

Peanut Butter Christmas Mice

- 1 cup creamy peanut butter
- 1/2 cup butter (no substitutes), softened
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1-1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 cup peanut halves
- 2 tablespoons green and red M&M miniature baking bits
- 4 teaspoons miniature semi-sweet chocolate chips
- Cake decorator holly leaf and berry candies
- 60 to 66 pieces red shoestring licorice (2 inches *each*)

In a large mixing bowl, cream peanut butter, butter, sugar and brown sugar. Beat in egg and vanilla. Combine the flour and baking soda; gradually add to the creamed mixture. Refrigerate for 1 hour or until easy to handle.

Roll into 1-in. balls. Place 2 in. apart on ungreased baking sheets. Pinch each ball at one end to taper. Insert two peanut halves in center of each ball for ears. Add one M&M baking bit for nose and two chocolate chips for eyes. Arrange holly and berry candies in front of one ear.

Bake at 350° for 8-10 minutes or until set. Gently insert one licorice piece into each warm cookie for tail. Remove to wire racks to cool completely. **Yield:** about 5 dozen.

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With their red licorice tails, candy noses and peanut ears, these chewy “mice” were always a hit at classroom parties. My children are in their teens now, but they still ask me to make these cookies for the holidays.

—Nancy Rowse
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2nd
Place



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