

The Daily Herald

Olive oil can be for sweets, too

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Micki and Dave Sannar had a dilemma. They ate healthy and rarely consumed fast food but discovered they had elevated levels of LDL (low-density lipoprotein, or bad cholesterol) during a routine medical exam.

After searching for healthier, heart-smart foods, Micki found out about the healthy mono-unsaturated fatty acids (MUFAs) in olive oil.

"I learned how good it is for your heart," says the 46-year-old Highland resident. Micki started looking for dessert recipes using olive oil but "they simply did not exist," so she experimented. Now after six years of experimentation, Micki published the cookbook *Olive Oil Desserts* (Mikko Publishing, \$24.95). She says her cholesterol has also dropped 100 points.

Her key in changing a dessert recipe to a healthier but tasty version is to replace $\frac{2}{3}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ cup olive oil for each 1 cup of solid fat used in a recipe. Micki includes cakes, cookies, muffins and pies in her cookbook.

She's caused quite a stir within the food industry. Micki's appeared on three local TV networks, was recently interviewed by a women's radio talk show host in New York called "The Recipe Box," and is headed to Book Expo America in New York in May.

"I've learned that much of the best-tasting olive oil comes from right here in America," says Micki. "Places like California and Texas have delicious olive oil -- the new Texas Oil, who knew?"

In fact, the Texas Department of Agriculture invited her to promote Texas olive oil with her desserts. She's traveling to Austin soon to do just that and next to California for book signings and an olive oil country tour. Micki is sharing her desserts on an international TV shopping network during the dessert months (September-December).

Locally, the author is appearing at Thanksgiving Point for a book signing on May 9.

In between all these media engagements Micki, enjoys her four children ages 9-18, a Golden Retriever, a cat and eight chickens (for fresh eggs!). She and her husband and kids cook and bake together -- and eat desserts, of course! They love hiking and camping (and always pack along the olive oil).

"Food, especially desserts, have deep meaning to family and home," says Micki. "Most people do not want to give up dessert if they don't have to. ... If you know you can enjoy dessert with one-third the fat and calories ... and that dessert is as good if not better tasting ... why wouldn't you switch (to olive oil)?"

Micki is all for eating desserts "without guilt."

Pink Frosted Soft Sugar Cookies

Serves 12 to 15

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup pure olive oil
- 1 cup vanilla yogurt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup granulated sugar
- 1 large egg
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon butter extract
- $2\frac{3}{4}$ cups all purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
- 1 Recipe Cream Cheese Frosting

- Decorative sprinkles

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Coat cookie sheets with olive oil cooking spray. In large mixer bowl add olive oil, yogurt, sugar, egg and vanilla and butter extracts.

Mix on medium speed for 2 minutes or until smooth and creamy. Add flour, baking soda and salt. Mix on low speed until completely combined (dough should be a bit sticky). Roll out onto a floured surface until dough is about 1/8-inch thick.

Cut into desired shapes and place onto prepared cookie sheets. Bake for 10-12 minutes. Cool completely and frost with Basic Cream Cheese Frosting. Top with decorative sprinkles.

Basic Cream Cheese Frosting

- 8 ounces light cream cheese
- 4 cups powdered sugar
- 1½ teaspoons pure vanilla extract
- ½ teaspoon butter extract
- ½ teaspoon salt

2-3 drops of red food coloring

In mixer bowl add cream cheese and beat on medium/high speed until smooth. Add remaining ingredients and blend until smooth and creamy.

-- "Olive Oil Desserts," by Micki Sannar. Mikko Publishing (self-published), American Fork, \$24.95. Available on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).