

M&M Bars

HOLIDAY COOKIES 2011 DEC 7, 2011

This is an easy one-bowl recipe. The bar cookie was designed to please young customers of Vienna baker Mary Lee Montfort, but it has been a huge hit with adults. You can change the colors of the candies to match the holiday or season.

Make Ahead: The bars can be stored in an airtight container for up to 1 day or frozen for up to 1 month.

SERVINGS: 24 PIECES

INGREDIENTS

- 2 3/4 cups flour
 - 2 teaspoons baking powder
 - 1 teaspoon salt
 - 8 tablespoons (1 stick) unsalted butter, at room temperature
 - 1/2 cup vegetable shortening, at room temperature
 - 1 cup packed light brown sugar
 - Rounded 1/2 cup granulated sugar
 - 3 extra-large eggs, at room temperature
 - 4 teaspoons vanilla extract
 - 2 slightly rounded tablespoons sour cream (do not use low-fat or nonfat)
 - 12 ounces plain M&M candies (about 2 cups)
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DIRECTIONS

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Use nonstick cooking oil spray to grease a 9-by-13-inch metal baking pan, then line the bottom of it with enough parchment paper so that some of it sticks up/out beyond the two short sides of the pan.

Sift together the flour, baking powder and salt.

Combine the butter and shortening in the bowl of a stand mixer or hand-held electric mixer; beat on low speed until smooth. Stop to scrape down the sides of the bowl. Add both sugars; beat on low, then on medium speed for about 2 minutes, until the mixture is light and fluffy. Add the eggs one a time, beating to incorporate after each addition. Stop to scrape down the bowl. Add the vanilla extract and sour cream; beat on low speed to incorporate.

Gradually add the sifted ingredients, beating (on low) to form a soft dough. Stir in the M&Ms. Transfer the dough to the pan, patting it in evenly and smoothing the surface. Bake for 25 minutes; the cookie slab should be puffed and slightly golden.

Cover loosely with aluminum foil and bake for 5 to 10 minutes or until just set at the center. Cool completely in the pan. Use a round-edged knife to loosen the edges of the cookie slab, then use the parchment paper to lift and transfer the cookie slab to a cutting board before cutting it into 24 bars.

RECIPE SOURCE

From Montfort, of Mary Lee's Desserts in Vienna.

Tested by Lucy Shackelford.