

They'll Cheer For These Chocolate Cherry Stars

(NAPSA)—You'll really shine whenever you serve family and friends these Chocolate Cherry Stars. They're made with maraschino cherries, characterized by a bright, uniform color and fruity flavor with a hint of almond, which makes them an excellent part of this recipe, devised by Carol Kicinski of Simply Gluten-Free.

Chocolate Cherry Stars

cook: 30 mins

serves: 24

- 8 ounces almond paste
- ½ cup sugar
- 2 large egg whites
- 4 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- 12 maraschino cherries plus 2 teaspoons maraschino cherry liquid

Line two baking sheets with parchment paper or silicon baking mats.

Break the almond paste up into small pieces and place in a food processor or mixer. Add the sugar and mix well. Add the egg whites, cocoa powder, vanilla, salt, and maraschino cherry liquid and process or mix for 2 minutes or until the batter is moist and smooth. The batter will be sticky.

Spoon the mixture into a pastry bag or cookie press fitted with a large star tip. Pipe the batter into 24 stars about 1½ inches in diameter on the baking sheets, about 1 inch apart. To make it even easier, you can simply drop rounded



Day or night, the fun starts when these stars come out.

tablespoons of the dough onto the prepared sheets. Dry the maraschino cherries well and cut them in half. Top each cookie with half a cherry.

Refrigerate for 30 minutes. (You can skip this step if in a hurry, but if you piped the cookies into stars, the edges will be more defined if you chilled them before baking.)

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Bake the cookies for 25–30 minutes. Place the parchment paper or baking mats on a wire rack and let the cookies cool completely before peeling off the paper.

The recipe may be prepared gluten-free by using gluten-free nonstick cooking spray and almond paste.

Learn More

For more marvelous cherry recipes, go to the National Cherry Growers & Industries Foundation (NCGIF) website, www.maraschinocherries.org. The NCGIF is a nonprofit corporation that represents the unified community of the Processed Cherry Industry. The United States leads the world in sweet cherry production.