

## Shortbread Cookies and a slew of food-related events

I know you're probably thinking I couldn't possibly still be thinking about holiday cookies but, well, I guess I am – particularly these shortbread cookies made with hazelnuts and olive oil that I tried at the home of Dick and Sharon Gilbert, who are from St. Joseph but now live in Peoria, Ariz.



**Jane Ammeson**

Sharon is a nutritionist, so these kind of have a healthy vibe to them but not so much that they're not delicious.

If you try the recipe, Sharon says you can substitute walnuts for the hazelnuts, orange zest for lemon zest, and you can add 1/4 teaspoon fennel seed for flavoring. Just pulse seeds with the nuts and sugar. She also notes that the recipe is easily doubled and the cookies freeze well.

"Although I haven't tried it," she says, "I think you could freeze the individual dough slices and bake when desired. Nothing like warm, freshly baked cookies."

### Hazelnut Olive Oil Shortbread Cookies

1/2 cup hazelnuts, blanched  
1/4 cup sugar  
1 1/4 cups unbleached all-purpose flour  
3/4 teaspoon kosher salt  
1/2 cup powdered sugar  
Zest of 1 lemon  
1/2 cup extra-virgin light olive oil  
Raw or turbinado sugar, to sprinkle

Toast hazelnuts in a shallow baking pan until fragrant, about 6 minutes. Cool to room temperature.

Pulse nuts with the 1/4 cup sugar in a food processor until nuts are finely ground. Invert into a bowl, and with the help of a whisk combine very well with the flour, salt, powdered sugar and lemon zest. Pour in the olive oil, and with your clean hands work the dough just until it forms into a ball.

Divide the dough into two pieces and roll each on a piece of parchment paper into a tight log. Refrigerate 1 hour until firm. Unwrap dough and cut into 1/3-inch slices.

Place on a cookie sheet covered with parchment paper and sprinkle with raw sugar, baking at 375 degrees for 20 minutes. (Don't expect the cookies to brown much.)

Remove from the oven and allow cookies to stand on the cookie sheet for 1-2 minutes. Remove from the cookie sheet and place on a wire rack until cooled completely.

### Wine, Food and Music

Even those of us who don't like the cold can bundle up and enjoy some of the great food events going on in Southwest Michigan this month.

The 8th Annual Winter Delights: A Festival of Wine, Food and Music will be from 5-9 p.m. Jan. 21 at the Lake Michigan College Mendel Center Grand Upton Hall.

It will feature more than 20 wineries, including Baroda Founders Wine Cellar, Dablon Winery, Free Run Cellars, Gravity Vineyards and Winery, and Round Barn Winery of Baroda;

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12 Corners Vineyards, Black Dragon Meadery and Vineyard 2121 from Benton Harbor; Lemon Creek Winery from Berrien Springs; Tabor Hill Winery & Restaurant, and Wyncroft from Buchanan; Cranes' Pie Pantry, Restaurant and Winery, and Fenn Valley Vineyards & Wine Cellar from Fennville; Burgdorf's Winery from Haslett; Cody Kresta Vineyard & Winery from Mattawan; Leelanau Cellars Winery from Omena; St. Julian Winery and Warner Vineyards from Paw Paw; Cogdal Vineyards from South Haven; and Chateau Chantel and Chateau Grand Traverse from Traverse City.

Edible offerings will come from Bistro on the Boulevard, Cranes' Pie Pantry, Restaurant and Winery, Papa Vino's Italian Kitchen, Tabor Hill Winery & Restaurant, Veni's Sweet Shop, Vineyard 2121 and The Mendel Center's Conference and Event Services.

Tickets are \$35 in advance or \$40 the day of the event, and are available through The Mendel Center box office at 927-1221 weekdays from 2-6 p.m., or online at [www.TheMendelCenter.com](http://www.TheMendelCenter.com).

Admission includes a festival glass, 10 wine tastings, \$10 of food, and entertainment. Designated driver tickets are \$20 and include a festival glass, two non-alcoholic drinks and \$10 in food.

### More upcoming food events

Then, on Jan. 27, there's the 5th Annual Chili Tour, where you can taste (and vote) for chilies prepared at various locations in downtown St. Joseph.

Sponsored by Zion Evangelical United Church of Christ in St. Joseph, the suggested cost for the tour is \$2 per person or \$5 for families of four or more. A portion of the proceeds will be donated to the Benton Harbor Soup Kitchen.

Pick up a tour map between 9 a.m. and 8 p.m. Jan. 27 at the Welcome Center, 301 State St. The event will be from 5-8 p.m.

The next day is the 2nd Annual St. Joe Winter Beer Fest in downtown St. Joseph.

Running from noon-4 p.m. Jan. 28, tickets are \$35 in advance or \$40 at the door, if any are available. Tickets are limited and are expected to go fast – they sold out last year.

Tickets for the outdoor event include a tasting cup,

12 tokens (one token per sample), and live music by the Rain Dogs. Featured breweries will be Arclight Brewing, Bell's Brewery, Blackrocks Brewery, Cultivate Brewing Co., Dark Horse Brewing Co., Founders Brewing Co., Greenbush Brewing Co., The Livery, North Pier Brewing Co., Right Brain Brewery, Round Barn Brewery, Silver Harbor Brewing Co., Short's Brewing Co., Tapisstry Brewing and Watermark Brewing Co.

Then, on the weekend of Feb. 3-5, enjoy artistry as carvers turn blocks of ice into a variety of sculptures during the 13th Annual Magical Ice Festival.

The three-day event includes a myriad of festivities, such as the Fire & Ice Tower Display at 7:30 p.m. Feb. 3, followed by the Fire and Ice Party at Shadowland starting at 8 p.m.

The cover charge is \$10 for those 18 and older, which includes a cash bar, Tropical Martini Luge, pizza by Silver Beach Pizza, Zick Sticks provided by Zick's Specialty Meats, music by Joshua and Jeremy Sprague, and barefoot Hawaiian fire performers at 9 and 10:30 p.m.

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