

Lembas (Orange Shortbread)

Yield: Makes 24 lembas

2 stick (1 cup) butter, softened

1/2 cup sugar

2 teaspoons finely grated fresh orange zest

1/4 teaspoon salt

2 1/2 cups (10 oz) all-purpose flour

2 tablespoons coarse sugar

Preheat oven to 375°F.

Cream butter and sugar in mixer. Add orange zest, and salt. Gradually add in flour at slow speed until mixture forms a soft dough.

Transfer dough to an ungreased large baking sheet and pat into a 10 by 8-inch rectangle. Prick dough all over with fork and sprinkle with coarse sugar, pressing it gently into dough with your fingertips to adhere. Score dough crosswise with back of a knife into 12 rectangles (3 rows by 4 columns) (do not cut all the way through), then score each rectangle into 2 triangles.

Bake shortbread in middle of oven until edges are golden but center is pale, 12 to 17 minutes. Cool on baking sheet on a rack 10 minutes, then cut into 24 triangles along scored lines while still warm. Transfer triangles with a long spatula to a rack to cool completely.

Notes: • Shortbread can be made 3 days ahead and kept in an airtight container at room temperature. • Shortbread keeps 1 week.

Smaug's Scales (Raspberry Shortbread bars)

3 sticks butter

1 cup sugar

1 egg

4 cups flour

1 tsp salt

1 (18 oz) jar raspberry jam

1/4 cup sliced almonds

Cream butter and sugar. Add egg. Mix well. Stir in flour and salt. Spread 3/4 dough in greased jelly roll pan. Spread with raspberry jam. Make lattice with remaining dough. Either roll into thin "pencils" with hands, or roll out dough on floured surface and cut into 1/2" strips. Lay on top of jam in lattice pattern (horizontally and then diagonally). If you cut strips using a pizza cutter, dough will roll up onto cutter, then you can unroll across jam. Don't be a perfectionist - just patch breaks or gaps with small pieces of dough - it will melt together as it bakes. Sprinkle with sliced almonds. Bake at 350° for 30 min. Cut into bars (4 strips on short edge of pan, and 16 strips on long edge of pan).

For Smaug's Scales look, cut 1/2" wide strips with zigzag pastry wheel. Place across jam on short side of pan with thin strip of jam showing between pastry strips. After baking, cut through middle of each zigzag strip (parallel with short width of pan) with knife (straight cut), and cut into 4 or 5 columns parallel with long side of pan to create bars with pastry on two edges, and jam showing in middle between zigzag edges.

The One Cheese Ring

24 oz shredded cheddar cheese (sharp)

2 8 oz pkg cream cheese or Neufchatel

2 tsp celery seeds

2 tsp garlic powder

1 tsp hot sauce

1 onion, chopped

2 tsp Worcestershire sauce

One Ring inscription: Cream cheese, sour cream, red food coloring

Mix all in food processor till combined. Mold into a ring shape on serving plate. Chill several hours in refrigerator. Mix small amount of cream cheese, sour cream and red food coloring to a piping consistency. Using an icing bag with small tip (#2 or #3 round), pipe elvish inscription on the One Ring using red cream cheese mixture around top of cheese ring.