

Thumbprint Cookies adapted from Macy's Arcade Bakery and Café, Pittsburg

MAKES ABOUT 5 DOZEN COOKIES

- 1½ cups granulated sugar**
- ¾ teaspoon salt**
- 2 cups solid vegetable shortening, at room temperature**
- 1½ cups butter, at room temperature**
- 1 large egg**
- ½ teaspoon pure vanilla extract**
- ½ teaspoon pure rum extract**
- 8¼ cups cake flour**
- Decorating sugar in various colors, rainbow sprinkles, and/or finely chopped nuts**

Position a rack in the center and in the upper third of the oven and preheat to 375°F. Have ready 2 ungreased baking sheets.

In a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, combine the granulated sugar, salt, shortening, and butter and beat on medium speed until light and fluffy, 2 to 3 minutes. Add the egg and the vanilla and rum extracts and beat until incorporated. On low speed, add the flour and mix just until the dough comes together. (If it doesn't look like all of the flour will fit into the bowl of your mixer, scoop the butter-shortening mixture out into a large bowl and, using a rubber spatula, gently fold in the flour just until combined.)

Put the decorating sugars, sprinkles and/or nuts in separate bowls. To shape each cookie, scoop up a heaping tablespoon of the dough, or use a 1-ounce scoop, and roll between your palms into a ball. As the balls are shaped, roll them in the decorating sugar, sprinkles,

or nuts, coating them evenly on all sides, and place them on a baking sheet, spacing them 2 inches apart. Using your thumb, make a shallow indentation in the center of each cookie.

Bake the cookies, switching the pans between the racks and rotating them 180 degrees about halfway through the baking time, until a light golden brown, 18 to 20 minutes.

Remove from the oven, transfer the cookies to a rack, and let cool completely. The cookies may be stored in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 5 days.

