



Your (Unofficial) Guide to Advent

The Great Canadian Christmas Baker

Some hot tips, from my kitchen to yours, to help you be the star of the cookie exchange this year!

If you bake it they will come!

Own Your Recipe. Make sure the recipe is your own and is to your taste. Compare it to a few different recipes to make sure that the basic proportions are okay. Consider the occasion you are baking for, and what might be good flavor pairings.

Be Clean! Clean everything (your workspace, yourself, your supplies) and have your ingredients ready before you begin. It makes the space less stressful and helps to guard against cross-contamination.

Create a Vibe. Baking is a spiritual practice for me. I try to make sure that I am in a good space when baking and pray at every stage of the process. I also make sure that I surround myself with good things that I am grateful for (good shows, good tunes, good company, good ingredients, good blessings); where good things come in, good things come out.

Know the Climate. Have ingredients at room temperature so that they are easier to combine. If making cut cookies, make sure to chill your dough before rolling and shaping—this will help with shape definition (especially on cookies like stars and snowflakes). If decorating cookies, make sure that your cookies are completely cool so the icing doesn't melt.

Flavor Everything! Season your icing (and cookies) with a little salt (trust me) and a little flavoring (such as vanilla) so that your cookies are more interesting to eat. You may also be able to use less sugar in your cookie dough recipe with the right flavor profile.

Make it Pretty! One of the easiest ways to make a tray of cookies look pretty is to choose an attractive colour palette of two or three shades that go well together. This way your cookies will look great on their own and amazing together!

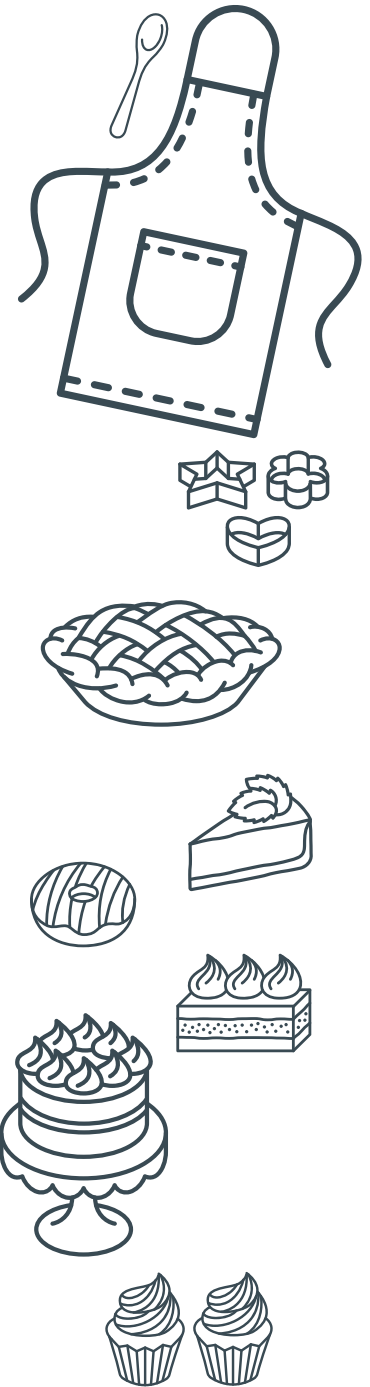


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