

## History about Spice

There is evidence that both nutmeg and mace were discovered as early as the 1st century A.D.

when Roman author Pliny speaks of a tree bearing nuts with two flavors. Later, Emperor Henry VI had the streets of Rome fumigated with nutmegs before his coronation. In the 6th century, nutmegs were brought by Arab merchants to Constantinople.

## What Is Nutmeg?

Nutmeg is not a nut but a seed of the Myristica plant. The fragrant nutmeg plant produces a golden-hued, apricot-like fruit. The kernel of that fruit is where nutmeg and mace, the outer skin of the nutmeg kernel called the aril, are sourced. When the nutmeg kernel and arils are fresh, they have a glossy appearance from the oils in the nutmeg. Once they are dried into the spice, they lose their shiny exterior. It takes six to eight weeks of drying in order to prepare the nutmeg seed to be used as a spice.



## How Is Nutmeg Used?

In the United States, nutmeg is popularly used as a baking spice in cooler months. It's used heavily in fall desserts, in pumpkin spice blends, and it's what gives eggnog its distinct flavor. Nutmeg is more widely used in Black diaspora cooking because of its history in African and Caribbean cuisine. Beyond the United States and its use in desserts, nutmeg is used in savory cooking as well. It is an essential part of spice blends like garam masala and quatre épices.

Nutmeg is subtly layered into the mother sauce, bechamel, and can also be found in Jamaican jerk seasoning spice. On the island of Penang in Malaysia, the astringent fruit is sweetened and used in juice.

## Information

The "Spice up Your Life" is a monthly "Take & Make Spice Club Kit" featuring a variety of unique spices, herbs, or blends.

### Kits Include

- Information on the featured spice.
- Two recipes (1 baking & 1 cooking).
- A small packet of featured spice-enough for all the recipes.

### Share your experience with us

Once you have created your culinary masterpieces at home, we'd love you to share photos with us.

Send to [reference@townhall.lib.wi.us](mailto:reference@townhall.lib.wi.us) and you might be featured on the Town Hall Library Website

### One-Per-Household

Take & Make Spice Club Kit are free, but supplies are limited. Please, take one kit per household.



# Take & Make Spice Club Kit Holiday Cookie Edition

## Spice Up Your Life



## December



# Hanukkah

## Honey Spice Cookies



### Ingredients

Makes about 4 dozen.

- 1/2 cup (1 stick) margarine, softened
- 1/2 cup firmly packed dark brown sugar
- 1/2 cup honey
- 1 egg
- 2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons ground ginger
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- **1 teaspoon ground nutmeg**
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cloves

### Directions

- In a large mixing bowl, cream margarine and brown sugar until well combined, and then beat in honey and egg.
- In a small bowl, combine flour, ginger, baking soda, cinnamon, nutmeg, salt, and cloves; add to the honey mixture.
- Beat on low speed until well blended. Cover dough and refrigerate for at least 1 hour.
- Grease cookie sheets and set aside.
- Working with 1/4 of the dough at a time, roll out on a floured surface to 1/4-inch thickness. Cut into desired shapes. Using a spatula, place on prepared cookie sheets 1 inch apart. Reroll and cut scraps.
- Bake in a preheated 350° F oven for 7 minutes, or until done. Transfer to wire racks to cool.

# Christmas

## Ginger Snaps



### Ingredients

- 3/4 cup Butter
- 1 cup Sugar
- 1/4 cup Molasses
- 1 egg
- 2 cups flour
- 2 tsp Baking Soda
- 1 tsp. Cinnamon
- 1tsp. Ginger
- **1/2 tsp. Nutmeg**  
\*Extra Sugar to roll cookies in

### Directions

- Preheat oven to 350 degrees
- Beat Butter. Add Sugar. Combine with the rest of the ingredients.
- Shape into walnut-size balls and roll in sugar.
- Place on cookie sheet and bake@350 for ABOUT 7-8 minutes.

**\*Best when not overbaked!**

**\*\*Recommend adding Salted Sea Caramel Chips if you are a caramel fan.**

**ENJOY!**

**The recipe was given to us by  
a staff member!**

### Sources

- <https://www.thespruceeats.com/nutmeg-and-mace-history-1307632>
- <https://www.foodandwine.com/nutmeg-what-it-is-and-how-to-use-it-7089902>
- <https://www.chabad.org/recipes/recipe.cdo/aid/769010/jewish/Chanukah-Honey-Spice-Cookies.htm>
- <https://southernladymagazine.com/benne-wafers-recipe/>

# Kwanzaa

## Benne Wafers



### Ingredients

Makes approximately 5 dozen

- 1/2 cup plus 2 tablespoons sesame seeds
- 6 tablespoons butter, softened
- 1/2 cup firmly packed light brown sugar
- 1 egg yolk
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla
- 1/3 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon baking powder
- **1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg**

### Directions

- Preheat oven to 325°. Line several baking sheets with parchment paper.
- In a nonstick skillet over medium-low heat, cook sesame seeds for 3 to 5 minutes or until lightly toasted, stirring often. Spread on a rimmed baking sheet in a thin layer to cool.
- Place butter in a large bowl. Beat with a mixer at medium-high speed until fluffy. Add brown sugar; beat at medium speed until blended. Add egg yolk, beating until blended. Add vanilla, beating well.
- In a medium bowl, sift together flour, salt, baking powder, and nutmeg. Gradually add flour mixture to butter mixture, beating until combined. Add cooled sesame seeds, stirring well. Spoon in 1/2 teaspoonfuls onto prepared baking sheets. Bake for 10 to 12 minutes or until lightly golden and crispy. Let cool on pans for 5 minutes. Let cool completely on a wire rack. Repeat with the remaining wafer dough.