

How to Make Gifts from Your Kitchen

How to Make Pretty Little Loaves

Almost any recipe or mix can be adapted to making tiny, cute little loaves. Both yeast breads and quick breads can be made into small loaves. Roll recipes also work.

You can make pretty little loaves from a few inches long to six or eight inches long. You can make them free-standing or in mini-loaf pans. We sell a couple sizes but you can use whatever mini pans that you have in your arsenal. Just make the recipe and fit the bread in the pans. If you have leftover dough, use a muffin pan, small baking dish, or even ramekins. (If the loaves are all the same size, chances are that you'll be able to take them out of the oven at the same time.

It's fun to decorate and wrap these little loaves. Use cellophane bags, foil, colored paper or just plain clear plastic wrap to wrap your loaves. Tie them with raffia, place bows on them, or put stickers on them to make them pretty. Look around the house for items to use and check your local craft store for ideas.

You'll find many uses for your little loaves. Friends and neighbors will love these as personal, homemade gifts. Children will like having their very own loaf tucked in a lunchbox. Or serve them to your family; these are great breads to go along with soup or stew.



Basic directions: Pour the batter into well greased and floured mini-loaf pans. Bake according to recipe directions or until done. (Baking times will vary depending on the size of the pans but will be less than the recipe says. Test for doneness by inserting a toothpick in the center of the loaves. If it comes out clean, it should be done.) Let the loaves cool for 15-20 minutes and then remove them to a wire rack to cool completely. If they break apart while taking out, let them cool longer.

Glazed Nuts

2 cups nuts (whole almonds, pecan halves, walnut halves, whole hazelnuts or whole cashews, peanuts)
3/4 cup Back to Basics Nut Glaze
3 tablespoons water

1. Put nuts and glaze mixture in nut roaster pan, stir to mix.
2. Place nut roaster pan on medium high heat.
3. Add water to nut mixture in pan. Glaze will quickly turn into a thick liquid. Boil gently during cooking process. Stir.
4. Stir slowly and continuously to keep glaze coating nuts at all times until liquid evaporates and nuts are glazed (5 to 10 minutes). When liquid is evaporated and the stir handle becomes harder to turn, the nuts are done. Do not overcook.
5. Remove pan from burner. Quickly sprinkle a little water over the nuts (about 1 tablespoon). Mixture will steam, keep hands away until steam dissipates. Stir nuts to coat evenly with glaze.
6. Spread hot nuts on a nonstick cookie sheet to cool. Gently separate nuts with a spatula.
7. Let cool before eating. Very hot!

Baking tip: When cooled store in an airtight container and refrigerate or freeze for future use.

Mix in a Jar Recipes

Homemade Hot Chocolate Mix in a Jar

2/3 cups skim milk powder
2/3 cups white sugar
1/3 cup unsweetened cocoa
1/3 cup non-dairy creamer

Place all ingredients in a large mixing bowl and stir well. For a finer mix, combine all ingredients in a blender or food processor and mix well. Pour into 1 pint size canning jar. Attach gift tag or label and decorate jar as desired. Makes 10-16 servings.

Variations: Please note, adding additional ingredients may make your mix larger than a 1 quart jar.

- **For spiced hot chocolate:** Add 1 1/4 teaspoon of cinnamon to mix and stir well.
- **For raspberry hot chocolate:** Add one package of raspberry Kool-Aid to the mix and increase the sugar to a scant 1 cup and stir well.
- **For mint hot chocolate:** Add 1 1/3 cup of mint chocolate chips and stir well.
- **For butterscotch hot chocolate:** Add 1 1/3 cup of butterscotch chocolate chips and stir well.
- **For marshmallow hot chocolate:** Add 1 1/3 cup of marshmallows and stir well.

Directions for tag or label: Place 2 or 3 tablespoons in a mug and add boiling water. Stir.

Homemade Orzo Soup Mix in a Jar

1/2 tsp garlic powder
3/4 tsp. dried oregano, crushed
1 1/2 tsp. dried parsley flakes
1 1/2 Tablespoon instant chicken bouillon granules
1 1/2 Tablespoon minced dried onion
3 Tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese
1/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons dried chopped mushrooms
2/3 cup Mediterranean orzo
2/3 cup black calamari orzo

In a 1 pint canning jar, add ingredients in order listed making layers as you go. Seal with lid. Attach gift tag or label and decorate jar as desired.

Directions for tag or label: Empty contents of jar into a medium saucepan. Add 5.5 cups water; heat to boiling. Reduce heat; cover and simmer for 40 minutes or until orzo is tender, stirring occasionally. Add more water if needed.

Homemade Rice & Mushroom Soup Mix in a Jar

1 (2.75 ounce) package country gravy mix
1/2 tsp salt (optional)
1 1/2 tablespoon chicken bouillon granules
3 teaspoons dried minced onion
3 teaspoons dried celery flakes
1 teaspoon dried parsley flakes
3/4 cup white rice
3/4 cup wild, black, red or brown rice
2 tablespoons coarsely chopped dried mushrooms

In a 1 pint canning jar, add ingredients in order listed making layers as you go. Seal with lid. Attach gift tag or label and decorate jar as desired.

Directions for tag or label: Empty contents of jar into a large saucepan. Add 8 cups water; heat to boiling. Reduce heat; cover and simmer for 25 to 30 minutes or until rice is tender, stirring occasionally. Add more water if needed.