

AT HOME FOR THE

# Holidays

*Cookbook*



✧ **Desserts** ✧



**Jay Baer**  
Founder  
Convince and  
Convert

## DESSERTS

## Grammy's Peanut Blossoms

This is from my grandmother, Florence Meyer (Ranch). She was among the first women to attain a degree in molecular biology from the University of Nebraska and was also a great cook and a fantastic grandma. In fact, loooooong before Spotify and even iPods, she used to record herself reading storybooks to me on an old cassette recorder and send them to me. I was like 6 years old.

Being from Nebraska, my family has a lot of holiday recipes that are meat and potato-oriented. But this is my favorite, a cherished cookie concoction that isn't necessarily holiday in its ingredients, but that's when my Grammy would always make them.

## INGREDIENTS:

1 3/4 cups flour  
1 tsp baking soda  
1/2 tsp salt  
1/2 cup firmly packed brown sugar  
A shallow dish of white sugar  
1/2 cup shortening  
1/2 cup peanut butter  
1 egg  
2 tbsp milk  
1 tsp vanilla  
48 Hershey's kisses, unwrapped

1. Combine all ingredients except candy and white sugar. Mix well.
2. Shape dough into balls, using a teaspoon.
3. Roll balls in white sugar.
4. Place on ungreased cookie sheets.
5. Bake at 375 for 11 minutes.
6. Remove from the oven and top each cookie immediately with a Hershey's kiss. Press down firmly so cookie cracks around edges.





**Cathy McPhillips**

VP of Marketing  
Content Marketing  
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## DESSERTS

# Cheesecake

Christmas Eves dating back to the 70s involved trips to my Aunt Jean and Uncle Mel's. They had lots of land, and we loved playing there, especially in the snow on the rolling hills on their property.

I vividly remember my sister and I being so cold and exhausted from playing in the snow, so we went into the master bedroom and fell asleep under everyone's coats until our parents woke us for the 45-min trek home, over the river, and through the woods - literally.

Aunt Jean's go-to recipes on holidays were her stuffed cabbage and her cheesecake. She'd cut the cheesecake in 2" squares and put on a platter, and I'd walk by and grab a piece, and then continuing to keep passing through the room to take another, not thinking anyone would notice. (They did!) Aunt Jean passed away a few years ago, but thankfully my mom and cousin have mastered this recipe!

I don't have a sweet tooth, but this cheesecake is the only dessert I truly can't resist.

## INGREDIENTS:

## Crust

1.5 cups graham cracker crumbs

¼ cup margarine

¼ cup sugar

## Filling

3 8 oz. packages of cream

cheese, room temperature

5 eggs

1.5 tsp vanilla

## Topping

1 pint sour cream

¼ cup of sugar

1 tsp vanilla

1. For the crust - melt margarine, add graham cracker crumbs & sugar. Mix, pour into 9x13 cake pan. Pat bottom of the pan and halfway up the sides
2. For the filling - put cream cheese in the mixer, add sugar, mix well. Add eggs one at a time, then vanilla. Mix until smooth. Add to graham cracker crust, bake at 350 for 30-40 min.
3. For the topping - mix ingredients, pour on top of the warm cheesecake, spread evenly. Put cheesecake back in the oven for 5 min. Remove and refrigerate.



## DESSERTS

# Thumbprint Cookies



**Laura Gassner Otting**  
Author, Speaker, Coach

Imagine that you are a nice Jewish Girl from Miami going home for your very first Christmas at the childhood home of a nice Catholic Boy from Cincinnati.

Greeting you is your future mother-in-law, and she's carrying the most delicious cookies you've ever tasted: the thumbprint cookies. They are buttery, they are sugary, and filled with red and green frosting. A family tradition!

They are, in a word, Christmas, as are the hours you'll come to spend baking cookies together in the decades to come, talking and getting to know each other until, eventually, your children join in, too, and those memories become Christmas.

**INGREDIENTS:**

3/4 cup finely chopped nuts  
1 cup butter  
1 cup brown sugar - firmly packed!  
1 egg yolk  
1 tsp. vanilla  
1 cup flour  
1 tsp. salt

1. Mix together the butter, brown sugar, egg yolk, and vanilla
2. Stir in flour and salt
3. Chill batter
4. Roll into balls
5. Beat egg white slightly with a fork
6. Dip balls in egg white and roll in nuts
7. Place on greased baking sheet
8. Bake at 350 degrees for 5 minutes
9. Take out and place thumbprint in center
10. Return to oven and bake 8 minutes longer
11. Decorate center with icing



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## DESSERTS

## Coconut Bon Bons

The warm, magical atmosphere of the holidays has been a source of many happy memories for me since I was a kid. Family happily gathered together with kids playing and parents reminiscing, a real fire burning in the fireplace, Bing Crosby or Johnny Mathis singing Christmas songs in the background, tinkling lights, decorations and a cornucopia of delicious smells coming from the kitchen all spell home for me.

One of those intoxicating smells of home came from the wide range of cookies my Mom would make and my favorites were always the Coconut Bon Bons.

**INGREDIENTS:**

2 lbs powdered sugar  
14 oz flaked coconut  
2 cups chopped walnuts  
1 stick of butter  
1 can sweetened condensed milk

1. Mix together sugar, coconut, walnuts
2. Add butter, condensed milk
3. After all ingredients are thoroughly mixed, roll into balls half the size of a golf ball
4. Melt 12 oz chocolate chips with 1/2 sheet of paraffin wax
5. Use a toothpick to dip the balls into the melted chocolate and place on wax paper to cool
6. Enjoy! Now go run a half marathon to burn the calories :)



SERVE WITH: [REWARD CUSTOMERS ON REPEAT PURCHASE AUTOMATION RECIPE](#)

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## DESSERTS

## Yule Log

My parents weren't much for cooking, but we did occasionally host Christmas dinner at our house. Those dinners were my favorites because our neighbor, Mrs. Gilmore, would come over. She always brought a Yule Log, frosted sponge cake rolled up into a log shape and frosted with chocolate icing. Her Yule Logs always featured elaborate holiday scenes.

She'd place a tiny mirror pond on top of the log, surrounded by snow dusted trees, then finish it with tiny ice skaters. Everyone was different, and they were all tiny windows into a perfect country holiday. I've used different recipes over the years, but this one has mascarpone whipped cream, just like Mrs. Gilmore's.

No idea where she got the tiny, pond-shaped mirror, though. That's a holiday mystery for the ages!



**Kerry O'Shea  
Gorgone**

Marketing Director  
Marketing Profs

## INGREDIENTS:

**Chocolate Cake**

3/4 cup (98g) all-purpose flour  
1/3 cup (38g) Hershey's Special  
Dark cocoa powder  
1 tsp baking powder  
1/2 tsp salt  
4 large eggs, divided  
3/4 cup (155g) granulated sugar  
5 tbsp (72g) sour cream  
1/4 cup butter, melted  
1 tsp vanilla extract

**Whipped Cream Filling**

1 1/4 cups (300ml) heavy  
whipping cream, cold  
3/4 cups (86g) powdered sugar  
1 tsp vanilla extract  
1/8 tsp salt  
8 oz (226g) mascarpone cheese,  
softened but still chilled\*

**Whipped Chocolate Ganache**

8 ounces semi-sweet chocolate,  
finely chopped  
1 cup heavy whipping cream  
Sugared cranberries, optional\*  
Sugared rosemary, optional\*

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line a 17×12 inch jelly roll sheet pan with parchment paper. Make sure the parchment paper sticks up at least an inch above the sides of the pan on all sides. You'll use the parchment paper later to lift the cake out of the pan and roll it up.
2. Whisk the flour, cocoa, baking powder, and salt together in a medium bowl and set aside.
3. In a large bowl, combine the egg yolks and sugar and whisk together until well combined.
4. Add the sour cream, melted butter, and vanilla extract and whisk together until well combined.
5. Add the dry ingredients and gently whisk together until well combined, then set aside.
6. Add the egg whites to a large mixer bowl and whip at high speed until stiff peaks form.
7. Gently fold about 1/3 of the whipped egg whites into the chocolate mixture to loosen up the batter.
8. Add the remaining egg whites and gently fold together until well combined.
9. Spread the cake batter evenly into the prepared pan and bake for 10-12 minutes, or until the top of the cake springs back when touched and a toothpick inserted comes out clean.
10. Remove the cake from the oven and immediately lift the cake out of the pan using the parchment paper and place it on the counter.
11. While the cake is hot, use the parchment paper the cake was baked in and start at the shorter end of the cake to slowly roll the cake up. Set the cake aside to cool completely.
12. When the cake has cooled and is ready to be filled, make the filling. Add the heavy whipping cream, powdered sugar, vanilla extract, and salt to a large mixer bowl and whip on high speed until soft peaks form.
13. Add the mascarpone cheese to the whipped cream and whip until stiff peaks form. It will happen fairly quickly.
14. Unroll the cake roll very carefully, looking out for areas where it may be sticking to release it. You can use an offset spatula or something similar and run it along the parchment paper as you unroll the cake to help release it as it unrolls.
15. Spread the filling evenly onto the unrolled cake, then roll it back up without the parchment paper.
16. Wrap it up in plastic wrap with the seam side down and refrigerate for at least an hour to firm up.
17. When you're ready to decorate the cake, make the chocolate ganache. Add the chocolate to a medium-sized bowl and set aside. Heat the cream in the microwave just until it begins to boil, then pour it over the chocolate.
18. Allow the chocolate and cream to sit for a few minutes, then whisk until smooth. Let the ganache cool to about room temperature, then transfer to a large mixer bowl.
19. Whip on high speed until lightened in color and thick enough to spread.
20. To decorate the cake, use a large serrated knife to gently cut off a piece of the log about 3 inches in length. Make the cut with a slight diagonal.
21. Use some of the chocolate ganache to attach the small log to the side of the larger log.
22. Spread the remaining chocolate ganache all over the cake, then use a fork to create bark-like lines all over it. Decorate with sugared cranberries and rosemary (instructions in notes), if desired.
23. Refrigerate the cake until ready to serve.

recipe source: <https://www.lifeloveandsugar.com/yule-log-cake-buche-de-noel>





**Sydney  
Lynch**

Client Success Manager  
L2

## DESSERTS

# Pumpkin Bread with Brown Butter Frosting

I used to live down the street from the AC office and I brought Jay (Quiles, ActiveCampaign Agency Partner Manager) a loaf of this around the holidays a few years ago. He kept telling everyone about my baking without ever having anything I've made.

## INGREDIENTS:

**Pumpkin Bread**

3 cups all-purpose flour  
1 tsp ground cloves  
1 tsp ground ginger  
2 tsp ground cinnamon  
1 tsp ground nutmeg  
1/2 tsp salt  
1 tsp baking soda  
1/2 tsp baking powder  
2 1/2 cups granulated sugar  
1 cup butter, very soft  
3 large eggs  
1 16 oz can of pure pumpkin

**Frosting**

1/2 c. butter  
2 c. powdered sugar  
1 Tbsp. milk  
1 tsp vanilla

1. Preheat oven to 350 °F and spray two medium loaf pans with nonstick spray.
2. In a medium bowl, mix the flour, spices, salt, baking soda, and baking powder and set aside.
3. In the bowl of a stand mixer with the wire whisk attached, add the sugar, butter, and eggs. Cream these three ingredients together on medium speed for about 2 minutes or until fluffy. Add the pumpkin and combine well.
4. Add the dry ingredients in two or three batches and mix until just incorporated. Scrape the sides between each batch.
5. Pour batter into the other prepared pan. Bake side-by-side for about one hour or until an inserted knife comes out clean the top is golden.
6. For the frosting, in a small saucepan over low heat, melt the butter, and let it cook till it's a delicate brown color.
7. Remove from heat, pour into a mixing bowl, and let cool. Using an electric mixer, combine powdered sugar with browned butter. Add 1 Tbsp. milk and vanilla.
8. Add more milk as needed to reach spreading consistency.



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**Adam  
Horsman**

Co Founder  
Sakari

## DESSERTS

# Apple Pie by Grandma Ople

You simply can't go wrong with a classic apple pie recipe, but this isn't just any old run of the mill version; it's the most popular apple pie recipe on the internet. As of this posting there are 11,351 reviews with more than 3900 photos, with the overwhelming majority of them being incredibly positive. It's like the Kenny G\* of Apple Pie recipes!

*\*Kenny G is the best-selling holiday artist of all time*

### INGREDIENTS:

1 recipe pastry for a 9 inch double crust pie

½ cup unsalted butter

3 tablespoons all-purpose flour

¾ cup of water

½ cup white sugar

½ cup packed brown sugar

8 Granny Smith apples - peeled, cored, and sliced

1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees F (220 degrees C).
2. Melt the butter in a saucepan.
3. Stir in flour to form a paste.
4. Add water, white sugar and brown sugar, and bring to a boil.
5. Reduce temperature and let simmer.
6. Place the bottom crust in your pan. Fill with apples, mounded slightly.
7. Cover with a lattice work crust.
8. Gently pour the sugar and butter liquid over the crust. Pour slowly so that it does not runoff.
9. Bake 15 minutes in the preheated oven.
10. Reduce the temperature to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C) and continue baking for 35 to 45 minutes, until apples are soft.

recipe source: <https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/12682/apple-pie-by-grandma-ople/>



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**Jay  
Acunzo**

Founder  
Marketing  
Showrunners

## DESSERTS

# Pignoli Cookies

Every holiday season, my parents' house basically becomes a Christmas cookie bakery. My sister, my dad, and I all give my mom a hard time about how the insane number of decorations makes it look like Christmas vomited all over the house, but really, we love it. We're Italians. Of course we do! Christmas Eve with seven types of fish. Christmas Day with endless antipasto, plus a prime rib or ham, and for some reason, a serving of manicotti as an "appetizer." (That's pronounced "mon-ee-GAWT," by the way. Chop the ending, harden the C, and manicotti --> manigott.)

At the center of all of all of this food is one special treat -- the impossibly addicting pignoli cookie. (That's pronounced "pinYOlee," by the way. The "gn" in Italian is like the "ñ" in Spanish. It makes a "nyah" sound.)

Make them now. Thank me later. Enjoy -- and happy holidays!

### INGREDIENTS:

1 lb almond paste  
1 lb pignoli (pine nuts)  
2 cups sugar  
4 egg whites - large eggs

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Mix almond paste, sugar, and egg whites in mixer until blended.
3. Roll into balls the size of large marbles and roll in pignoli nuts.
4. Shape into crescent shapes.
5. Place onto cookie sheets lined with parchment paper.
6. Bake for 15 minutes until lightly brown.
7. Cool for 10 minutes before removing and placing on racks to finish cooling





**Carla  
Johnson**

Marketing & Innovation  
Strategist

## DESSERTS

# Thumbprint Cookies

My mom made these cookies once a year – for Christmas. I grew up on a farm, the youngest of 5 kids, and we saved money however we could. My mom bought the big bags of whole walnut nuts, and my sister and I had to sit at the kitchen table for hours pounding the nuts and digging out the meat. It was a pain in the patootie, but this was my favorite Christmas cookie, so it was always worth it.

Also, when it says to press your thumb into the hot cookie dough that just came out of the oven...don't. Use the end of a wooden spoon or something else along those lines. You'll save yourself a holiday injury.

## INGREDIENTS:

1 c soft shortening  
 ½ c brown sugar  
 2 egg yolks  
 1 teaspoon vanilla  
 2 cups flour  
 ½ teaspoon salt

1. Mix together the shortening, brown sugar, egg yolks, and vanilla
2. Add flour and salt
3. Roll into 3 cm balls (1 inch).
4. Dip in slightly beaten egg whites, then roll in finely chopped nuts
5. Heat oven to 190 C (375 F)
6. Bake for 5 minutes
7. Remove from the oven and press your thumb (or a spoon) into each cookie to make a deep indentation into the middle. Return to the oven and bake another 8 minutes
8. Cool, and fill with a frosting mixture of powdered sugar, water, and coloring that matches the holidays



## DESSERTS

# Chocolate Chip Pumpkin Bread

This recipe has been passed down for generations beginning with my great great grandmother who got it off of Pinterest.

It's always a big hit, except with people who don't like pumpkin. So before baking it for friends, be sure to check their gourd preferences.



**Tim Washer**  
Virtually Funny

**INGREDIENTS:**

1 and 3/4 cups (220g)  
all-purpose flour

1 teaspoon baking soda

2 teaspoons ground cinnamon

1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg

1/4 teaspoon ground cloves

3/4 teaspoon salt

2 large eggs

3/4 cup (150g) granulated sugar

1/2 cup (100g) packed light or  
dark brown sugar

1 and 1/2 cups (340g) pumpkin  
puree (canned or fresh)

1/2 cup (120ml) vegetable oil,  
canola oil, or melted coconut oil

1/4 cup (60ml) orange juice (or  
milk works too!)

2/3 cup (120g) semi-sweet  
chocolate chips

1. Adjust the oven rack to the lower third position and preheat the oven to 350°F (177°C) degrees. Lowering the oven rack prevents the top of your bread from browning too much too soon. Spray a 9x5 inch loaf pan with non-stick spray. Set aside.
2. In a large bowl, whisk the flour, baking soda, cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves, ginger, and salt together until combined.
3. In a medium bowl, whisk the eggs, granulated sugar, and brown sugar together until combined.
4. Whisk in the pumpkin, oil, and orange juice.
5. Pour these wet ingredients into the dry ingredients and gently mix together using a rubber spatula or a wooden spoon. There will be a few lumps. Do not overmix.
6. Gently fold in the chocolate chips.
7. Pour the batter into the prepared loaf pan.
8. Bake for 60-65 minutes, making sure to loosely cover the bread with aluminum foil halfway through to prevent the top from getting too brown. The bread is done when a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean with only a few small moist crumbs. This may be before or after 60-65 minutes, depending on your oven, so begin checking every 5 minutes at the 55 minute mark or so. Allow the bread to cool completely in the pan on a wire rack before removing and slicing.



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## DESSERTS

# Pistachio Baklava

This classic dessert of the Middle East and the Mediterranean has many variations depending on the country of origin.

But what's always consistent is the crisp pastry layered with nuts and covered in a deliciously sweet sugary syrup that's sure to be the shining star of your holiday table.



**Briana Strauss**

Partner Marketing  
Manager  
Jotform

## INGREDIENTS:

2 ¾ cups/300 grams shelled pistachio nuts

4 sticks/2 cups/454 grams unsalted butter

1 pound phyllo dough, defrosted overnight in the refrigerator

3 cups/600 grams of sugar

Juice of 1/2 lemon, more to taste

1. In a food processor, pulse the pistachios until coarsely ground (or you can chop them by hand until very finely chopped). Don't overprocess the nuts. You want to maintain some texture.
2. Clarify the butter by melting it over low heat, then letting it cook until the foam rises to the top and the milk solids fall to the bottom of the pan. This will take about 5 to 15 minutes depending upon how high your heat is but don't rush it or the butter could burn.
3. Skim foam off the top of the melted butter. Line a fine-mesh sieve with a piece of cheesecloth, place it over a bowl and pour the melted butter through.
4. Heat oven to 400 degrees and brush the inside of a 9-by-13-inch baking pan with a little of the clarified butter.
5. Prepare the phyllo dough by trimming the stack of it with scissors to fit the bottom of your baking dish. Packages of phyllo come in different sizes; some won't need any trimming, some may need an inch or two cut off the side, and some may need to be cut in half crosswise. Cover phyllo layers with a lightly damp kitchen towel, and keep covered.
6. Place 1 piece of phyllo on the bottom of the baking pan; brush lightly with clarified butter. Layer phyllo sheets on top, brushing each sheet with butter as you go, until half the phyllo is used.
7. Spread pistachios on phyllo in an even layer, then layer with remaining phyllo, brushing each sheet with butter as you go (rewarm butter if necessary).
8. Cut the pastry into 36 pieces, using clean up-and-down strokes and rotating the pan if necessary. Make sure to cut all the way through to bottom of pan. Pour any remaining butter evenly over pan.
9. Bake baklava until the top is golden brown, and the lower phyllo layers beneath the pistachios are thoroughly baked through. To test this, use a knife to lift up a corner of one of the pastry rectangles from the center of the pan so you can peek at the bottom layers. Start checking after 40 minutes, but it could take an hour or even 1 hour 10 minutes. If the top starts to get too brown before the pastry is cooked through, lay a piece of foil over the top.
10. Meanwhile, prepare sugar syrup: In a medium pot, combine sugar with 1 2/3 cups/400 milliliters water. Bring to a boil, then let simmer for 10 minutes, until slightly thickened. Stir in lemon juice.
11. When the baklava is baked through, reheat the syrup until it comes to a simmer. Remove pan from oven and place in the sink or on a rimmed baking sheet to catch any drips of syrup. Slowly pour hot sugar syrup over the pastry; it will bubble up and some may overflow. When the syrup stops bubbling, move pan to wire rack to cool completely. Serve at room temperature.

