

Brown butter shortbread cookie packs caramelized pecan crunch



Toasted Pecan Brown Sugar-Brown Butter Shortbread Photos Susie Iventosch

By Susie Iventosch

This little cookie is fabulously delicious and really, what isn't when it's made with brown butter? The caramelized toasty, nutty flavor you get when you brown butter just makes anything taste divine, whether it's sweet or savory!

In this shortbread cookie recipe, we used light brown sugar, and added toasted pecans for the perfect tea cookie or afternoon pick-me-up. I think that you'll find snitching the dough is pretty tasty too. When using brown butter for

baked goods, you have to prepare it ahead of time, because you need to brown the butter and then chill it until it's firm again, before you take it out of the refrigerator to soften it for the cookies. I once made an entire wedding cake using this method and it took some extra time just to get enough brown butter for a four-layer wedding cake.

If you decide you love cooking or baking with brown butter, you can make a pound of it ahead of time and store it in the refrigerator. That way, it'll be ready to go when you are.

INGREDIENTS

1 cup (8 oz.) brown butter (see notes on how to brown, chill and soften below)
1 cup, packed, light brown sugar
2 cups all-purpose flour
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 cups finely chopped toasted pecans

DIRECTIONS

How to brown butter:

Cut the cubes of butter (salted or unsalted ... your choice) into smaller pieces (maybe 8 pieces per stick of butter) and bring it to room temperature. Place the butter in a sauce pan with a light colored bottom, if possible, so you can watch the color of the butter as it changes. Heat butter over medium heat until melted, stirring occasionally. Continue to cook until you see the butter foam and little brown crystals form along the edge and at the bottom of the pan. This whole process will take about 6 minutes or so. When the butter is brown, it will take on a rich, nutty smell and look like it has brown bits on the bottom and along the edges. Be sure not to burn the butter, which can happen quickly. Remove the brown butter from the stove and cool to room temperature. Once cooled, refrigerate it either in the pan or in a plastic container until firm. Now you are back to square one and can take this butter out to get it to room temperature just as you would with a regular cube or stick of butter before baking.

Note: You should account for about 15% loss in volume after browning the butter, so make a little extra to make up the difference.

Shortbread Cookies:

Preheat oven to 325 F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Place softened brown butter in a mixing bowl. Using an electric beater, beat butter with brown sugar and vanilla until fluffy. Add flour and salt and mix until well-integrated. Finally, stir in the toasted, chopped pecans and mix well. The mixture will be rather thick at this point. Place dough on a floured cloth or cutting board and roll out with a rolling pin to 1/4-inch thickness. Using a 2-inch biscuit cutter, cut the dough into rounds. This may take several steps of reshaping the dough after you've cut several of the cookies out. Place the cookie rounds on the prepared baking sheet. Bake for approximately 15-20 minutes, or until cookies begin to look golden brown. Remove from oven and cool completely before removing from baking sheet. These cookies store well for up to a week in an airtight container.

Susie can be reached at suziventosch@gmail.com. This recipe can be found on our website: www.lamorindaweekly.com If you would like to share your favorite recipe with Susie please contact her by email or call our office at (925) 377-0977. Or visit <https://treksandbites.com>



Local artists open studios in Lamorinda June 12-13



Artwork by Jennifer Perlmutter



Artwork by Carol Brent Levin



Artwork by Allison Skidgel



Artwork by Jorge Spiropulo



Artwork by Lana Fly

One of the most interesting aspects of art is experiencing it in person and talking to the artists about their work and what inspires them. East Bay Open Studios will once again be offering these in-person opportunities, featuring five Lamorinda artists – Allison Skidgel (Orinda), Lana Fly (Moraga), Carol Brent Levin (Lafayette), Jorge Spiropulo (Moraga) and Jennifer Perlmutter (Lafayette) – as part of its 680 Corridor Artists Weekend 2, Region 2 physical event from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. June 12-13.

Skidgel, who creates paintings and mixed media, says her drawings begin a creation journey that goes from paper to canvas. "The natural world is my muse," she says.

Brent Levin's printmaking and photography is described as often proactive, "challenging us to ponder humanity's role in our evolving ecosystem." Lana Fly's work is an instinctive natural expression of spirituality and primordiality. And Spiropulo, who works with oils and watercolor, loves painting with bold colors "while offering my interpretation of people and trees."

Jennifer Perlmutter Gallery in Lafayette is a sponsor location, which will have guidebooks available. Current state and county restrictions and regulations regarding COVID-19 will apply. For a map, and detailed information about locations, visit eastbayopenstudios.com.
– J. Wake

JM graduates take the stage for next step in education



Photo provided

Submitted by Amy Martinez

The eighth-grade students of Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School graduated in person, outdoors in a socially distant ceremony on May 26 at the Joaquin Moraga School Pavilion. Students received their diplomas from members of the Moraga School

District board and walked across the stage as their names were announced. Families cheered them on with "Pomp and Circumstance" playing in the background. Families and students took photos and saw one another briefly while enjoying a beautiful spring evening. Congratulations to the graduates as they move on to high school in the fall.

'See You Up There' – great film that condenses lyricism, passion and redemption opens in Orinda

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He chooses to pass for dead and takes refuge in a shop laid out under the rafters, creating unbelievably poetic masks to hide his disfigurement. In order to survive, the two organize a scam using the remembrance business that is starting to flourish and to bring fortunes to the unscrupulous, including to their personal enemy, Captain Pradelle, who caused their misfortune. Love, betrayal, redemption, courage, cowardice, mix in this very human dance of survival.

The movie takes an almost cartoonish tone to portray the business manipulations during and after the war. Lies and sham appearances are the norm as the post-war reconstruction economy becomes a breeding ground for thugs. Dupontel uses caricatures to create a

distance from a reality that could be unbearable otherwise, and adds a well-managed humorous thread to his tapestry.

"See You Up There" is served by wonderful cinematography that vividly transports the viewers from the desperation of the war front, to brilliant salons where decadent parties are held, to miserable districts of the city where Péricourt, the man-without-a-face, symbolizes death but also creativity and poetry. Nahuel Pérez Biscayart inhabits this incredibly romantic character through his gaze and his body; he is simply overwhelming. Director Dupontel plays Maillard with a convincing mix of naivety and craftiness; Laurent Lafitte as Pradelle is the perfectly despicable bad guy; and Niels Arestrup gives Péricourt's arrogant father the right dose



Photo provided

of touching vulnerability.

This imaginative and baroque universe, lyrical and eccentric, should appeal to all audiences. The film is part of the International Film Showcase that presents foreign movies to East Bay audiences, often before they are available nationally.

"See You Up There" opens in Orinda on June 18 for three days and nine screenings; limited seating; tickets: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/international-film-showcase-au-revoir-la-haut-tickets-154758239059>