



## 2026 Cookie Contest Regional Cookie Recipe

### Cherry Blossom Surprise

*This cookie combines baking skills and creativity. Follow the recipe and then add your own festive twist. Dazzle us with your own holiday baker's choice topping that tastes delicious, looks good, and creates a one-of-a kind cookie.*



#### Ingredients:

- 1 cup unsalted butter, softened to room temperature
- 1 cup powdered (confectioner's) sugar
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon maraschino cherry juice (liquid from jar of cherries)
- ¼ teaspoon almond, vanilla, or cherry extract (Baker's Choice)
- 2- 2¼ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 cup chopped maraschino cherries- drained (12-16 oz jar of whole cherries)
- ¼ granulated white sugar (for rolling)
- Your surprise topping (baker's choice ingredient- must be edible)

## **Instructions:**

### **Oven temperature for cooking: 350 degrees F**

1. In a large bowl, use an electric mixer to combine butter, salt, and powdered sugar until light and fluffy.
2. Add the 1 tbsp cherry juice and ¼ tsp extract of choice and continue mixing until smooth.
3. Add 2 cups of flour and mix on low until fully incorporated. Once the two cups are added, slowly add a couple of TBSPs at a time until the dough resembles a playdough consistency and can be handled without sticking to hands.
4. Carefully stir in the chopped cherries, just until combined.
5. Use a tablespoon or one inch scoop. Round cookie dough to form small cookie dough balls. Roll the balls in granulated sugar until coated.
6. Chill the dough balls for at least 30-60 minutes before baking. Longer/ overnight is also ok.
7. While the dough is chilling, preheat the oven to 350 degrees and prepare a baking sheet. Use an ungreased cookie sheet or parchment paper. (Lining the cookie sheet with parchment paper makes sure the bottoms of the cookies bake evenly and don't overbrown.)
8. Place each cookie dough ball two inches apart.
9. Bake in the preheated oven for 10 – 14 minutes or just until the bottom edges are lightly golden. Don't overbake.
10. Remove from the oven and place the baker's choice edible topping on the cookie. Depending on choice of topping, place when cookie is warm or cooled.

**Hint:** To help ensure the cookies stay fresh, line the bottom of an airtight storage container with parchment paper to create an extra moisture barrier between the container and the cookies. Place the cookies in a single layer, being careful not to overlap them, which could cause the cookies to stick together.