

do you know what's in your cookies?

by Charlene Phillips

Do you have cherished memories of baking in the kitchen with someone you love? In days past, baking was a time for creating, sharing, and learning. During those special times we not only learned about each other, we learned how to measure ingredients, stir with wooden spoons, and how to crack eggs (if someone really trusted us!). Spending time in the kitchen with children makes us acutely aware of our memories and how important they are.

Today, in spite of our busy lives, the tradition of baking continues, yet not quite as we remember it. We live in a convenience-driven world where pre-made and processed food prevails. Refrigerated cookie dough takes 10 minutes to bake from the package to the table. In the fundraising world, refrigerated cookie dough is a great seller too! You can get three pounds of it in a tub -- wow, just think about that! Cookies ready and waiting to be baked whenever we want. But what are we sacrificing? And what message are we sending our children? Are we telling them that it is all right to eat junk food as long as it is convenient? Are we sending the message that traditions take too long? It is extremely important that our children understand their choices, and it is our responsibility to guide them in making them.

Cookies will never be health food, but they can be made with healthful ingredients. They don't have to contain hydrogenated oil, artificial colors or flavors, and an abundance of sugar! Whole grain baking mixes are becoming more popular today and rightly so. The new 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend three "ounce-equivalents" of breads, rolls, cereals, or other grain foods made with 100% whole grains. The reason for this is that whole grains contain disease-fighting phytochemicals and antioxidants. They are also a wonderful source of vitamins such as B and E, the minerals magnesium and iron, and fiber. Cookies and other baked goods made with whole grains are a wonderful choice for moderate snacking choices. Substituting healthy baking ingredients is also something you can do to improve the nutritional content of baked goods. Lower fat variations of mixes include reducing butter and substituting equal amounts of nonfat yogurt or applesauce. Pumpkin adds great flavor and fiber to baked goods too!

Let's teach our children how to snack in moderation, and at the same time teach them that baking is not just about snacking, it's about tradition and creating memories. And in the process, let's not forget the value of knowing what's in our cookies and choosing ingredients that we can pronounce and feel good about!




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To learn more about Tealightful Treasures Whole Grain Baking Mixes and Healthy Choices Fundraising Program, contact (585) 436-9019 or visit www.tealightfultreasures.com.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR




Charlene Phillips is the founder of the Rochester company Tealightful Treasures, a national home party company featuring teas and associated products. Visit their website, www.tealightfultreasures.com, to get more great ideas on making tea a part of your life.

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