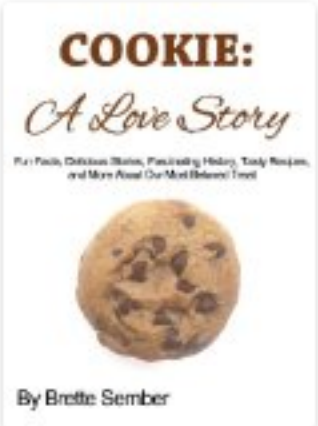




TAG ARCHIVES: COOKIE: A LOVE STORY

Who Doesn't Love Christmas Cookies?

4 Replies



We are talking about **Christmas cookies** all during December, so naturally I talked to my friend, [Brette Sember](#), the cookie expert. She shares all she knows about cookies in ***Cookie: A Love Story***. Great title, isn't it?

Well, we were both astounded to learn that we had a heritage cookie in common, which made me wonder—how many ways are there to make a sugar cookie?

Brette wrote last year for the site, **Living Large in Our Little House**, about the [traditions of Christmas Cookies](#). Did you know that Christmas cookies reach back to the 1500's? And it all began with the Gingerbread man! Brette says:

Gingerbread was a similar food [to cookies], but laws restricted its baking to guildsman. However at the holidays these regulations were relaxed and people were allowed to bake their own at home, making a very special once-a-year treat.... Eventually [gingerbread] became associated with Christmas when speculaas (gingerbread cookies) were made into animal and people shapes and used as holiday decorations.



Frosted Sugar Cookies cut with a Gingerbread Man cookie cutter.

When I asked Brette about heritage recipes, she replied:

The book [Cookie: A Love Story] includes a very special sugar cookie recipe. My grandmother's recipe is made with buttermilk and produces a soft, cake-like cookie that is unlike any I've had anywhere else.

They are a bit of a pain to make, since the dough is very sticky, so you freeze the dough before baking. My grandmother used to keep a plastic container of the dough in her freezer (which was on the bottom of her fridge) and when I was little, I used to sneak out there and eat it with a spoon like ice cream.

When she passed away, she left me her handwritten recipe notebooks and I discovered the recipe was her mother's. Her mother-in-law, my grandfather's mother, also gave her a very similar recipe, which uses sour cream instead of buttermilk and creates the same type of very soft cookie.

I found it fascinating that both families had the same recipe. They both lived in the same small rural area, but my grandmother's mother (who was a Mennonite) was from Kansas so I don't know if it is a recipe she brought with her or was given once she got here. This cookie is a special part of our holiday traditions and learning to make it is a rite of passage in our family.

My aunt once famously had to make the recipe in a hurry with no time to freeze it, so she set up a table in the garage and rolled the dough out there where it was cold.



Cookie Assembly line

As Brette and I discussed this heritage recipe from her grandmother, I realized that it was nearly identical to the soft sugar cookie from my Grandmother Vera's recipe— which is the must-have cookie at our house. My grandmother used sour milk instead of buttermilk, and sprinkled in nutmeg for the flavoring. I'll be sharing that recipe later. If you want to try out Brette's version and learn a whole lot more about Christmas cookies, you can follow the link to [Living Large in Our Little House](#).

Read more of Brette's cooking and decorating and travel and other things at [Putting It All on the Table](#). And of course, I recommend that you add Brette's interesting and comprehensive book on cookies to your kitchen library.

Do you make sugar cookies for Christmas? Are they crispy or soft? Do they use sour cream or buttermilk? What flavoring do you use?

WHY DO THIS?

"There are people who came before us. We owe it to them to find out who they were, how they lived."

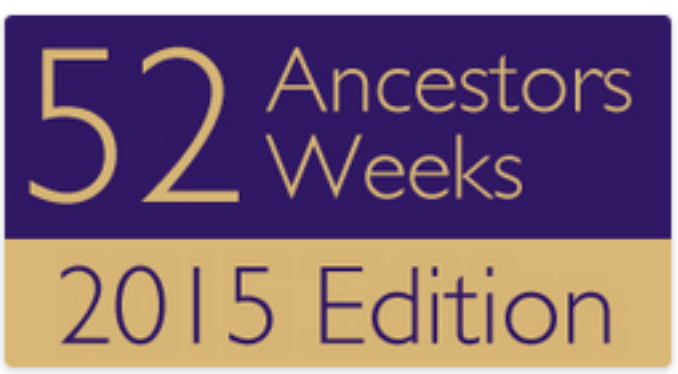
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