

Holiday Baking

A Tried & True Treat Rich In Nutritious Raisins

(NAPSA)—Once again, it's that festive time of year when people spend more time than usual in the kitchen in order to treat friends and family to home-baked holiday goodies. Whether you choose to dust off the recipe box and sift through grandma's old recipes or surf the Internet for the latest and greatest eye-popping holiday dish, be sure to consider: the number of ingredients, their availability and cost, ease of preparation, and whether the final product will really be a hit or simply a novelty dish that winds up returning home with you.

When deciding which sweet treat to bake for this year's holiday parties, consider dried fruit. Using dried fruit is a popular trend that usually proves to be a crowd pleaser. For example, raisins are a great option since they are available year-round, do not spoil or bruise, and can be used in both sweet and savory dishes. Also, raisins make a great staple to keep in the pantry for holiday baking or as a healthful snack, and their sweetness and texture can help spruce up an old recipe or inspire a new one. There are many ways to use them in a variety of dishes including cookies, as an addition to fruit pies,



muffins, as salad toppers or even baked with different types of meat.

Some tips to keep in mind when using raisins in recipes:

- When chopping raisins with a knife or chopper, grease the blade lightly with vegetable oil to prevent the fruit from sticking to it.

- When baking with raisins, dredge them lightly in flour before adding them to the batter or dough to keep them from sinking to the bottom of the pan. Or, mix half the fruit into the batter and sprinkle the rest on top once the mixture is poured into the baking pan.

- Be sure to evaluate whether it's necessary to "re-hydrate" the fruit before submitting it to high temperatures for baking so the fruit doesn't become too dry or

hard. Try using DOLE brand Raisins in your recipes. They are different from other raisins due to the unique "spa treatment" drying process which results in plumper, moister raisins that are preferred by gourmet chefs.

Tried & True Raisin Oatmeal Cookies

- 1¹/₂ cups flour**
- 1 tsp. baking soda**
- 1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon**
- 1/4 tsp. ground nutmeg**
- 1/4 tsp. salt**
- 3/4 cup margarine, softened**
- 3/4 cup packed brown sugar**
- 3/4 cup granulated sugar**
- 2 eggs**
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract**
- 1³/₄ cups rolled oats**
- 2 cups DOLE Raisins**

Combine first five ingredients in bowl; set aside. Beat margarine and sugars in bowl. Beat in eggs and vanilla. Beat in flour mixture until blended. Gradually add oats and raisins. Drop by spoonfuls onto ungreased baking sheets, 2 inches apart. Bake at 375 degrees F, 10-12 min. Cool on racks. Makes 4¹/₂ dozen.