trays of cookies to friends .... so many that I had them scattered about the kitchen, filling with cookies assembly-line fashion. One year at midnight mass when I could hardly stay awake, it finally dawned on me that I may have had a lapse of memory about the "reason for the season." From then on, trays were eliminated and whenever cookies were baked during the year I set some aside to take to a friend or friends, depending on the size of the batch. There are several people who still get Christmas cookies from me but no more trays by the dozen from this house!

## COOKIE BAKING ADVICE

The most important thing about a cookie is the taste so start with the best ingredients you can afford. Nothing gives a cookie a better flavor than butter. (I stock up and freeze it when Chief and Rays' butter is on sale). Another flavor enhancer is toasted nuts, whether recipe says to toast or not. The easiest way to do it is in a large non-stick skillet over medium heat. Stir frequently until nuts give off an aroma, about 5 minutes.

After having old baking soda spoil a batch of peanut brittle last year, I started with fresh boxes of baking soda and baking powder. Pure vanilla extract is best because imitation vanilla flavor freezes out.

Thanks to major help from daughter Mary Ann on Thanksgiving weekend, we both have 6 kinds of cookies, already frozen.

## KEEPING A FOOD JOURNAL CAN HELP WITH A HOST OF HEALTH ISSUES

The holiday season is a good time to keep track of what you're eating, especially if you're concerned about weight loss, keeping track of all foods eaten, portion sizes and time of intake can help you be accountable for every calorie that goes into your body. It is surprising how easy it is for uncounted calories to add up from foods between meals, or from larger-than-expected portion sizes. Also include how hungry you are and how you are feeling at the time; some people find that they eat when they are bored, sad or frustrated, even if they are not very hungry. This can help identify emotions and situations that trigger unhealthy eating behaviors.

SOURCE: *Weill Cornell Medical College Women's Nutrition*

*Connection*, December 2012.

## HAVE YOURSELF A MERRY VEGGIE MEDLEY

In a study published recently in the *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*, participants ate a larger quantity of vegetables overall when they were served three different types of veggies at a meal rather than a single vegetable.

SOURCE: *Consumer Reports on Health*, December 2012.

## PRODUCE WASHING 101

Five general rules are:

1. Start with a clean kitchen including cutting surfaces, colander, knives and sink.
2. Wash your hands well before handling produce.
3. Rinse produce under cold running water. In some cases you'll want to use a brush for extra cleaning.
4. Blot dry with a paper towel or clean cloth to reduce any pathogens that may be present.
5. Wash fruits and vegetables before you plan to eat them. Washing and then storing can promote mold and bacterial growth.

SOURCE: *University of California, Berkeley, Wellness Letter*, December 2012.

## COOKIE FROM CHRISTMAS PAST

*Mary's Memo* 31 & 32 in 1968 featured 10 cookie recipes. One that Daddy liked especially well was Ambrosia Drop Cookies. Do any of you remember this one?

### AMBROSIA DROP COOKIES

- 1/2 cup butter
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 cup + 1-1/2 tablespoons unsifted flour
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon zest of orange
- 1 cup toasted chopped pecans
- 1 cup flaked coconut
- Additional pecan halves

Cream butter; add sugar gradually and cream until light and fluffy. Add egg and beat well. Mix dry ingredients together and add to creamed mixture until blended. Stir in zest of orange, chopped nuts and coconut. On cookie sheets lined with parchment paper drop dough by teaspoonfuls onto prepared sheets and press a pecan half into center of each cookie. Bake in 375°F oven until lightly browned, about 10 to 12 minutes. Recipe makes 3 dozen.