



# Best Shortbread Ever An Old-Time Recipe

By ALISHA CAMPBELL, Woodside National Historic Site, ON

Baking cookies with your family is a classic Christmas time activity. Did you know that this activity was also popular in the 19th century?

As a Parks Canada heritage presenter, I had the chance to make these cookies many times for people visiting Woodside National Historic Site. Woodside is the boyhood home of William Lyon Mackenzie King, Canada's tenth, and longest-serving Prime Minister. It's located in Kitchener, Ontario.

The King family's love of shortbread was passed on by their Scottish grandparents who immigrated to Canada. They surely would have made and served these delicious cookies during special gatherings while living at Woodside over 100 years ago.

Since many visitors have declared it the best shortbread they've ever tasted, I would like to share its secrets with you. If you have small Parka enthusiasts at home, they will be happy to learn that these cookies are one of her favorites to share with her friends.

P.S. This shortbread recipe has been used at Woodside for a very long time and is also available on Parks Canada Heritage Gourmet App.



## YOU WILL NEED

- 1 cup | 250 ml sugar
- 4 cups | 750 - 1000 g all-purpose flour (closer to 750 g)
- 1 lb | 454 g butter at room temperature
- pinch of salt (not necessary if butter is salted)
- almond or vanilla extract, if desired



## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Sift together the flour, sugar and salt. Rub in the butter with your hands or a dough blender. It is important to be gentle with the dough to avoid making it too hard or tough.



2. Make ¼" thick discs and cut them with cookie cutters. Younger kids can simply shape their cookies like medallions.



3. Gently place the cookies about 1 inch apart on a non-stick or parchment-lined cookie sheet.



4. Bake at 350°F (180°C) until pale brown, about 12-15 minutes.

Another option would be to pat the dough (½" thick) onto a cookie sheet and prick with a fork. Once it is baked, cut the shortbread into fingers while still warm.

Even though this recipe is quite simple, don't be surprised if it is a bit different every time you make it. With time and practise, it will become your own family classic.

This Club Parka activity is a perfect way to revive the magic of Christmas and a taste of the past while spending time with your family. To create even more of a Victorian Christmas feel in your house, you could also decorate gingerbread or sugar cookies and hang them in your Christmas tree!

Happy baking... and tasting



*This activity is part of Club Parka, a Parks Canada program for preschoolers offered at national parks and historic sites across the country. Kids can take part in the program online too. Visit [parkscanada.gc.ca/Parka](http://parkscanada.gc.ca/Parka) to get to know Parka, the busy little beaver who helps kids explore the world around them.*

*For more Parka fun, try her other activities, download her mobile app or sing along to her song! And don't forget to watch her videos!*