

# Homemade Good News

Vol. III

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM DIXIE CRYSTALS

No. 10



Holiday Gifts...homemade cookies & candies.

In our neighborhood, as in most, the Holidays touch off a great storm of baking activity, followed by happy flurries of exchange that set our sideboards to groaning with homemade delicacies. It's a beautiful, warming sight, that jumble of gaily wrapped tins, sent from this kitchen and that, each lovingly packed with a friend's most coveted recipe. Many are traditional cookies and candies, handed down from one generation to another; some even bridge the gap from old country to new, where they are enjoyed all the more for the heritage they recall. But all contain the one ingredient that we cherish most at this festive time — the spirit of giving — and it makes everything taste especially fine and sweet to us then. With this in mind, we spread our favorite Christmas goodies before you now, to give . . . and to receive!

With any fragile baked goods, one can never put too much T.L.C. (Tender Loving Care) into packaging, and if you have plenty of sturdy, airtight jars and tins on hand, you have half the problem licked to start with. Even so, you'll find a couple of the recipes below, the Chocolate Truffles (which must be refrigerated), and the Lace Cookies with Praline Butter Filling (which should be filled only at the last minute so they don't become soggy) probably should be reserved for when friends drop by, as very special "at-home" holiday treats.

### Chocolate Truffles

- ¼ cup heavy cream
- 2 TBSP Framboise (raspberry liqueur)\*
- 6 oz. German's sweet chocolate, broken into pieces
- 4 TBSP sweet butter, softened at room temp.
- powdered unsweetened cocoa

Pour cream into a small saucepan and bring to a boil. When reduced to about 2 TBSP., remove from heat and stir in raspberry liqueur and chocolate. Return to low heat and stir until chocolate is melted. Add butter and whisk until smooth, then pour into a shallow pan and chill for 40 minutes, or until firm. Using a teaspoon, scoop chocolate up and shape into balls. Roll in powdered cocoa and store in a covered container in the refrigerator. Let truffles stand at room temperature at least 20 minutes before serving.

\* You can substitute the liqueur of your choice: Grand Marnier, Kahlua, Creme de Menthe, Amaretto, etc. Dark rum is also good.



### Painted Christmas Cookies

These cookies make charming tree ornaments, but if you use them as such, we recommend that you **don't** eat them: the "paint" probably won't taste too wonderful after they've been hanging on the tree for a while. They're great fun to make, though — get a group together and see what happens — and they last a long time if handled carefully.

#### Cookies

- 4 cups sifted all-purpose flour
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1½ sticks (12 TBSP) butter or margarine, softened
- 1½ cups Dixie Crystals sugar
- 2 eggs
- 2 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1 tsp. almond extract

#### Cookie Paint

- 5 egg yolks
- 2 tsp. water
- blue, green, red, yellow food coloring

Sift together the dry ingredients and set aside. In a large bowl, beat the softened butter or margarine with the sugar until fluffy. Add the eggs, vanilla and almond extracts and beat in well. Then, stir in the sifted dry ingredients, a third at a time, until all is incorporated for a smooth, stiff dough.

To make the paint: Beat the egg yolks with the water until smooth. Divide this mixture equally among five clear glasses (plastic is fine). To each of four glasses, add drops of the different food colorings — blue, green, red and yellow. To make colors darker, add more drops. To the fifth glass, add drops of blue, green and red to make a dark "outline" paint.

Moisten a work surface or counter and spread waxed paper over it. The moisture will prevent it from slipping. Roll out a por-

tion of the dough, into a ¼ inch thick rectangle. Press cookie cutters of desired shapes — Christmas trees, stars, angels, etc. — into dough. Trim away excess dough. Using small artist's brushes, paint cookies anyway you like, using the dark outline paint to define the larger colored areas. Brush paint on rather thickly so that it won't crack during baking. With a spatula, gently lift painted cookies and place on greased baking sheets. Repeat rolling, cutting, and painting process with remaining dough.

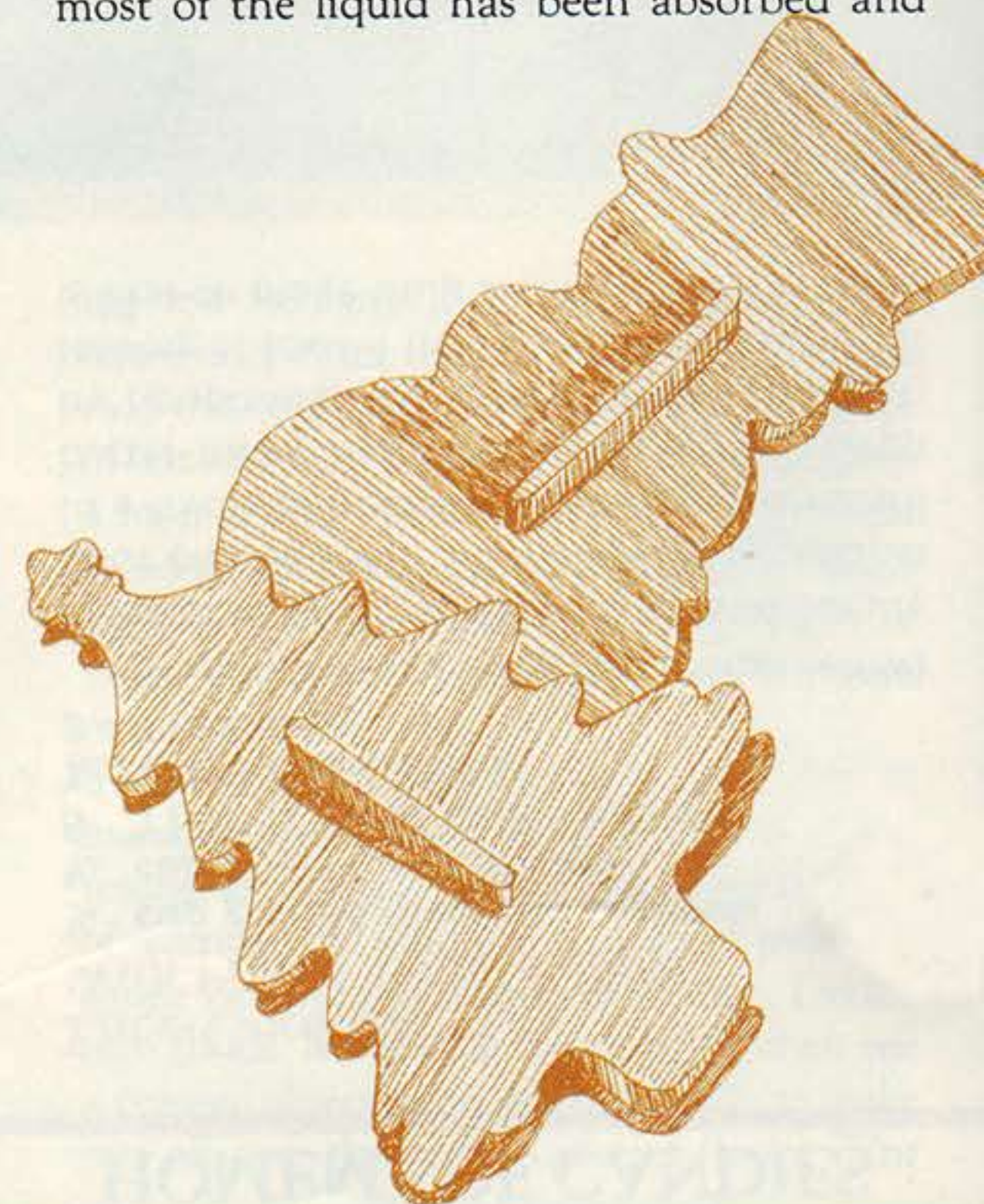
Bake cookies for about 10 minutes at 350°, or until cookies are firm and a light golden color in their un-painted areas. Remove from cookie sheet and allow to cool completely.

To use as ornaments: Thread a needle with desired length of thread and run through cookie about 2 inches from the top. For smaller cookies, pierce through center. Tie the ends of the thread together and make a loop if you wish, or hang from metal tree hangers.

### Candied Grapefruit Peel

- 3 pink grapefruit
- 5 cups Dixie Crystals sugar
- 2 cups water

Cut grapefruit into large wedges and remove peel. Cut the peel into long strips about ¼ inch wide. Put in a heavy saucepan and cover with boiling water. Cook in rolling boil for 10 minutes, then drain. Repeat this boiling process 3 more times, then drain and set aside. In the same saucepan you just used, combine 3 cups of sugar and 2 cups of water. Place over high heat and stir until the sugar dissolves and mixture comes to a boil. Add the drained peel, stir, and reduce heat to cook at a gentle boil. Cover partially and cook, stirring occasionally, for an hour or so, or until most of the liquid has been absorbed and



the peel is transparent. Remove from heat. Cover a large work surface with waxed paper or aluminum foil, and pour a cup of the remaining sugar in the center of it. Roll the candied peel in the sugar, shaking off excess, and set on the side to dry. Use the rest of the sugar if necessary. Leave the peel to dry for a few hours (this time will vary, depending on the temperature and humidity), then store in air-tight containers or jars.

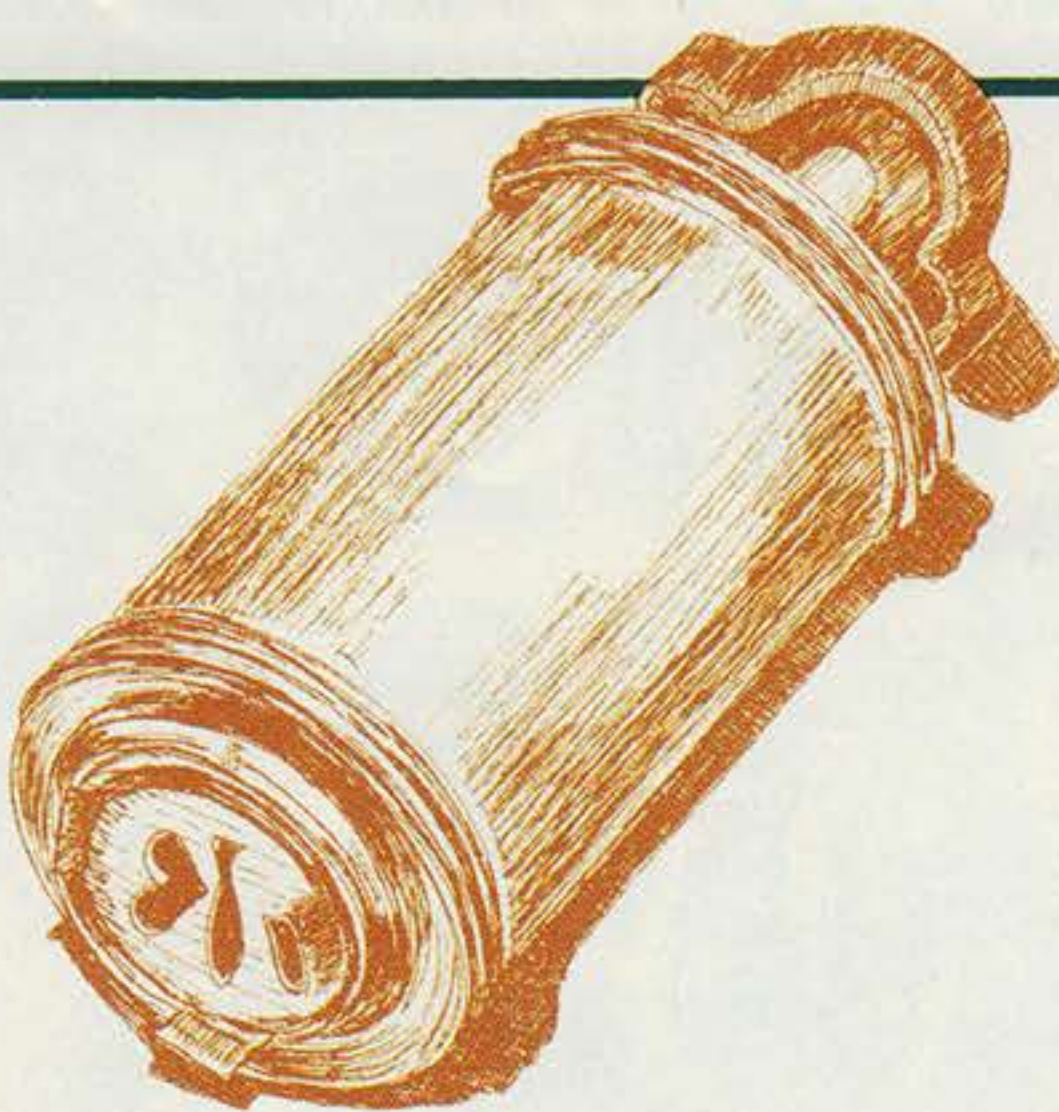
### Spritz Cookies

(Cookie Press Cookies)

- 1/2 lb. (2 sticks) sweet butter, softened at room temperature
- 3/4 cup Dixie Crystals sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 2 1/4 cups all-purpose flour, sifted
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/4 tsp. baking powder
- Cookie Press

Preheat oven to 375°. Cream the butter and sugar together until fluffy. Beat in the egg and the vanilla, then gradually stir in the remaining dry ingredients, which have been sifted together. Blend until dough is smooth. Test the consistency of the dough by putting just a small amount in the cookie

**Did you know . . . that soft cookies should not be stored in the same container with hard cookies. If you mix them, the crisp cookies will absorb the moisture from the soft cookies.**



press and practice pressing cookies according to the directions that come with the press. If the dough is too soft and won't break off when the press is lifted, it may need to be chilled for a half hour or so. If it is still too soft after being chilled, adjust it by adding 2 TBSP of flour at a time until it is the right consistency. If the dough is too stiff and won't come through the design plate, add a few drops of milk or egg yolk. When you have the dough at the right consistency, fill the press and press cookies out in desired shapes onto an ungreased baking sheet. (Sometimes cookies will stick to the baking sheet better if it has been chilled a bit, too.) Decorate cookies according to your taste, with glazed cherries, sprinkles, colored sugar, etc. Bake for 10-12 minutes, or until golden and crisp. Remove to a rack to cool. Store in airtight tins. The cookies freeze well.

### Shortbread

- 2/3 cup plus 3 TBSP Dixie Crystals sugar
- 2 cups all-purpose flour, sifted
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1/2 lb. (2 sticks) sweet butter
- 1/4 tsp. vanilla extract

Mix 2/3 cup sugar, flour and salt together. Cut the butter into 16 pieces. Using your fingertips, rub the butter into the flour mixture until it looks like a coarse, crumbly meal. Add the vanilla extract and blend it in, also with your fingers. Gather the dough up into a ball, wrap in waxed paper and chill for 30 minutes. Preheat oven to 325°. Divide the chilled dough in half. On a large baking sheet, press the halves out — again using your fingers — to form two circles, each 1/2 inch thick. Press the edges of the circles down with the tines of a fork and lightly draw a knife blade over the top of each circle to make a spoke pattern (pie-shaped wedges). This will be your guide when you cut the shortbread and will prevent it from crumbling so much as it is cut. Prick the dough all over with a fork and sprinkle the remaining sugar on top. Bake for 20 minutes, or until the shortbread is just starting to color. Do not brown. Remove from oven and allow to cool for 5 minutes. With a sharp, thin knife, carefully cut all the way through the drawn lines to separate the wedges. Cool completely before removing from baking sheet and storing in airtight tins.

### Sugar and Spice Nuts

- 1 egg white
- 1 tsp. water
- 1 cup whole, blanched almonds
- 1 cup pecan halves
- 1/2 cup Dixie Crystals sugar
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1 1/2 tsp. cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp. ground nutmeg
- 1/2 tsp. coriander
- 4 TBSP. (1/2 stick) butter, melted

Preheat oven to 225°. Beat egg white with water until frothy. Add nuts and stir to coat. Combine remaining ingredients, add the nuts, and mix well. Spread on a baking sheet in an even, single layer and bake for one hour, stirring every 20 minutes, until nuts are dry. Brush with melted butter on a marble slab or smooth work surface (or a counter covered with waxed paper) and turn the nuts out onto it. Turn them over with a spatula several times to coat all over and give a nice glaze. Store in an airtight jar or tin.

**Did you know . . . that before measuring molasses, if you dip your measuring cup in very hot water, the molasses will run out easily.**

Nella Walters  
Knoxville, TN

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**Petit Fours**

These little delicacies are so beautiful in their pastel-colored jackets that your friends will probably want to save, rather than eat them. But do encourage them to taste them, too, as they're too delicious not to!

- 4 eggs
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup Dixie Crystals sugar
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. almond extract
- Apricot Glaze (see recipe below)
- Almond Paste (see recipe below)
- Sugar Icing (see recipe below)

Preheat oven to 350°. Grease a 15½x10½ jelly-roll pan and line with waxed paper. Grease the waxed paper. In a large mixing bowl, beat eggs with an electric mixer at high speed until foamy. Gradually add sugar and continue to beat for about 7 minutes, or until mixture is light yellow and fluffy. Reduce speed and beat in flour, baking powder, salt and almond extract. When mixture is smooth and well blended, pour it into prepared jelly roll pan and tap to distribute the batter evenly. Bake for 20 minutes, or until cake springs back when lightly touched with a fingertip. Allow to cool for 10 min. Invert onto flat work surface and peel off waxed paper. Cool completely.

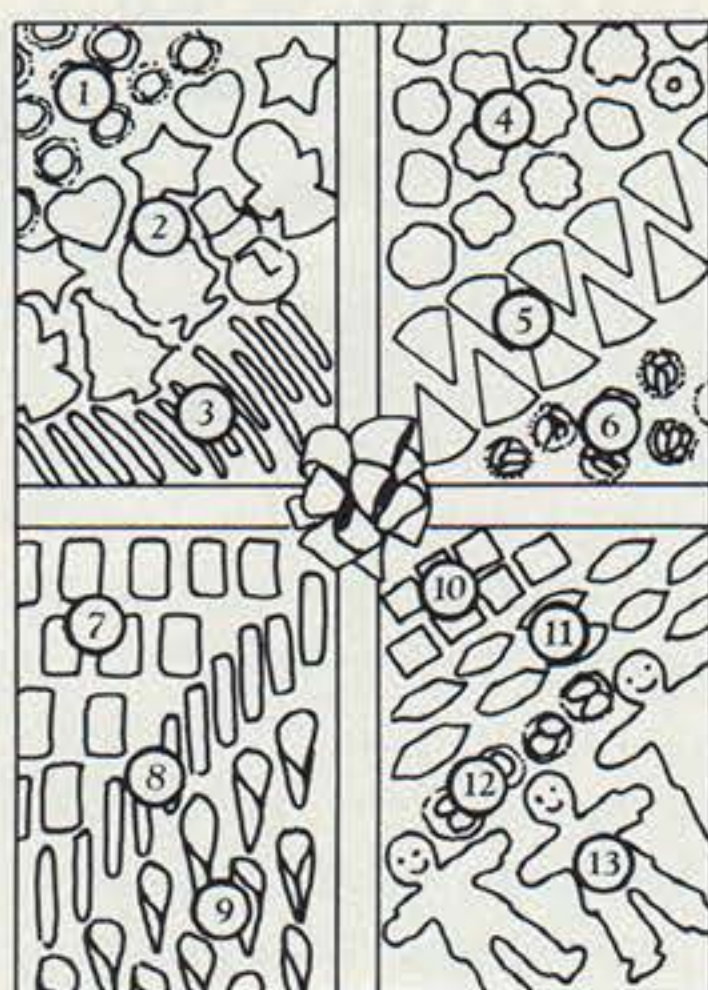
**Make Apricot Glaze:** Strain 1 ten oz. jar of apricot jam through a sieve and then boil it with 2 TBSP Dixie Crystals sugar. Stir until clear. Reduce heat to very low.

Brush cake with some of the glaze and reserve the rest of it for later. Cut the cake in half crosswise, to make 2 rectangles 10½"x 7¾". Roll out almond paste (recipe below) between two sheets of waxed paper to a rectangle 10½"x 7¾". Peel off top sheet of waxed paper, invert almond paste onto 1 of the cake rectangles, and peel off the other sheet of paper. Place the other cake rectangle, glaze side down, on that, and press down firmly. Using a serrated knife, cut cake lengthwise into 6 equal strips 1¼ inches wide. Then cut crosswise into 5 equal strips. Brush the cut surfaces of each little cake with the remaining Apricot Glaze. Place them, a couple of inches apart, on wire racks, over waxed paper. Pour the pink sugar icing (recipe below) over them, and use a spatula if necessary to coat them evenly. Scrape up dripped icing and re-use. When icing dries, decorate by piping white and green colored icing on top using a pastry bag and decorating tip.

**Almond Paste**

- 1 cup ground almonds
- 1 cup Dixie Crystals confec. sugar
- 1 egg yolk
- 2 tsp. lemon juice
- $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. almond extract

Mix all of the ingredients above until blended. Sprinkle work surface with some powdered sugar and knead mixture on it until smooth and not sticky. Wrap in



1. Chocolate Truffles
2. Painted Christmas Cookies
3. Candied Grapefruit Peel
4. Spritz Cookies
5. Shortbread
6. Sugar and Spice Nuts
7. Petit Fours
8. Russian Cigarettes
9. Lace Cookies with Filling
10. Oklahoma Brown Candy
11. Prune Filled Cookies
12. Stuffed Dates
13. Gingerbread Men

**Lace Cookies With Praline Butter Filling**

- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup ground blanched almonds
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup Dixie Crystals sugar
- 8 TBSP (1 stick) sweet butter
- 1 TBSP flour, sifted
- 2 TBSP milk

Praline Butter Filling (see recipe below)

Preheat oven to 350°. Grease and lightly flour baking sheet. Combine all ingredients in a frying pan, and stir over low heat until butter melts and mixture is blended. Drop by teaspoons onto prepared baking sheet, leaving at least 4 inches between cookies. It is best to make only 3 cookies at a time, so



waxed paper until ready to use.

## Sugar Icing

- 1 16 oz. box *Dixie Crystals* confectioners sugar
- 5 TBSP water
- 1 tsp. almond extract
- 2 drops red food coloring
- 1 drop green food coloring

Mix powdered sugar, water and almond extract together until smooth. Take  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of this mixture and divide it equally into two small bowls. To one, add 1 drop of green food coloring and stir to blend. Leave the other white. To the large portion of the icing, add 2 drops of red food coloring and stir to make a light pink icing. Use pink to coat petit fours and use green and white to make decorative ribbons using a pastry bag and a #46 pastry tip.

## Russian Cigarettes

- 4 TBSP ( $\frac{1}{2}$  stick) sweet butter)
- 2 egg whites
- pinch of salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup *Dixie Crystals* sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. vanilla extract
- 2 TBSP flour

A sturdy aluminum baking sheet (tin is too flimsy and may buckle, causing cookies to bake unevenly)

Preheat oven to 350°. Prepare baking sheet by buttering, then lightly dusting with flour. Melt the butter in a small saucepan and set aside. Combine the egg whites, salt, and sugar, and beat just until frothy — do not whip. Then, add the vanilla, flour and melted butter and stir to blend ingredients well. Batter should be smooth. It is best to bake only two or three of these cookies at a time, so that you have time to shape them before they cool and become too brittle to roll. Drop batter by the tablespoon onto prepared baking sheet, leaving at least 5 inches between cookies. With the back of a spoon, gently spread each circle of batter to make it a thin, almost transparent oval about 4 inches long. Bake for 5 or 6 minutes, or until the edges are light brown and the centers golden. Remove from oven and wait 10 seconds before shaping. Working quickly, scrape cookies up with metal spatula, flip face down on a smooth work surface, and beginning at one end of the oval, roll cookie tightly around a pencil or wooden spoon handle. Slide off gently when set, and shape remaining cookies the same way. It helps to leave the cookies on the baking sheet until you are ready to roll them so that they retain some of the heat and stay soft. If they do cool too quickly, however, and become too crisp to roll, return them to the oven for just a few seconds and re-soften. Before you bake more cookies, be sure to clean baking sheet and prepare it again as before, or cookies will stick. (You might want to use two sheets, just to make things go a little faster.) To store, let cigarettes cool and harden, then transfer to an airtight container. They are very fragile, so try to keep from shaking them around.



## Marzipan

- 1 cup blanched almonds
- 1 cup *Dixie Crystals* granulated sugar
- 1 egg white
- 1 cup sifted *Dixie Crystals* confectioners sugar
- lemon juice

Grind almonds in a food mill or nut grinder until very fine in texture and slightly oily. Mix in sugar, working mixture until it has the consistency of wet sand. If you use a food processor to grind the almonds, process  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup at a time, with 1 TBSP of sugar per batch. Work in remaining sugar. Place one cup of this almond paste in the mixing bowl, reserv-

ing rest for later. Beat an egg white until frothy and white, and mix into almond paste. Add the confectioners sugar and a few drops of lemon juice. Blend well, then gather into a ball, adding more lemon juice if mixture is too dry and crumbly, or more confectioners sugar and almond paste (equal amounts of both) if it is too sticky. Knead for a minute or so, until smooth.

**STRAWBERRIES:** Pinch off a 3" ball of marzipan, then pinch a tiny bit off of it and reserve for making "stems" later. Tint the rest of marzipan red until you achieve "strawberry" shade (adding just a drop of yellow). Divide into thirds. Mold each into a berry, then use a pointed object, such as a toothpick, to make pits all over the surface of each berry. Tint

that you have time to shape them before they cool and become brittle. Bake in a preheated oven until cookies have a "lacy" appearance and are well browned. Remove from oven and wait about 10 seconds before removing from sheet and shaping (see Russian Cigarettes). **To shape:** Making a conucopia or horn shape is fairly easy to do by hand, but is faster if you have a cone cutter to work with. You can either buy a metal cone cutter in a kitchen supply store, or make one yourself out of cardboard. If you don't have a mold, you may want to practice cone-making with a paper circle before you move on to shaping cookies. After you have

shaped them, allow them to cool and harden, then store in an air-tight container until you are ready to fill and serve them. **To fill:** Spoon Praline Butter (see recipe below) into a pastry bag fitted with a fluted tip and pipe into lace cookies. If you don't have a pastry bag, gently spoon the mixture into the cookies.

### Praline Butter

½ lb. almonds  
1 cup Dixie Crystals sugar  
½ lb. (2 sticks) sweet butter, softened at room temperature

Put almonds and sugar in a heavy saucepan. Cook over low heat until the sugar

caramelizes and turns a light, golden brown. Pour the mixture onto a buttered baking sheet and allow to cool. Break the hardened candy into pieces and put a little at a time in your blender or food processor fitted with a steel blade. (This works best if you do it in batches). Grind to a fine powder. Whip the softened sweet butter until light and creamy, then add praline powder and blend well.

### Oklahoma Brown Candy

6 cups Dixie Crystals sugar  
2 cups milk or light cream  
¼ tsp. baking soda  
¼ lb. (1 stick) butter or margarine  
1 TBSP vanilla extract  
4 cups walnut or pecan pieces

Put 2 cups of sugar in a heavy skillet. Cook over low heat, stirring with a wooden spoon, until sugar caramelizes and turns light brown in color. Don't let it burn or turn dark brown. While it is cooking, combine the remaining sugar and the milk (or light cream) in a deep, heavy saucepan or kettle. Cook over low heat, stirring, until well blended. Let it simmer until caramelized sugar is ready, then pour the caramel in a thin stream into the milk mixture, stirring all the while. Cook, stirring constantly, until mixture reaches the firm ball stage (244°-248° on a candy thermometer.) To test doneness, drop a small amount of the mixture in cold water. If it will form a firm ball without much shaping and retain its shape when removed from the water, it is ready. Remove candy from heat and stir in baking soda, beating vigorously as it foams. Add butter and stir until it melts and is blended in. Set aside to cool at room temperature for 20 minutes. Add vanilla extract and beat until candy becomes thick and loses its gloss. Stir in nuts and turn mixture out into buttered pans. Cool slightly, then cut into squares. Keep covered. Makes 6 lbs.

Recipe submitted by: Mrs. W.W. Sprague, Jr.  
Savannah, GA

### Prune Filled Cookies

½ lb. (2 sticks) butter, softened  
½ lb. (8 oz.) cream cheese, softened  
2½ cups flour  
Dixie Crystals confectioners sugar

Whip butter and cream cheese together until smooth and creamy. Add flour and knead into a dough. Sprinkle powdered sugar on work surface and roll out dough a little at a time to 3/8 inch thickness. Cut with pastry wheel (with fluted edges) into squares 2" x 2". Fill squares with prune filling (see recipe below) and pull diagonal corners up and overlap them to cover filling (some should still be showing at the sides.) Place cookies on greased baking sheets and bake at 350° for 15 to 20 minutes. Don't let them get too brown!

### Prune Filling





20 pitted prunes  
Dixie Crystals sugar to taste

Put prunes in a saucepan and cover with water. Boil until soft, then drain and mash well. Stir in sugar to taste. Fill cookies.

Recipe submitted by: Mrs. Helen Millus  
Manville, NJ

### Stuffed Dates

1 8 oz. box pitted dates  
walnut or pecan pieces

Dixie Crystals confectioners sugar

Using the tip of a small knife, slit each date up the full length of its side. Stuff nut pieces inside, then firmly press the sides of the date back together — the dates are sticky and should hold together well. Roll in powdered sugar and store in a cool, dry place. If the powdered sugar falls off or becomes absorbed, roll the dates again before serving.

### Gingerbread Men (or Women)

½ lb. (2 sticks) sweet butter or margarine, softened at room temp.

1 cup firmly packed Dixie Crystals light brown sugar

½ tsp. grated lemon rind

2 tsp. grated orange rind

2¼ tsps. cinnamon

1 TBSP ground ginger

1 cup golden molasses

2 eggs, beaten

6 cups all-purpose flour

½ tsp. salt

1¼ tsp. baking soda

Sugar Icing (see recipe below)

Cream butter with brown sugar until fluffy. Blend in grated rind and spices. Put molasses in a saucepan and bring to a boil. Pour into butter mixture and blend well. Add eggs and beat until thoroughly mixed in. Sift all of the dry ingredients together and add to butter mixture. Stir vigorously until dough is smooth and pliable. Wrap in waxed paper and chill for one hour.

Preheat oven to 350°. Lightly flour a flat work surface and roll dough to ¼-inch thickness. Cut cookies out with a gingerbread man or woman cookie cutter using any size you like — those pictured here are 8 inches tall. Transfer to large cookie sheets and bake for about 12-15 minutes, or until cookies are golden brown all over. Remove to racks and cool completely before decorating with Sugar Icing (recipe follows). Makes 12 eight-inch gingerbread people.

### Sugar Icing

2 egg whites

pinch of salt

1 box Dixie Crystals confectioners sugar

1 tsp. lemon juice

Whip egg whites, salt, powdered sugar and lemon juice with an electric beater until stiff peaks are formed. Fit a pastry bag with a narrow icing tip (#2 or 3) and fill bag half full with icing. Holding the tip about 2 or 3 inches above the cookie, pipe design onto surface. Or, spread icing all over with spatula or knife. When icing hardens (and it does so quickly!) store cookies in airtight container, preferably without stacking them, as this may chip the icing.

the small reserved portion of marzipan green and divide into thirds. Shape into tiny stems. Press each stem gently into the top of each berry.

**BANANAS:** Pinch off a 3" ball of marzipan. Tint it yellow, working color in evenly, then divide into fourths. Roll each into a cylinder, taper the ends, then flatten the sides slightly to give a banana shape. Mix brown food coloring—1 drop green, 4 drops yellow, 3 drops red—and paint lines on the sides of the bananas, and on the "stems" and ends.

**CARROTS:** Pinch off a 3" ball of marzipan, then pinch off a tiny bit of it to reserve for "tops." Tint the large portion orange—2 drops yellow with 1 drop red—and divide into thirds. Roll into cylinders, then taper one end

of each to a point. Round off the other end of each to look like the top of a carrot, pressing the tip of your pinkie finger into the top to make the slight indentation. Using the dull edge of a small knife, make horizontal wrinkles in each carrot. Tint the little reserved piece of marzipan green and divide it into thirds. Divide each of these into thirds and roll these out on a work surface (using your index finger) to make tiny strips. Pinch the ends of the 3 strips together to make a carrot "top." Repeat with the other two sets, then press each "top" into the indentation you made in the top of each carrot. Paint the wrinkles on the carrots lightly with brown food coloring.

'Tis the season for giving.



Christmas decorations courtesy of The Mulberry Tree, Savannah, Georgia

## • MORE HOLIDAY TREATS •

### Pecan Wafer Sandwiches

#### Wafers:

- 2 cups shelled pecans
- 1 cup butter, softened at room temperature
- 1 cup Dixie Crystals granulated sugar
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 4 egg whites
- 1 1/4 cups flour
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. cinnamon

#### Chocolate Cream Cheese Filling:

- 4 oz. unsweetened chocolate
- 1/4 cup (1/2 stick) sweet butter, softened at room temperature
- 8 oz. cream cheese, softened at room temp.
- 1 lb. box Dixie Crystals confectioners sugar
- 1/2 tsp. vanilla
- silver shot (balls), for decoration

**To make Wafers:** Preheat oven to 350°. Arrange pecans on a baking sheet in a single layer. Toast in preheated oven for 10 minutes, turning once. Remove from oven and cool completely. Put half of the toasted nuts in the bowl of a food processor fitted with a steel blade. Use several on/off turns to grind nuts to a fine texture. Transfer to a bowl, then repeat with remaining nuts. Set aside. Line two cookie sheets with parchment paper. In a mixing bowl, cream butter with sugar and vanilla, beating until light and fluffy. Beat in egg whites, one at a time. Sift together the flour, salt and cinnamon, and stir into creamed mixture. Add ground nuts and stir until well

blended. Spoon mixture into a pastry bag with a 1/2" open tip and pipe out circles the size of a quarter, leaving space in between for the cookies to spread during baking. Bake one sheet at a time for 10-12 minutes, turning the sheet around halfway through so that the cookies bake evenly. The cookies are done when edges are golden brown. Transfer cookie sheet to a rack and let stand 5 minutes before lifting the cookies from the parchment and setting on racks to cool completely. If you are not going to fill the wafers right away, or if it is a very humid day, store the cooled wafers in an airtight container until ready to fill. To fill, pipe or spread chocolate cream cheese filling (recipe below) on the flat side of one pecan wafer. Place another wafer, flat-side down, over filling. Pipe a star or rosette on top (using a pastry bag fitted with an open star tip), then place a silver ball in the center of the star. Serve right away—these cookies are best when they are still crisp, and they lose their crispness soon after being filled.

**To make Chocolate Filling:** Melt the chocolate in the top of a double boiler, over simmering water. Stir until smooth, then set aside to cool. In a mixing bowl, cream butter and cream cheese together until light and fluffy. Add the confectioners sugar and vanilla and mix well. Stir in the melted, cooled chocolate and blend thoroughly.

### Orange Mints

- 1 lb. box Dixie Crystals confectioners sugar
- 1/3 cup butter
- 1/2 cup light corn syrup
- 2 tsp. orange flavoring

- 1/4 tsp. vanilla
- 5 drops yellow food coloring
- 1 drop red food coloring

Combine half the sifted confectioners sugar, butter and corn syrup in a large saucepan. Cook mixture, stirring constantly, until it comes to a full rolling boil. Stir in remaining confectioners sugar, vanilla, orange flavoring and food coloring. Remove from heat, and stir until mixture is cool enough to handle. Pour onto waxed paper and knead until mixture is smooth. Press into molds (plastic candy molds are available in specialty cooking stores) and let set till they hold the shape—3-5 minutes. Pop out of molds onto waxed paper until firm enough to store. Store in airtight containers. Makes about 4 dozen candies.

### Chocolate Dipped Apricots

- 3 oz. (1/2 cup) semi-sweet chocolate chips\*
- 2 TBSP sweet butter
- 6 oz. package dried apricots

Combine the chocolate and butter in the top of a double boiler, set over simmering water. Stir until smooth. Remove from the heat, but keep mixture over warm water to maintain dipping consistency. Line a baking sheet or tray with waxed paper. Dip half of each apricot in the chocolate mixture, then place it on the waxed paper. When all of the apricots are dipped, put the tray in the refrigerator for a while to set the chocolate. Transfer to airtight container and store in the refrigerator until ready to serve.