

Shortbread

Cream together:

- 1 cup butter, softened
- ½ cup sugar

Add and mix til dough comes together:

- 2 ½ cups flour

Press dough into ungreased 9 x 13 inch pan, prick all over with a fork, and sprinkle with sugar (tilt pan to cover the top evenly, then shake excess sugar back into the sugar canister).

Bake for about 40-45 minutes at 300 degrees (till very lightly browned--just golden around the edges).

Let stand for 5 minutes, then cut into 24 squares while warm.

Leave in pan to cool thoroughly. (Shortbread will not be crisp until cool.).

My candy corn shortbread:

- Make this recipe 3 times, 1 plain (optional pinch of lemon zest), 1 yellow (1/4 tsp. of ginger), 1 orange(1/4 tsp. cinnamon pinch of cloves).
- Line 2 loaf pans with cling wrap and layer each color in, white, orange, yellow; cover and refrigerate
- Cut slices the length of the pan slightly less than ¼" thick and then cut into triangles like for croissants
- Place on parchment-lined sheets and freeze a few minutes before baking at 350 degrees for 8-10 minutes.
- Optional: Dip white ends in white chocolate



Less easy method: Chill dough. Roll into 1-inch balls, then press balls to about 1/4-inch thickness on ungreased cookie sheets with the bottom of a glass dipped in sugar (sometimes you can find a glass with a pretty design on the bottom, like a star). Bake at 300° for about 20-25 minutes (until edges are very lightly browned).

Least easy method: Chill dough. Roll out to about 1/4-inch thickness, sprinkle with sugar, then cut with cookie cutters. Bake on ungreased cookie sheets at 300° for about 20-25 minutes (until edges are very lightly browned).

Variation: Add 2 tablespoons dried lavender to the creamed butter and sugar before adding flour. It may sound strange, but the flavor is subtle and elegant. Food-grade lavender is usually available in herb bins at health food stores, and I recently found it at a great price from Atlantic Spice online (their Lavender #1).

Variation: After cutting shortbread into squares (it will still be warm), scatter 1 cup of chocolate chips over the top, let the chocolate soften completely, then spread as a thin layer and let cool completely before removing from pan. (No need to sprinkle shortbread with sugar before baking if you plan to do this.).

Variation: Stir 1 cup chocolate chips or butterscotch chips into the dough before pressing into pan. You can also try melting the butterscotch over the top, as above. In England, you'll find "caramel shortbread," which has a layer of caramel and a layer of chocolate on top of the shortbread. It's wonderful (of course!). I've tried various ways of doing this and various kinds of caramel, but it's been a while and I don't remember what works best. It can be tricky not to make a mess!