



Karan's Korner

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February is National Cherry Month. Cherries are one of my favorite ingredients to prepare dishes. Cherries add that elegant touch to Cheesecake or cookies, breads and salads. Why choose cherries?

There are lots of reasons, and most of them are vitamin A, potassium, few calories, low sodium, low fat, and oh, yes – great taste.

There are two different kinds of cherries: tart and sweet. Tart cherries are sometimes called pie cherries or sour cherries. Canned or frozen tart cherries and cherry pie filling and topping are widely available. Dried cherries, which are made from tart cherries, are relatively new. It takes six to eight pounds of fresh tart cherries to make just one pound of dried cherries. They are eaten as snacks or added to recipes. You'll find them in gourmet and specialty stores, and in some supermarkets, and they are quite expensive. Ninety per cent of all of America's tart cherries are grown in three states. Seventy-five per cent come from Michigan, ten per cent from Utah, and five per cent from Wisconsin.

Sweet cherries often are sold fresh, especially during the summer months. Frozen and canned sweet cherries are available year around. Almost a fourth of the nation's sweet cherries are grown in Michigan.

Some food folklorist's claim that cherries help relieve the pain of arthritis or gout, while others say that cherries have aphrodisiac qualities. No guarantees on those claims, but cherries are a healthy treat in a cherry ruby red color. Cherries are tasty, with a tangy flavor worthy of celebration!

The following is one of my favorite Cherry Cookie Recipe. I made these cookies when I was a student in Home Economics class at Austin High School in El Paso Texas. These cookies have a shortbread texture blended with walnuts or pecans (I always use pecans) and cherries. I usually bake them around Christmas, but they are super any; time of year. They are particularly great with a hot cup of coffee or tea, I hope you enjoy these as much as my family does!

CHERRY BUTTER COOKIES

INGREDIENTS

2 cups butter, softened
2 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 cups confectioners' sugar
¼ teaspoon salt

4 ½ cups sifted all-purpose flour
½ cup chopped walnuts
½ cup chopped maraschino cherries

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C.)
2. In a large bowl, mix together the butter, vanilla and confectioners' sugar until smooth. Mix in salt, then stir in flour by hand until dough is stiff. Add the nuts and cherries, and mix into the dough, kneading like bread on a clean floured surface.
3. Roll dough into ping pong sized balls, and place onto ungreased cookie sheets.
4. Press down balls with a fork to make a criss cross pattern on top.
5. Bake for 15 to 17 minutes in the preheated oven. Let stand on the baking sheet for a few minutes before removing to wire racks to cool completely.

CHERRY CHEESE PIE

An easy and quick pie recipe for when you are in a hurry. The pie has a great taste.

INGREDIENTS:

1 (8 ounce) package cream cheese	1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 (14 ounce) can sweetened condensed milk	1 (9 inch) prepared graham cracker crust
1/3 cup lemon juice	1 (21 ounce) can cherry pie filling

DIRECTIONS:

In a large bowl, beat cream cheese until fluffy. Beat in milk until smooth. Stir in lemon juice and vanilla. Pour mixture into graham cracker crust. Cover and refrigerate for 3 hours, or until set. Top with desired amount of pie filling before serving. Refrigerate leftovers.

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