

April Vacation & Peanut-y Chocolate Chip Cookies

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Private Chef, Catering & Cooking Classes

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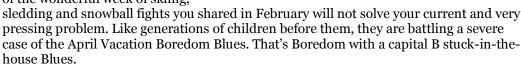
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What to do during April vacation? It certainly is a dilemma. Okay, maybe it's only a dilemma if you're stuck in the chilly, gray north. A vacation is hardly a vacation when cloudy days and muddy yards make outside play uninviting at best. And a disaster waiting to happen to your carpets at worse. If you're one of the lucky ones, problem solved – you're soaking up the sun on a beach somewhere.

For those without the time, inclination or budget for a family trip to Disney World or the Bahamas, April vacation can be a challenge. Reminding the kids of the wonderful week of skiing,



So what do you do with a house full of bored kids for a week? Well, you could send them to Nana and Grandpa. How many times have your parents or in-laws told you how much they miss their grandchildren? They'll be delighted to entertain them ... at least for a day or two.

Whether you are a parent, grandparent, aunt or uncle, if you've got kids at home this vacation week, here are a few ideas to keep everyone busy and happy.

Hit the road. When the going gets rough, the tough take a field trip. Kindle your kids' interest in science with a trip to the planetarium or aquarium. Awaken the budding artist with a museum visit. If your children have an interest in history, take them to an antique house or village or the historical society. And don't forget a visit to the library.

When in doubt, choose a place which interests you. By sharing your love of music, art, history or science, you may find a kindred spirit.

Laugh 'til you cry or be inspired. Check the newspaper, web or video store for movies. Whether you take in the latest comedy or a classic bio-pic, a great movie will lift you out of the ho-hum and humdrum of another rainy afternoon. An ice cream afterwards is not a bad way to finish the adventure.

Do a good deed. And another. Simple acts of kindness work wonders on everybody's disposition on a dreary day. When we stayed with my grandparents, my sister Brenda and I frequently ran errands for Nana. She always shared her morning newspaper with the lady up the street. Off we went after breakfast to deliver the paper. Sometimes Nana added a pint of berries, a cup of chowder or a piece of pie. After delivering the paper and pie, we took at least a few minutes to chat with Nana's friend. And then a few minutes more to play with Brownie, her cocker spaniel.

There are many things your children can do to help others. From baking cookies for the neighbors to spending a morning sorting cans at a food bank, you needn't look far to find a deed in need of doing. The experience will be even better if you do it together.

Suddenly a dull and boring week is anything but.

Enjoy the vacation with your children or grandchildren and bon appétit!





Peanut-y Chocolate Chip Cookies

My mother moved to the local nursing home late last summer.

About once a month | do a baking demonstration and tasting for her and her pals. These cookies were given a big thumbs up by one and all! Enjoy!

Makes about 5 dozen cookies

2 1/4 cups all-purpose flour 1 teaspoon baking soda

1 teaspoon salt

1/2 cup butter, softened

1/2 cup peanut butter

3/4 cup granulated sugar

3/4 cup packed brown sugar

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

2 large eggs

12 ounces semi-sweet chocolate chips (try the minis)

1 cup chopped peanuts

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees.

Put the flour, baking soda and salt in a bowl and whisk to combine.

Put the butter and sugars in a large bowl and beat with an electric mixer until creamy. Add the vanilla and beat to combine. Add the eggs one at a time and beat until smooth.

Gradually add the dry ingredients and beat until just combined.

Stir in the chocolate chips and peanuts.

Using a mini ice cream scoop or 2 spoons, drop the batter onto ungreased baking sheets.

Bake for about 10 minutes or until golden brown. Cool on the baking sheets for a few minutes before transferring to a wire rack to cool completely. Be sure to enjoy at least one while it is still warm.

