



Let's TALK


Elevating your baking game!

Welcome to the holiday edition of the HighAltitudeBaker.com newsletter, where we celebrate the spirit of the season, whether you're vacationing in the mountains 🏔️ or living the dream at 🏠 altitude!



Picture this I stumbled upon a charming pecan pie dish at a local resale store recently. Even though I didn't necessarily need another dish, I couldn't resist capturing a photo of the accompanying recipe. Here at HighAltitudeBaker.com, I'm always on the lookout for inspiration, and sometimes it comes from unexpected places.

Join me as we turn everyday encounters into culinary creativity, sparking ideas that elevate your high-altitude baking experience. This holiday season, let that pecan pie dish be a symbol – a reminder that inspiration is everywhere, waiting to be discovered in the most delightful corners of our daily lives!

Let's get started! & Thank you in Advance for Enjoying Issue 4  Vic "Tori" a at 8750'

Covered This Month...

Pecan Pie – A Southern tradition that has found its way to many holiday tables...

Sugar Cookie Cut Outs - NO SPREAD - Ever...

Think your menu can withstand high altitudes? Reconsider.



ARE YOU READY TO ELEVATE YOUR BAKING GAME?

[Ask me anything about Baking and I'll give you the answer from my High-ALTITUDE Kitchen at 8750'](#)

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I would like to Receive the High Altitude Baker Monthly Newsletter...

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Maintaining the correct oven temperature is crucial for successful cooking and baking. However, solely relying on the oven settings might not guarantee that your dishes are fully cooked inside. That's why I recommend using an internal thermometer to monitor the temperature of your cakes, bread, or meats. Investing in a reliable thermometer allows you to closely track your cooking progress. You can find a quality option here: <https://amzn.to/3pVAKRp>

Don't delay in acquiring a thermometer, as inadequate temperature checking can result in undercooked or overcooked food. Take the necessary steps to ensure your next dish is perfectly cooked. Additionally, if you use the provided link to purchase the thermometer, I may receive a commission as an Amazon affiliate.

Keep in mind the upcoming holiday baking season, where this tool can prove invaluable.



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Pecan Pie – A Southern tradition that has found its way to many holiday tables, pecan pie's sweet and nutty filling, often with a gooey texture, makes it a decadent treat...



After experimenting with numerous “Original” Pecan Pie recipes in my kitchen at an elevation of 8750 feet, I’ve discovered that the differences among them are **quite subtle**. The variations typically revolve around the quantity of ingredients, such as 3 or 4 eggs, 2/3 to 1 cup of sugar, around a 1 cup of corn syrup, a dose of melted butter, and approximately a cup of pecan halves. Some include vanilla for added flavor, while others skip it.

A great aspect of pecan pie is its flexibility. I appreciate that you can easily simplify the baking process by opting for a pre-made pie crust. This is especially convenient when you find yourself in a holiday rental or visiting family with limited kitchen equipment, making pecan pie a hassle-free and delicious treat to whip up.

Surprisingly, despite these distinctions, the end results often taste remarkably similar. In light of these findings, I’ve crafted what I believe to be the ultimate **High Altitude Pecan Pie** recipe, drawing inspiration from the best elements of various classic recipes.

- **Roast the Pecans:** Enhance the depth of flavor in your pecan pie by roasting the pecans before incorporating them into the filling. This simple step adds a delightful nuttiness and aroma to your pie.
- **Pre-bake the Crust:** Ensure a crisp and golden crust by pre-baking it before adding the pecan filling. This prevents the crust from becoming soggy and ensures a perfect balance between the crunchy exterior and gooey interior of the pie.
- **Use an Oven Thermometer:** Maintain precision in baking by using an oven thermometer to verify the accuracy of your oven’s temperature. Pecan pies benefit from the correct baking temperature, ensuring even cooking and a well-set filling that reaches 200°



High-Altitude Pecan Pie with Roasted Pecans



Ingredients: Up to 5,000'

- 1 unbaked 9-inch pie crust
- 1 cup light corn syrup
- 3 large eggs
- 1 cup packed brown sugar
- 1/3 cup salted butter, melted
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 Tbsp vanilla extract
- 1 1/2 cups pecan halves



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Pecan Pie – Continued...

Preparation Up to 5,000': (See Below for Higher Altitudes)

- **Preheat Oven:** Set the oven to 350°F (180°C).
- **Roast Pecans:** Spread pecan halves in a small pan and roast for 8-10 minutes until they release a fragrant aroma. You can also par bake your pie crust at this time. Allow the pecans to cool before using.

Mixing:

- **Combine Ingredients:** In a spacious mixing bowl, whisk together the light corn syrup, eggs, packed brown sugar, melted unsalted butter, salt, and vanilla extract. Ensure the mixture is smooth and well integrated.

Pecan Addition:

- **Fold in Roasted Pecans:** Gently fold in three-quarters of the roasted pecan halves into the mixture until they're uniformly coated.
- **Fast Version:** Don't Roast the Pecans, fold all of them into the mixture & use a premade pie crust.

Pie Assembly:

- **Prepare Pie:** Pour the pecan mixture into the unbaked pie crust.
- **Design:** Arrange the remaining roasted pecan halves on the top of the pie, creating an appealing pattern prior to placing it in the oven.

Baking:

- **Oven Placement:** Position the pie, one rack above center, in your oven. No need to burn the bottom 😊
- **Bake Time:** Let it bake for 50-60 minutes until the filling is set to an internal temperature of around 200°F and the crust achieves a golden-brown hue.
- **Prevent Over-Browning:** If the edges of the crust start browning too rapidly, cover them with foil during baking.
- **Cooling:** Allow the pie to cool completely before serving to ensure the filling sets properly and the flavors meld together perfectly.



High-Altitude Adjustments:

For 5000 Feet Elevation:

- **Temperature:** Reduce oven temperature to 335°F (168°C).
- **Baking Time:** Adjust to 55-65 minutes.
- **Corn Syrup:** Increase to 1 1/4 cups for a better filling set.

For 9000 Feet Elevation:

- **Temperature:** Reduce oven temperature to 300°F (149°C).
- **Baking Time:** Adjust to 65-75 minutes.
- **Corn Syrup:** Increase to 1 1/2 cups.
- **Sugar:** Reduce to 1/2 cup. Decrease butter to 1/4 cup to prevent boiling over and excessive crust browning.

For 7000 Feet Elevation:

- **Temperature:** Reduce oven temperature to 320°F (160°C).
- **Baking Time:** Adjust to 60-70 minutes.
- **Corn Syrup:** Increase to 1 1/3 cups.
- **Sugar:** Reduce to 3/4 cup to prevent overboiling.



Indulge in this high-altitude pecan pie, where I've enhanced the rich flavor and aroma with toasted pecans. This recipe is tailored for elevated kitchens, acknowledging the delicate nature of pecan pie, requiring adjustments even below 7000 feet for that perfect bake.



In the airy peaks where dreams take flight,
High protein flour brings cookies to light.
With leavening cut, a delicate hand,
Oven's gauge ensures a bake that's grand.

Presenting The Best Cut Out Sugar Cookie Recipe for ANY Altitude

Ingredients

- 3/4 cup Salted Butter
- 3/4 cup White Sugar
- 1 Whole Egg
- 1 Egg White Only
- 2 Tablespoons Vanilla Extract
- 2 cups 11.7% Protein Flour



Directions

- **Preparation:** Clear your oven space. Preheat the oven to 350°F and verify the temperature accuracy using an oven thermometer. While the oven heats, place eggs in warm water to remove the chill. Ensure butter reaches room temperature.
- **Prepare the Baking Sheet:** Line your cookie sheet with foil followed by parchment paper for easy baking.
- **Creaming:** In a mixing bowl, cream together the butter and sugar until achieving a whipped cream-like consistency.
- **Incorporate Eggs and Vanilla:** Add the whole egg, egg white, and vanilla extract to the creamed mixture. Continue mixing until thoroughly combined.
- **Add Flour:** Gradually incorporate the flour into the butter mix until the dough easily pulls away from the bowl's sides.
- **Rolling the Dough:** Place the dough between two parchment paper sheets and roll it to your desired thickness.
- **Chilling (if needed):** If intricate cookie cutters are used, consider chilling the dough for a stiffer consistency.
- **Test Cookie:** For the first batch, bake a sample cookie to gauge timing and adjust as needed. Always double-check the oven temperature before baking.
- **Baking:** Bake the cookies for approximately 15 minutes or until golden, considering your oven's unique behavior.
- **To make the icing:** Mix together 1 bag of powdered sugar, 3 tablespoons of meringue powder, 1/4 cup of corn syrup, 1 tablespoon of clear vanilla extract, and slowly add about 1/4 cup of water; then additional tablespoons until it reaches piping consistency, while incorporating Wilton gel food coloring for desired hues.

These exceptional sugar cookies are carefully crafted to avoid overwhelming sweetness, especially when iced. They're made with high protein flour for a sturdy yet subtly textured base, and without leavening agents to keep their shape stay intact. Egg whites are used for binding and help create a soft bite. A bit of extra vanilla enhances the taste without making it overly sweet. For almond flavor enthusiasts, substituting 1 tablespoon of almond extract for vanilla can add nuance without overpowering, but using 2 tablespoons might be too intense. An oven thermometer ensures precise baking temperatures, so these cookies can SHINE!

Embrace experimentation and delight in the simplicity of these instructions for a perfect batch of cut-out cookies in your kitchen!

Side NOTE... If you're contemplating ways to generate extra income from your kitchen, exploring the cottage food laws in your region could be a fantastic start. Especially during the holidays, cookie kits tend to fly off the shelves.

Crafting and packaging these delightful treats not only allows you to showcase your culinary skills but also presents an appealing opportunity to capitalize on the seasonal demand for homemade goodies.

With the right approach and compliance with local regulations, turning your kitchen into a hub for crafting and selling cookie kits could be a lucrative venture.





Think your menu can withstand High Altitudes? Reconsider. **THE BASICS**. We all forget...

Adjust Cooking Times: Be aware that higher altitudes can affect cooking times. Start checking for doneness earlier than usual, especially for meats and baked goods.

Temperature Modification: Increase oven temperatures by 15 to 25°F (about 8 to 14°C) to counteract lower air pressure and ensure thorough cooking. Most holiday recipes are forgiving about high altitude adjustments, but maintaining the right oven temperature is key. An oven thermometer becomes your ally, guarding against altitude-related temperature variations and ensuring your turkey, pies, and casseroles cook uniformly. <https://amzn.to/47840S1>

Watch Your Potatoes: When boiling potatoes for mashed potatoes, cut them into smaller, uniform pieces, and use a thermometer to ensure they are cooked to perfection.

Smaller Baking Pans: Opt for smaller baking pans to achieve better heat distribution, helping baked goods cook more evenly.

Be Precise with Temperatures: 350° does not mean 340°. It's crucial to be precise with your temperatures, as a mere 10-degree difference can significantly impact the outcome of your dish. <https://amzn.to/47840S1>

Use a Thermometer: Invest in a reliable kitchen thermometer to check the internal temperatures of meats and ensure safe and accurate cooking.

- **Turkey:** 165°F (74°C) in the thickest part of the thigh and the innermost part of the wing.
- **Mashed Potatoes:** Ensure they are heated thoroughly, aiming for a temperature of 165°F (74°C).
- **Sweet Potatoes:** 205°F (96°C) for a soft and creamy texture.
- **Stuffing:** 165°F (74°C) throughout.
- **Corn Casserole:** 165°F (74°C) for dishes containing meat or eggs.
- **Mac & Cheese:** Ensure it's heated thoroughly; aiming for a temperature of 165°F (74°C).
- **Pecan Pie:** 160°F (71°C) or until the center is set.
- **Green Bean Casserole:** 165°F (74°C) for dishes containing meat.
- **Ham:** 145°F (63°C) for pre-cooked ham, and 165°F (74°C) for fresh or raw ham.



Hydration Matters: In high places, ingredients play by different rules. Adjust batters and doughs as needed. Don't rush to add more liquid; focus on the texture. And when dealing with fluctuating flour, weighing it is your best bet!

- **Bread:** Consistency: The dough should be slightly tacky to the touch, yet elastic. When you perform the windowpane test by stretching a small portion of dough, it should thin out without tearing, indicating proper gluten development.
- **Pizza Dough:** Consistency: Pizza dough should be smooth and elastic but not overly sticky. It should hold its shape when formed into a ball, and when pressed with a finger, it should exhibit a slight bounce-back.
- **Cookies:** Consistency: Cookie dough should be soft, pliable, and not overly sticky. It should hold its shape when scooped onto a baking sheet and exhibit a bit of spread during baking without becoming too thin. Whenever you're making cookies, it's a good practice to bake a test cookie if feasible. This simple step ensures that you won't end up wasting an entire tray in case there's an issue with your dough.
- **Pie Crust:** Consistency: Pie crust dough should resemble coarse breadcrumbs when properly mixed. It should come together easily when pressed but still maintain a crumbly texture. Avoid overworking the dough to prevent toughness in the final crust.
- **Cakes:** Consistency: Cake batter should be smooth, velvety, and free of lumps. It should have a ribbon-like consistency when poured, ensuring an even rise and a tender crumb.
- **Pastry Dough (for croissants, danishes, etc.):** Consistency: Pastry dough should be layered, slightly elastic, and pliable. It should roll out easily without tearing, allowing for the creation of distinct layers in laminated pastries.
- **Muffins:** Consistency: Muffin batter should be thick but scoopable. It's important not to overmix to prevent dense muffins. The batter should drop easily from a spoon, and a few lumps are acceptable.

Experiment and Record: High-altitude cooking often involves some trial and error. Keep a record of adjustments made and the outcomes to refine your recipes for future occasions. The altitude experiment is about **honing your culinary instincts and developing an intuitive sense** of how ingredients respond to the atmospheric changes. It's a process of trial and error, requiring patience and a willingness to learn from each culinary experiment. Ultimately, the altitude experiment empowers cooks to adapt their favorite recipes to the specific challenges posed by higher elevations, resulting in delicious and successful creations tailored to their unique kitchen environment.