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Mint Chocolate Cookies - What's Not to Love?

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By Susie Iventosch



Andes Mint Chocolate Cookies

Photo Susie Iventosch

chips in our kitchen cupboard because pressed! my grown kids absolutely love seven-layer bars. So, one day, as I was making a baking chocolate cookies and placed a whole Andes mint chip run, I noticed the Andes Creme de Menthe chips and decided they were a much needed addition to our baking cabinet. I had no idea what I planned to do with them, until my husband and I were at a friend's house a couple of weeks ago. She bakes a homemade cookie every single morning to put in her kids' lunches. Of course, she has the cookie dough made ahead

Te keep a generous supply of baking of time, but nevertheless, I was really im-

That particular morning, she was baking on top of each mound of dough before baking. Well, needless to say, the light bulb went on and I remembered the Andes baking chips in my cupboard. When we returned home, my daughter, who loves nearly anything with a hint of chocolatemint, set about making these cookies. I must say, they do make an excellent dessert, even if you are well past the days of making school lunches!

Andes Mint Chocolate Cookies

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup (2 sticks) butter, softened to room temperature
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 cup white sugar
- 2 eggs
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 1/4 cup Andes Creme de Menthe baking chips (1 cup for batter, 1/4 cup for sprinkling on top of cookies.)

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

In a large mixing bowl, beat butter and both sugars with an electric mixer until creamy. Add eggs and continue to beat until incorporated. Stir in vanilla. In another bowl, mix flour, baking soda and salt. Add to butter-sugar mixture and mix well. With a wooden spoon, stir in 1 cup Andes Creme de Menthe baking chips.

Drop by large spoonfuls onto greased baking sheet and sprinkle extra chips on top of each cookie.

Bake for 10-12 minutes, or until cookies are done and chips on top are melted.

Susie Iventosch is the author of Tax Bites and Tasty Morsels, which can be found at Across the Way in Moraga, www.amazon.com, and www.taxbites.net. 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.



LYNN'S TOP FIVE

The Grab Bag Column

A potpourri of planning ideas for you to use By Lynn Ballou, CFP®

planning ideas to think about as we enter the fall months. None of these topics warrant their own column, but they are individually worth your consideration.

- Oops! We refinanced 1) house title reads! Are you one of many Americans who refinanced their mortgage recently? Be sure your home is still titled the way it should be! Sometimes in the process of retitling, your home is taken out of your Living Trust, for example. This could be disastrous to your estate plan if something happens to you. So, dig out your paperwork now and review how your home or other real estate's title is listed. If it's not right, clean up the titling to reflect your estate planning needs and design.
- 2) Umbrella Insurance do you have enough? So for a super fun Friday date night with your sweetie,

s you are coming back from drag out your casualty insurance dec- Get on top of these numbers and meet At a recent conference I attended, one event Oct. 9. I will cover highlights summer fun, cleaning the sun- laration pages and see how that insurscreen off your car seats and shaking ance plan is working! Ok - find a to see if you should increase your estirement planning" anymore. It's reout the sand from the beach bag, I'd weekday to do it, but don't put this timated taxes. like to present you with a few non as- off. With real estate prices recoversociated, but nonetheless important ing, your investments regrouping and assets in general going up in value, you might find that your liability protection isn't covering your "ass" ets get it? So get your "ass" ets in gear and get this part of your insurance portfolio increased! Again, don't wait **again and have no idea what the** for an uh-oh moment – do it now! Umbrella liability insurance is inexpensive for the coverage it provides.

Capital Gains and the Stealth Year: Barring a year-end market melt-down, it's very likely that your investment portfolio will once again be back to distributing noteworthy capital gains at the year-end. Not only has this been a great year for many portfolios, but numerous investment managers have burned through their booked capital losses and have nothing left to shelter your gains. So a perfect storm is brewing this year: tax rates have gone up and your year-end capital gain pass throughs probably will be up as well.

with your tax advisor before year-end

BUDGET! Year-end expenses tug at us from all directions. We've got kids going back to school, home and yard work that needs our attention, and much more. It's so easy to blow your budget without a thought. So before you get into holiday spending (a REAL budget test!), get a handle on your year to date spending by reviewing where the money has gone (by category) and thinking about how that compares to what you should have spent. If you are living below your means, you have my standing ovation! For the rest of us, it's time to get real: cut back now, get ready for a reasonable holiday season that doesn't break the bank and start you in the hole financially in 2014. Being fiscally prudent is always a fashion forward idea and you still have time before year-end to add that style to your fiscal wardrobe.

Dust off your retirement plans and see if you are on track!

ally longevity planning. Why? Happy Planning, readers! The dreaded "b" word: Because we are living longer and longer and need now more than ever before in history to be more and more focused on making sure we don't run out of assets before we run out of life. Whether you meet with your own advisor to do this review or take advantage of the many free programs online that help you see how you are doing, don't procrastinate. The sooner you get a handle on the realty of your own plans, the better.

Something that DOES warrant at least a full column is a review of the Affordable Care Act and the California Health Insurance Ex**change.** Trust me, this topic is not for sissies! Insurance agents are in training as I write this, and much more accurate news and information continues to evolve. In our firm, we are hosting a webinar with guest presenter Colleen Callahan of Colleen Callahan Insurance Services. We will tape that webinar and post it to our website for you to access after the live

speaker noted that it's really not "re- of that webinar and developments on this subject in my next column.



Lynn Ballou is a CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ professional and co-owner of Ballou Plum Wealth Advisors, LLC, a Registered Investment Advisory (RIA) firm in Lafayette. Lynn is also a Registered Principal and Branch Manager with LPL Financial (LPL). The opinions voiced in this material are for general information only and not intended to provide specific advice or recommendation for any individual. Financial Planning offered through Ballou Plum Wealth Advisors, A Registered Investment Advisor and a separate entity. Securities offered through LPL Financial, member FINRA/SIPC.

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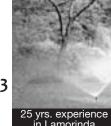
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