

Recipes from the Magical Bakery Mysteries

By Bailey Cates



From *Brownies and Broomsticks*

Peanut Butter Swirl Brownies

¾ cup chunky peanut butter
4 Tablespoons butter, melted
½ cup confectioners' sugar
½ teaspoon vanilla extract
¾ cup cocoa powder
½ cup boiling water

½ teaspoon baking soda
2 cups sugar
2 eggs
1 ⅓ cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon vanilla
¼ teaspoon salt

Preheat oven to 350 F. Oil and flour a 9x13 baking pan.

Mix together the peanut butter, butter, confectioners' sugar and vanilla extract. Set aside.

Combine cocoa powder and baking soda in a medium bowl. Add 1/3 cup of the vegetable oil and mix together thoroughly. Add boiling water and stir until mixture thickens. Add the rest of the vegetable oil, eggs, and sugar and stir until smooth. Mix in flour, vanilla and salt until thoroughly blended. Pour brownie batter into the prepared baking pan.

Drizzle peanut butter mixture over brownie batter. Using a knife, cut through the topping and batter to create a marbled effect. Bake for 35-40 minutes, or until brownies are set in the middle and peanut butter swirl topping begins to puff slightly. Allow to cool in pan before cutting.

Cheddar Sage Scones

2 ¼ cups all-purpose flour
1 Tablespoon baking powder
½ teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon dried sage

6 Tablespoons butter, cut into 1-inch pieces and chilled in the freezer for fifteen minutes
2/3 cup sharp cheddar cheese, grated
1 egg
½ cup milk

Preheat oven to 400 F.

Set aside ¼ cup flour in a small bowl. In a medium bowl combine 2 cups flour, baking powder, salt and sage. Add chilled butter and cut into flour by rubbing with your fingers or a using a pastry blender until the consistency of rough cornmeal.

Add the grated cheddar to the ¼ cup flour and toss to coat. Shake to remove excess flour and add to pastry mixture, tossing with your hands to evenly distribute the cheese.

Whisk together the egg and milk. Add to flour mixture, stirring lightly with a fork until ingredients are moistened and just hold together.

Transfer to a lightly floured surface and knead twenty times. Add more flour to the surface if needed. Pat into an 8-inch circle, slightly higher in the center than on the edges. Using a very sharp knife, cut eight equal wedges. Place scones on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper, slightly apart from each other. Bake for 12-14 minutes, until golden brown.

Makes 8 scones.

From *Bewitched, Bothered, and Biscotti*

Margie's Coca-Cola Cake

Makes one 9"x13" sheet cake

1 cup Coca-Cola

½ cup buttermilk

2 cups all-purpose flour

¼ cup cocoa powder

1 teaspoon baking soda

1 cup butter

1¾ cups sugar

2 large eggs, slightly beaten

1½ teaspoons vanilla extract

Preheat the oven to 350° F. Butter and flour a 9"x13" baking pan.

Mix the buttermilk and the Coca-Cola together and set aside. Sift together the flour, cocoa and baking soda and set aside.

Cream butter and sugar together on low speed with an electric mixer. Add eggs and vanilla extract and beat together until thoroughly combined. Add half the flour mixture and combine well. Mix in the Coca-Cola and buttermilk, then add the rest of the flour, mixing until just blended.

Pour the cake batter into the prepared pan and bake at 350° F for 30 to 35 minutes until a cake tester inserted in the middle comes out clean. Allow to cool for a few minutes while you make the frosting.

Coca-Cola Frosting

½ cup butter

¼ cup Coca-Cola

3 Tablespoons cocoa powder

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1 pound confectioners' sugar

1 cup chopped dried cherries (optional)

Melt the butter in a saucepan. Add the Coca-Cola and cocoa powder and bring mixture to a boil. Remove from heat and whisk in the confectioners' sugar and vanilla. Stir in the chopped cherries if you like. The cherries can also be replaced with the same amount of more traditional chopped pecans. Pour the warm frosting over the warm cake and allow to cool completely before slicing.

Cinnamon Raisin Biscotti

1 cup raisins	½ teaspoon baking powder
2 teaspoons cinnamon	⅔ cups sugar
¼ teaspoon nutmeg	½ teaspoon salt
2 cups all-purpose flour	1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 eggs	

Preheat oven to 350° F. Line a cookie sheet with parchment paper or non-stick aluminum foil.

Combine the raisins, cinnamon, nutmeg and flour together; set aside. Combine the eggs, baking powder, sugar, salt and vanilla extract and beat on medium speed until mixture is light and the sugar is mostly dissolved. Mixing on low speed, add the flour mixture in gradually until it is just incorporated. Do not over mix.

Shape dough into a 3"x12" loaf and transfer to the cookie sheet (or form the loaf on the cookie sheet). Bake for 25 minutes. Remove loaf from oven and reduce the temperature to 325° F. Allow the loaf to cool for 15-20 minutes on a cutting board then use a serrated knife to slice it into 12 pieces. Slice either straight across or horizontally, depending on the desired shape and size of the biscotti. Lightly misting the loaf with water first will help prevent crumbling.

Place the slices back on the cookie sheet and bake for another 20 minutes until crispy but not browned. Cool biscotti completely before storing in an airtight container.

If you like nuts in your biscotti, replace half the raisins with slivered almonds or chopped pecans. These are wonderful dipped into coffee drinks or a glass of dessert wine, of course, but something special with a cup of hot apple cider in the fall!

Makes 12 biscotti.

From Charms and Chocolate Chips

Mocha Shortbread

1 ¼ cups flour	2 teaspoons instant coffee or espresso powder
¼ cup cornstarch	1 cup softened butter
¼ cup unsweetened cocoa powder	1 cup confectioners' sugar

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Sift together flour, cornstarch, cocoa and instant coffee; set aside. Beat butter with an electric mixer until it is creamy and lighter in color – about five minutes. Add confectioners' sugar gradually, beating into butter until thoroughly incorporated. Add flour mixture and mix just until smoothly blended.

Spread parchment paper on a large cookie sheet. Divide the dough into three portions and, covering each portion with plastic wrap, press each one into a circle that is five-to-six inches in diameter. Be sure to press the rounds into place on the parchment where they will bake. If your cookie sheet is too small for all three rounds, use two smaller sheets with two rounds on one and a single round on the other. Remove plastic wrap.

With a very sharp knife, score each round into eight wedges. Bake for 25 minutes or until the shortbread feels firm to the touch (it will puff up a bit first). Remove from oven and re-score each round while still quite hot. Slide the shortbread, still on the parchment paper, onto a wire rack to cool. After they are completely cool, break or cut rounds into wedges along scored lines.

These are fabulous served with vanilla ice cream!

Makes 32 cookies.

Chocolate Chip Gingerbread

2 ½ cups flour	¾ cup molasses
2 teaspoons baking soda	¾ cup boiling water
2 teaspoons powdered ginger	2 Tablespoons grated ginger (or use pre-grated ginger found in the produce department)
½ cup butter	1/3 cup crystallized ginger cut into ¼-inch dice
1 cup sugar	1/3 cup dark chocolate chips
2 large eggs	

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Butter and flour a 9-inch square cake pan.

Sift together the flour, baking soda, and ginger; set aside. Beat butter with an electric mixer until it is creamy and lighter in color – about five minutes. Add sugar and beat until fluffy. Add the eggs one at a time and beat well.

Combine the molasses, grated ginger, and boiling water. Blend gradually into the butter mixture. Add in the flour mixture and combine thoroughly. Stir in the crystallized ginger and chocolate chips.

Pour into pan and bake for 35-45 minutes or until a cake tester inserted in the middle comes out clean. Cool slightly then turn out onto a wire rack to cool completely.

Delicious with a simple sprinkling of confectioners' sugar or a dollop of whipped cream on top. Or both!

From *Some Enchanted Éclair*

Fast and Easy Gluten-free Peanut Butter Cookies

1 cup sugar
1 cup chunky peanut butter
1 large egg

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Mix the three ingredients thoroughly together and roll into small balls. Put on a cookie sheet and flatten with a fork. Sprinkle with a dash of kosher or sea salt and bake 10-15 minutes (depending on size) until slightly browned. Allow to rest on cookie sheet for a few minutes before transferring to a rack. Cookies will crisp a bit as they cool.

Makes 12-24 cookies, depending on size.

Honeybee Carrot 'n' Apple Cake or Muffins

1 cup vegetable oil	1 cup whole wheat flour
1 cup sugar	2 teaspoons soda
1/4 cup molasses	1/2 teaspoon salt
4 eggs, well beaten	2 teaspoons ground allspice
3 cups grated carrots	2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
1 cup applesauce (chunky or smooth)	1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract
1 cup unbleached flour	1 1/2 teaspoons orange extract

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Butter and sugar a 10 x 14-inch pan.

Cream oil, sugar, and molasses. Add eggs, carrots, applesauce, and vanilla and orange extracts. Mix well. Mix dry ingredients together in a separate bowl. Add flour mixture to carrot mixture a small amount at a time, blending well. Batter will be quite thick. Spread in the prepared pan and bake for an hour or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Cool before frosting.

This recipe will also make approximately 24 muffins. Start checking for doneness after 40 minutes in the oven.

Makes one 10 x 14 sheet cake

Cream Cheese Frosting

8 ounces cream cheese	1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/4 cup butter	1 1/4 cups confectioners' sugar

Beat all ingredients together until smooth. Spread on the cake.

From *Magic and Macaroons*

Lucy's Brazilian Cheese Bread

(Pão de Queijo)

Crispy on the outside, soft and airy on the inside, this addictive cheese bread goes perfectly with any soup or stew. They keep for several days in an airtight container – they will soften (and make fantastic sandwich rolls) but can be re-crisped in the oven before serving. As an added bonus, these puffs are naturally gluten-free. Tapioca is made from the root of the cassava plant, so you may find “cassava” flour in international groceries. Most regular grocery stores and natural food stores carry tapioca flour. Bob's Red Mill is a popular brand.

1 cup milk (whole)

½ cup vegetable oil

1 tsp. salt

2 cups tapioca flour, sifted

2 large eggs

¾ cup Parmesan cheese

¾ cup sharp Cheddar cheese

Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Note: you will reduce the heat once the bread goes in the oven, so arrange the racks to accommodate two sheet pans at once. Line baking sheets with parchment paper.

Combine milk and oil in a 2-quart saucepan. Bring to a boil over medium heat while stirring. As soon as it begins to boil, remove from heat and add all the tapioca flour at once. Stir until combined. Dough will be slightly grainy in appearance.

Put the dough in the bowl of a standing mixer. (You can do the next bit by hand if you're looking for a workout.) Beat the dough for 2-3 minutes at medium speed until it is smooth and has cooled enough to easily touch for several seconds. Crack an egg into a ramekin and scramble slightly. Add to dough and mix on medium until incorporated. Repeat with the second egg. Dough will be smooth and slightly golden. Add the cheese and beat on medium until it's thoroughly incorporated.

The dough will be sticky with a consistency between a dough and a batter. With an ice-cream scoop or using two soup spoons, portion the dough into mounds a bit more than an inch apart on the lined baking sheets. Smaller puffs take about two tablespoons of dough, but you can double that size to make larger rolls (and add extra space between them) or use less dough for bite-sized appetizers.

Place baking sheets into oven and reduce the temperature immediately to 350 F. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes until the dough has puffed, the exterior is dry, and the outside is beginning to color. Serve immediately, or store for up to a week in an airtight container.

Makes 2 dozen puffs – or 1 dozen if you make them twice as large for sandwiches.

Katie's Thumbprint Macaroons

Naturally gluten-free, coconut macaroons pack a sweet punch made even sweeter here with the addition of a gooey filling. Easy to make, they can be topped with any kind of jam you might want like a typical thumbprint cookie or try a bit of homemade pomegranate jelly or pineapple jam for a different twist.

3 large egg whites
½ cup sugar
½ tsp. vanilla extract

Dash of salt
1 – 14 oz. package shredded, sweetened coconut
½ cup filling of choice

Preheat the oven to 325 and line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

Whisk together egg whites, sugar, vanilla and salt. Fold in the coconut until combined. Portion heaping tablespoonfuls of mixture onto the baking sheet, about 1-inch apart, and using wet finger tidy the coconut shreds around the edges. Bake for 15 minutes. Remove from oven and make an indentation in the middle of each cookie with the back of a spoon, being careful not to puncture the bottom of the cookie. Fill each with jam or jelly (see below), and bake 10 more minutes or until golden brown around the edges. Allow to cool on baking sheet for 10 minutes, then transfer to a rack to cool completely.

Makes about 30 macaroons.

Pineapple Jam

Combine 1-20 oz. can crushed pineapple, ½ cup sugar, and the juice of half a lime in a saucepan. Bring to a simmer over low heat and, stirring frequently, cook until reduced to a sticky jam – about 40 minutes. Makes about a cup. Leftovers are great over ice cream or as a topping for baked brie.

Pomegranate Jelly

Combine 1 cup bottled pomegranate juice from the refrigerator case (so it has not been heated in a canning or bottled process before use) with a tablespoon of water and two cups of sugar (be exact) in a saucepan. Heat to full boil, stirring constantly. Stir in ¼ cup liquid pectin (there might be some leftover if you buy it in pre-measured packets), and boil for exactly one minute, continuing to stir. Ladle into clean jars. Let stand on counter until cool, then put in the refrigerator. It may take a full day for the jelly to set. Makes about 2 ½ cups. Leftover will keep in the refrigerator for up to two months, or jars can be sealed in a boiling water bath for five minutes.

From *Spells and Scones*

Katie's Greek Scones

2 ¼ cups all-purpose flour	1/3 cup sundried tomatoes packed in oil, rinsed and roughly chopped
1 Tablespoon baking powder	¼ cup Kalamata olives, roughly chopped.
½ teaspoon salt	2/3 cup feta cheese, crumbled
1 teaspoon dried rosemary	1 egg
6 Tablespoons butter, cut into 1-inch pieces and chilled in the freezer for fifteen minutes	½ cup milk

Preheat oven to 400 F.

Set aside ¼ cup flour in a separate bowl. In a medium bowl combine 2 cups flour, baking powder, salt and rosemary. Cut the chilled butter into the flour mixture by rubbing with your fingers or a using a pastry blender until the consistency is that of of rough cornmeal.

Add the sundried tomatoes, the Kalamata olives, and feta cheese to the ¼ cup flour and toss to coat. Shake to remove excess flour and add to pastry mixture, tossing with your hands to evenly distribute.

Whisk together the egg and milk. Add to flour mixture, stirring lightly with a fork until ingredients are moistened and just hold together.

Transfer to a lightly floured surface and knead twenty times. Add more flour to the surface if needed. Pat into an 8-inch circle that is slightly higher in the center than on the edges. Using a very sharp knife, cut eight equal wedges. Place scones on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper, an inch or so apart from one another. Bake for 12-14 minutes, until golden brown.

Makes 8 large scones

Iris' Pumpkin Spice Softies

2 cups butter, softened
2 cups granulated sugar
2 teaspoons baking powder
2 teaspoons baking soda
1 teaspoon salt
2 teaspoons allspice
1 teaspoon ginger
1 teaspoon cinnamon
2 eggs

2 teaspoon vanilla
1 – 15 ounce can of pumpkin
4 cups flour

Frosting:

4 ounces (one stick) butter, softened
8 ounces cream cheese softened
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 cups confectioners' sugar, sifted

Preheat oven to 350 F.

Add 2 cups of softened butter to a large bowl and beat until fluffy with an electric mixer – about 30-40 seconds on high speed. Add the granulated sugar, baking powder, baking soda, salt, allspice, ginger, and cinnamon. Beat until thoroughly combined. Add the eggs and vanilla, and beat on medium until combined. Mix in the pumpkin. Slowly add the flour, beating it in on low until the mixture is smooth and even.

Using two spoons, drop dough onto a parchment-lined cookie sheet about two inches apart. Bake for 10-12 minutes until the tops are firm. Cool cookies on a wire rack.

For the frosting, combine softened butter and cream cheese with the vanilla extract in a mixing bowl. Beat on medium until glossy. Mix in the sifted confectioners' sugar until uniform. Spread the frosting on cooled cookies with a knife for a rustic look, or use a pastry bag for a tidier appearance.

Makes 48-60 cookies, depending on size.

From *Potions and Pastries*

Brown Butter Chocolate Chip Cookies

2 ¼ cups all-purpose flour

1 tsp. baking soda

1 tsp. salt

1 ½ cups (3 sticks) butter

¾ cup granulated sugar

¾ cup packed dark brown sugar

1 tsp. vanilla

2 large eggs

1 – 10 oz. package 70% cacao chocolate chips

1 cup slivered almonds

Place butter in a heavy saucepan, preferably with a light-colored bottom, so you can judge the color of the butter as it browns. Place over medium heat. Stir now and then to make sure the butter is cooking evenly. It will start to foam, then turn tan, then a darker brown. The foam will brown and crisp and fall to the bottom of the pan. When the butter has browned – about the color of light maple syrup – remove from heat and transfer all but 2 tablespoons into another container to cool. You should have a cup, as the butter decreases in volume as the liquid cooks out. If you have a bit more, set aside to add to pasta or steamed vegetables. It's delicious and will keep in the refrigerator for months.

Add the slivered almonds to the butter left in the pan and cook over medium heat until crisp and lightly browned. Set aside.

Preheat oven to 375 F. Cover a baking sheet with parchment paper or a silicon mat. Combine flour, baking soda, and salt. Set aside. Using a mixer, beat together 1 cup of the brown butter, sugars, and vanilla. Add the eggs, one at a time. Beat in the flour mixture. Stir in the chocolate chips and almonds. Drop by rounded tablespoon onto the baking sheet about two inches apart. Bake for 9 to 11 minutes until golden brown. Move to wire racks to cool.

Makes about 4 dozen cookies.

Rhubarb and Ricotta Crostini

2 ½ cups rhubarb, trimmed and sliced ¼ inch thick

2/3 cup sugar, plus more to taste

Zest of one orange plus 4 Tablespoons of juice

1 baguette, sliced ¼ inch thick

1 cup ricotta cheese

¼ cup honey

Place the rhubarb, sugar, orange zest, and orange juice in a heavy saucepan. Bring to a boil, then turn to low and simmer until the rhubarb is cooked through but still pink and holds its shape – about five minutes. Add a tablespoon of water if it starts to stick, but avoid making the mixture runny. Set aside to cool. When still slightly warm, add any additional sugar to taste.

Toast the baguette slices under a broiler. When golden brown on one side, flip and brown the other side. The toasts should be crisp, but still slightly tender on this inside.

When ready to serve, spread a bit of stewed rhubarb on each slice of toasted, followed by a dollop of ricotta and a drizzle of honey.

This makes a great appetizer, a nice addition to brunch, or a light breakfast.

From *Cookies and Clairvoyance*

Magical Chocolate Peppermint Cookies

½ cup softened butter

¾ cup sugar

1 egg

½ teaspoon peppermint extract

1¼ cups all-purpose flour

¼ teaspoon salt

½ cup cocoa powder

½ teaspoon baking soda

¼ teaspoon baking powder

⅓ cup semisweet chocolate chips

1/3 cup crushed peppermint candies

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.

Cream the butter and sugar together until light and fluffy. Add the egg and peppermint extract and beat another minute, scraping down the sides of the bowl. In another bowl, sift together the flour, salt, cocoa powder, baking soda and baking powder. Add the flour mixture ½ cup at a time to wet ingredients, mixing thoroughly between each addition. Fold in chocolate chips, then place dough in freezer for ten minutes to chill.

Using a tablespoon, form dough into small balls and arrange 1 ½ inches apart on a parchment-lined baking sheet. Flatten the tops with the tines of a fork.

Bake for 10–12 minutes until the edges begin to dry. The tops will still look soft. Sprinkle the crushed peppermint candies on immediately but allow cookies to cool on baking sheet for 3-4 minutes before removing to a rack to cool further.

When completely cooled, store in an airtight container for up to five days or freeze for several weeks.

Yield: 1 dozen cookies

Honeybee Spice Cookies

½ cup softened butter

¼ cup molasses

¾ cup dark brown sugar

1 egg

1 cup all-purpose flour

½ teaspoon salt

½ teaspoon baking soda

½ teaspoon each: powdered ginger, ground cloves, allspice, cinnamon, and grated nutmeg

Preheat oven to 375 degrees.

Cream together butter and brown sugar until smooth. Add molasses and egg and mix until thoroughly combined. In another bowl, mix together the flour, salt, baking soda and spices. Add to the first mixture all at once and blend thoroughly.

Drop cookies by the teaspoonful on a parchment-lined baking sheet, leaving about an inch between each cookie. Bake for 7 to 10 minutes or until crisp and lightly browned.

Yield: about 40 small cookies

NOTE from Bailey: A reader noted that the dough was too thin, and cookies ran together on the baking sheet. I tested the recipe again, and while the dough was indeed very soft, the cookies turned out the same as my initial test. This is possibly because I live at high altitude but more likely because I live in an extremely dry climate. Also, using more than a teaspoonful of dough did result in cookies running together. If your dough seems too wet, feel free to mix in another ¼ to ½ cup of flour!

From *Witches and Wedding Cake*

Hummingbird Cupcakes

2 cups all-purpose flour	2 large eggs
½ teaspoon baking soda	1 1/3 cup mashed bananas
¾ teaspoon salt	2/3 cup crushed pineapple
¾ teaspoon cinnamon	2/3 cup toasted and chopped pecans
½ teaspoon ground ginger	2/3 cup shredded coconut (unsweetened if possible)
3 sticks (¾ lb.) butter, melted and cooled	1 ½ teaspoons vanilla extract
1 ¼ cups granulated sugar	

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Line muffin tins with paper liners. Whisk together the flour, baking soda, salt, cinnamon, and ginger. In another bowl, cream the butter and sugar together on medium- high speed. Add the eggs, one at a time, beating on medium speed until each is thoroughly mixed in. Continue beating until light and fluffy. Add the bananas, pineapple, pecans, coconut, and vanilla extract, and mix until combined. Fold in the flour mixture, one third at a time, mixing until all streaks are gone.

Fill muffin cups three- quarters full. Bake for 20 minutes or until a cake tester comes out clean, rotating the tins halfway through baking. Allow to cool completely, still in the tins, before frosting.

FOR THE FROSTING:

12 ounces cream cheese
½ cup butter at room temperature
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
2 cups confectioners' sugar

Beat the cream cheese and butter together on medium- high speed until fluffy. Add the vanilla extract. Reduce speed to low and add the confectioners' sugar gradually until it's all incorporated. Increase speed to medium and whip the frosting until light and fluffy.

Classic Southern fare. Makes 24 cupcakes.

Peanut Butter Bacon Cookies

1 cup all-natural chunky peanut butter

1 cup sugar

1 Tablespoon molasses

1 teaspoon baking soda

1 egg

6 slices of bacon, cooked and diced

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

Mix together the peanut butter, sugar, and molasses until combined. Add the baking soda and egg. When thoroughly incorporated, fold in the diced bacon. Roll into balls a little smaller than a golf ball. Place on the cookie sheet and press flat with the tines of a fork. Sprinkle with a little more sugar— or if you prefer, sprinkle with just a dash of smoked salt. Bake for 10 minutes until lightly browned. Cool on the baking sheet. Will keep in an airtight container for 3 days— if they last that long.

Naturally gluten-free! Makes about 15 cookies.

From *Spirits and Sourdough*

Spiced Molasses Cookies

2 ¼ cups all-purpose flour	½ cup dark brown sugar, packed
2 teaspoons baking soda	½ cup granulated sugar, plus 1/3 cup for rolling cookies
½ teaspoon salt	1 large egg
1 ½ teaspoons ground cinnamon	1 teaspoon vanilla extract
¼ teaspoon ground allspice	1/3 cup molasses
¾ teaspoon ground cloves	
¾ cup (1 ½ sticks) unsalted butter, softened	

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F.

Whisk together the flour, baking soda, salt, cinnamon, allspice, and cloves in a bowl until thoroughly combined and set aside.

Using an electric mixer, cream the butter for 2 minutes. Add the brown sugar and ½ cup granulated sugar and beat until light and fluffy, about 3 minutes with mixer set at medium speed. Add egg, vanilla extract, and molasses. Beat until combined, about 30 seconds. Scrape down the sides of the bowl with a rubber spatula. Add dry ingredients and beat until just combined, about 30 seconds.

Place remaining 1/3 cup granulated sugar in a shallow bowl. Working with 2 tablespoons of dough at a time, roll dough into 1 ¾-inch balls. Roll balls in sugar and place on ungreased cookie sheets, spacing them 1 ½ to 2 inches apart.

Bake at 375F until the outer edges of the cookies begin to set and centers are soft and puffy, about 11-13 minutes. Cool cookies on sheets 2-3 minutes before transferring to cooling racks.

Be careful not to overbake. The centers of the cookies should be somewhat soft and spongy when you take them out of the oven. Makes 24 cookies.

Blood Orange Thyme Cake

2 ½ cups unbleached white flour

2 ½ teaspoons baking powder

4 large eggs

1 ½ cups granulated sugar

1 cup light olive oil

1 ¼ cups freshly squeezed blood orange juice

Zest from the oranges used for juice (usually 3-4)

2 teaspoons fresh thyme (or 1 teaspoon dried)

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Grease two standard loaf pans

In a medium mixing bowl, whisk together the flour and baking powder. In a large mixing bowl, cream together the eggs and sugar until light and fluffy, about five minutes. Switching mixer to low speed, slowly drizzle in the olive oil until thoroughly combined. Keeping the mixer on low speed, slowly add the blood orange juice, blood orange zest, thyme, and vanilla extract. Add the flour mixture, mixing until just combined. Do not overmix.

Pour the batter into the greased loaf pans. Bake for 50-60 minutes, or until a cake tester inserted in the middle comes out clean.

Allow cakes to cool completely on a rack, then store in an airtight container for up to five days. A lighter, not terribly sweet olive oil cake, the loaves can be sliced and served as is, or dusted lightly with confectioners' sugar. This cake freezes quite well.