

Holiday Baking

Baking: Holiday Help

(NAPS)—From the heavenly aroma of a freshly baked pumpkin pie to the first taste of a warm cookie as it melts in your mouth—mmmm, nothing beats the joy of baked holiday goodies.

This season, spread your baking wings and delight the palates of those around you with homemade gifts. But remember, no matter what enchanting path you choose (pies, cookies or fudge), even the best bakers need a little help sometimes. Luckily, there are plenty of resources you can turn to during this special time of year, including the baking experts at Nestlé.

In fact, during the holidays, Nestlé Consumer Services is available to help with recipe requests and advice (they do so for more than 50,000 bakers each holiday season). So, the next time baking has you “in a pickle,” give them a call, or better yet, try visiting some of their helpful online resources outlined here—they’re sure to meet all your baking needs.

• **LIBBY’S® Pumpkin Automated Phone Line—(800) 854-0374:** A direct line to information about some of the most frequently asked pumpkin pie questions.

• **Holiday Kitchen Help Line—(800) 637-8537:** A hotline dedicated to answering general baking questions.

• **Very Best Baking Holiday Guide and Video Learning—VeryBestBaking.com:** These helpful resources showcase delicious recipe ideas and a wide variety of instructional baking videos.

To help you get a head start on your holiday baking adventures, following are answers to some of



the most frequently asked holiday baking questions, according to the Nestlé culinary experts. Additional questions and answers can be found on VeryBestBaking.com.

• **How do I store a pumpkin pie once baked?** After your pumpkin pie has cooled for two hours, serve immediately or refrigerate until ready to serve. Store leftovers covered with plastic wrap in refrigerator for up to two days. Remember, pumpkin pie is a custard-type pie, so freezing is not recommended. However, you can make the pumpkin filling and pie shell ahead and freeze each separately for up to one month.

• **Can I use evaporated milk as a substitute for cream or half and half?** Yes. Evaporated milk is a convenient, lower fat substitute for various cream products. Be sure to use an equal amount of evaporated milk as a substitute for half and half, light cream and coffee creamer.

• **What’s the best way to mail perishables?** Choose durable foods, such as fruitcakes, brownies or sturdy cookies, to prevent breakage or crumbling. Be sure to pack them in a strong mailing carton with cushioning material and don’t forget to mark the outside of the box as “Perish-

able” or “Fragile.” This recipe for Chocolate Chip Cookie Brittle is perfect for shipping to long-distance loved ones, because it’s easy to pack and is sure to arrive safely—and it’s sensationally delicious too!

Chocolate Chip Cookie Brittle (Makes 50 pieces)

- 1 cup (2 sticks) butter or margarine, softened
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1½ teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 cups (12-ounce package) NESTLÉ® TOLL HOUSE® Semi-Sweet Chocolate Morsels, *divided*
- 1 cup chopped nuts

PREHEAT oven to 375° F.

BEAT butter, sugar, vanilla extract and salt in large mixer bowl. Gradually beat in flour. Stir in 1½ cups morsels and nuts. Press into ungreased 15 x 10-inch jelly-roll pan.

BAKE for 20 to 25 minutes or until golden brown and set. Cool until just slightly warm.

MICROWAVE remaining ½ cup morsels in small, *heavy-duty* plastic bag on HIGH (100%) power for 30 to 45 seconds; knead. Microwave at additional 10- to 15-second intervals, kneading until smooth. Cut tiny corner from bag; squeeze to drizzle over cookie. Allow chocolate to cool and set; break cookie into irregular pieces.

For more holiday resources, including baking tips, and recipe and packaging ideas, visit VeryBestBaking.com.

Food Ideas

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