

# PB&J WHOOPIE PIES

MAKES 12 PIES

Like cupcakes and cake pops, whoopie pies have become a trendy dessert recently. I had never had one until I tried to make them myself, and instantly thought of this variation. They were as fun to make as they are a fun play on two common foods. Of course as a chef, I like to give the whoopie pies a little extra visual appeal. I fill a pastry bag (fitted with a #4 star tip) and pipe the filling in a giant rosette (see [here](#)) on the bottom cookie. Then I top with the second cookie and gently squish until the ridged filling just shows at the sides.

## COOKIES

- 2<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> cups cake flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/2 cup vegetable shortening
- 1/2 cup creamy peanut butter
- 1/2 cup packed light brown sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> cups half-and-half

## FILLING

- 1 cup vegetable shortening
- 1 cup confectioners' sugar
- Pinch of kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> cups marshmallow creme, store-bought or [homemade](#)

## 1/2 cup grape jam or jelly

Position one oven rack in the top third of the oven and a second rack in the bottom third. Preheat the oven to 375°F. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper.

**MAKE THE COOKIES:** In a bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt.

In a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, cream the shortening, peanut butter, and brown sugar. Beat in the eggs one at a time, then beat in the vanilla. Alternate adding the half-and-half and the flour mixture in several additions.

Using a 2-ounce (1/4-cup) cookie scoop, place the batter on the baking sheets 2 inches apart. These cookies will, and are meant to, spread. Bake until light golden brown, 9 to 11 minutes; halfway through, switch the pans from rack to rack and also rotate the pans front to back. Transfer to a wire rack to cool.

**MAKE THE FILLING:** In a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat the shortening with the confectioners' sugar, salt, and vanilla on medium-high speed until smooth. Reduce the speed to medium-low and beat in the marshmallow creme and jam. Scrape the sides with a rubber spatula as you work.

After the cookies have cooled, spread a generous amount of the filling on the flat side of one cookie, then top with another cookie, flat side down. These will keep, covered, in an airtight container for up to 1 week.

### *chef it up!* MAKE YOUR OWN MARSHMALLOW CREME

**MAKES ABOUT 3 CUPS**

As a little girl, I had two strange, sugary obsessions that I'm not really proud of: powdered iced tea mix and marshmallow creme, both of which I just ate right off a spoon. I eventually grew out of my addictions, but my love for "fluff" has continued well into my

career. I find ways to make it my own and use it on desserts all the time. This recipe is so simple to make—and you can top virtually anything with marshmallow creme to make the ordinary extraordinary. For some added flair, if you have a crème brûlée torch, toast the marshmallow creme for a nod to childhood memories of sitting around the campfire!

**1/2 cup egg whites (see Note)**

**1 cup sugar**

**Dash of vanilla extract**

In a double boiler over simmering water, whisk the egg whites with the sugar until the sugar is completely dissolved and the mixture is very hot to the touch.

Transfer the mixture to a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment. Beat until stiff peaks form. Beat in the vanilla at the very end. Store the creme at room temperature.

**NOTE:** In this recipe, the ratio of sugar to egg whites (2:1) is extremely important. So separate your egg whites into a liquid measuring cup and stop when you get to 1/2 cup. You'll need somewhere between 2 and 3 large eggs.