



## CLEAN YOUR BACKPACK

A favorite backpack can get dirty more quickly than you think when you use it often. Tidying it up helps you stay organized. Here's how to start.

1. Deep clean. Once every few weeks, take everything out. Open all the zippers, turn the backpack upside down and shake out crumbs and dirt. Scrub any stains with a stiff brush. Many nylon and canvas backpacks can go in the washing machine (ask an adult first). Then leave the backpack out to air dry.
2. Organize the inside. Group similar items together instead of stuffing everything in the top. Put notebooks in the largest compartment and pens and pencils in a smaller pocket. Stash hand sanitizer and other small items in a zippered pouch.
3. Neaten up. At the end of each day, go through your backpack and get rid of things you don't need. Be sure to toss any uneaten food.



**HOLIDAY TRADITION**  
Kwanzaa is a celebration of African-American culture. It begins on December 26 and lasts for seven nights.



**WARNING!**  
Ask an adult's permission before using an electric mixer and the oven.

## Bake marbled Kwanzaa cookies

### Ingredients

- 1 cup granulated sugar
- ½ cup confectioners' sugar
- ½ tsp. salt
- 16 Tbsp. (2 sticks) butter
- 2 eggs
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- ¼ tsp. baking powder
- 3½ cups flour
- 2 Tbsp. cocoa
- Black, red, and green gel food coloring

### Instructions

1. In a bowl, blend the sugars, salt, and butter in an electric mixer until light and smooth, about 5 minutes. Add the eggs and vanilla and mix well.
2. In a separate bowl, stir the baking powder into the flour. Slowly add flour to sugar and butter mixture and blend until just combined.
3. Remove the dough from the mixer and divide into three equal portions. Return one portion to the mixer, then add the cocoa and 4 to 5 drops of black gel food coloring. Mix until incorporated, adding more coloring as needed.
4. Remove dough and clean mixing bowl and mixer. Repeat the process two more times with the remaining dough and the red and green gel food coloring.
5. Pat each portion of dough into a disk, wrap in plastic, and refrigerate at least 30 minutes.
6. Preheat oven to 350°F. Unwrap the dough and stack the colors on top of each other. Use a rolling pin or your hands to roughly flatten the disks into a single piece of dough about 1 inch thick.
7. Tear off tablespoon-size portions of dough. Press it between your fingers to "marble" the colors, then gently roll to form a ball. Set on a parchment-lined baking sheet and flatten to ¼ inch thick.
8. Bake cookies for 10 to 12 minutes or until just set. Remove to a rack to cool.



## ECO TIP OF THE WEEK LAYER UP TO ENJOY NATURE

Now that the days are colder in many parts of the US, it can be less tempting to spend time outside. But if you dress properly for the climate where you live, getting outdoors can be enjoyable in winter. The key to keeping warm is to wear several thin layers. Start with a base layer, like a long-sleeved undershirt. Depending on the outside temperature, layer on a sweater or sweatshirt. Then add a jacket or coat on top. Thin wool socks will keep your feet warmest because they allow the blood in your feet to circulate. You may also need gloves and a hat. Then you're ready to go outside to appreciate nature.



A coat and hat keep you warm.