

## Thumbprint Cookies

Five Cookies, One Dough | December 2007/January 2008



*Think you're too busy for a holiday baking spree? Think again. Our make-ahead dough recipe makes these gorgeous cookies a snap. Invite over friends and family and get rolling!*

PREP: 30 MINUTES PER VARIATION    BAKE: 8 MINUTES/BATCH    OVEN: 350°

**3/4 CUP BUTTER, SOFTENED**

**3/4 CUP SHORTENING**

**1 1/2 CUPS SUGAR**

**1 TBSP. BAKING POWDER**

**1/4 TSP. SALT**

**2 EGGS**

**1 TSP. VANILLA**

**4 CUPS ALL-PURPOSE FLOUR**

**ASSORTED VARIATIONS (SEE VARIATIONS AS LISTED BELOW)**

In a large mixing bowl beat butter and shortening with an electric mixer on medium to high speed for 30 seconds. Add sugar, baking powder, and salt. Beat until combined, scraping sides of bowl occasionally. Beat in eggs and vanilla until combined. Beat in as much of the flour as you can with the mixer. Using a wooden spoon, stir in any remaining flour. Divide dough into 6 equal portions; cover and chill dough for 1 hour or overnight until dough is easy to handle (if making *Peppermint-Chocolate Thumbprints*, see directions before chilling dough).

For each variation, dough will be shaped into 1-inch balls (at this point, see variations, as some are rolled into toppings) and placed 2 inches apart on lightly greased or parchment-paper-lined cookie sheets. Use the back of a small measuring spoon or your thumb to make imprints in centers of balls. Bake cookies in a 350° oven for 8 to 10 minutes or until edges are just firm and centers are set. If needed, press back of a measuring spoon into cookie centers while warm to reshape imprints. Cool cookies on a wire rack. See below for filling variations. Makes 16 cookies per variation (96 total).

**PEPPERMINT-CHOCOLATE THUMBPRINTS:** Stir or knead in 1 ounce melted bittersweet or semisweet chocolate into 1 portion of dough before chilling the dough. Make cookies and bake as directed above. For filling, in a medium bowl beat 1 tablespoon softened butter until smooth; beat in 2/3 cup sifted powdered sugar. Beat in enough milk, 1 to 2 teaspoons, to make of spreading consistency. Beat in a few drops of peppermint extract; tint pink using pink food coloring. Spoon filling into center of cooled cookies. Sprinkle with crushed candy canes.

**COFFEE TRUFFLE THUMBPRINTS:** Roll 1 portion of dough into balls. Roll balls in a mixture of 1 1/2 teaspoons instant espresso powder and 1 1/2 teaspoons granulated sugar. Make cookies and bake as directed above. For truffle filling, in a small microwave-safe bowl combine 2 ounces semisweet chocolate and 1/4 cup whipping cream. Microwave on high (100%) for 40 to 50 seconds or until whipping cream is bubbly. Let stand 1 minute; stir. Let stand 1 minute more. Stir until smooth. Cover and chill 40 to 45 minutes or until just set (chocolate should not be too firm). Beat with an electric mixer just until creamy and a spreading consistency. Using a piping bag with an open-star tip pipe filling into centers of cooled cookies.

### MAKE AN IMPRESSION

You know the drill: Roll dough in a ball, press with your thumb, bake, and fill. It's the same deal, except in six designer flavors (ever sampled a coffee truffle or pumpkin-spice thumbprint?).