



# Crimson Holiday Spirals

## My First Baking Disaster

I tried making these cookies years ago. I was so excited. But I forgot to soften the butter first.

My poor mixer groaned. The dough was a crumbly mess. I almost gave up. But I kneaded it with my warm hands. The dough came together like magic. It taught me patience.

## Why Soft Butter Matters

Let's talk about that butter. It must be soft. Not melted, just soft. Poke it with your finger. It should leave a gentle dent.

This matters so much. Soft butter whips up light and fluffy. It holds tiny

air bubbles. Those bubbles make your cookies tender. Hard butter just won't do that. Trust me on this.

## **The Joy of the Trough**

Now for the fun part. You press a line down each log. You make a little trough. It's like a riverbed for the jam. Use your finger. It's the best tool you have.

Don't worry if the dough cracks. Just pinch it back. Your hands can fix almost anything. Have you ever made a thumbprint cookie? This is like its fancy cousin. Which shape do you like better, circles or these long logs?

## **A Swirl of Sweetness**

That raspberry jam is the heart of it. The lemon juice is my secret. Just a teaspoon. It wakes up the jam's flavor. Doesn't that smell amazing?

\*Fun fact: The lemon juice also helps the jam set. It keeps it from running everywhere. Now you pipe that ruby red jam into the troughs. It looks so pretty. I still smile every time.

## **The Final Magic Touch**

After baking, the logs must cool. Then you drizzle the icing. Use a spoon and let it fall in zig-zags. Watch the white icing on the red jam. It is a little piece of art.

The diagonal cut is the last surprise. You get these beautiful, swirled pieces. Sharing them is the best part. This matters because food made with care is a gift. What's your favorite cookie to share with friends?

See also Festive Burgundy Beef Roast

## Your Turn in the Kitchen

These cookies seem fancy. But they are just simple steps. Take your time. Listen to the dough with your hands. That is how you learn.

The recipe makes four logs. You could make two with raspberry and two with apricot jam. What other jam would you try? Tell me about your baking experiments. I love to hear them.

### Ingredients:

Ingredient	Amount	Notes
unsalted butter, softened	16 tablespoons	
granulated sugar	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup (3 $\frac{1}{2}$ ounces/99 grams)	
vanilla extract	2 teaspoons	
table salt	$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon	
all-purpose flour	2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups (12 $\frac{1}{2}$ ounces/354 grams)	
seedless raspberry jam	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup	
lemon juice	1 teaspoon	
confectioners' sugar	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup (3 ounces/85 grams)	
hot water	1 tablespoon	plus more as needed for icing consistency



## Crimson Holiday Spirals

### Instructions

**Step 1:** First, get your oven ready. Move a rack to the middle. Heat it to 350 degrees. Line a flat baking sheet with parchment paper. This keeps the cookies from sticking. I love how parchment paper makes cleanup so easy.

**Step 2:** Now, let's make the dough. Beat the soft butter, sugar, vanilla, and salt together. Do this until it's light and fluffy. Then, mix in the flour on a low speed. It will look crumbly at first. (Make sure your butter is truly soft for a smooth dough.) Knead it gently into a smooth ball. Doesn't that smell amazing already?

**Step 3:** Divide your dough into four pieces. Roll each into a 14-inch log. If it cracks, just pinch it back. Place them on your baking sheet. Use your finger to press a little trough down each log. This is where our jam will go. What's your favorite jam flavor? Share below!

**Step 4:** Mix the raspberry jam with lemon juice. This makes it nice and smooth. Pipe or spoon it into the troughs. Bake for about 30 minutes. Rotate the sheet halfway through. The logs should be lightly browned. Let them cool until just warm.

See also [Frosted Meringue Forest Pines](#)

**Step 5:** Slide the logs together so they touch. Whisk the powdered sugar with hot water. Drizzle this icing over the warm logs. Let it set completely. This takes about half an hour. I still laugh at how messy my first icing attempt was!

**Step 6:** Finally, the fun part! Gently lift one log onto a cutting board.

Trim off the messy ends. Slice the rest on a diagonal. You'll get beautiful, swirled pieces. Repeat with the other logs. Now you have lovely spirals. (A sharp knife gives you the cleanest slices.)

## Creative Twists

These cookies are wonderful as written. But you can play with them, too. Try a different jam, like apricot or blackberry. A sprinkle of chopped nuts on the icing adds a nice crunch. For a festive touch, add a drop of red food coloring to the icing. Which one would you try first? Comment below!

## Serving & Pairing Ideas

These cookies are perfect with a cup of something warm. Place a few on a pretty plate. They look lovely next to a bowl of clementines. For a drink, a hot mug of spiced apple cider is my favorite. For the grown-ups, a glass of sweet dessert wine pairs beautifully. Which would you choose tonight?



Crimson Holiday Spirals

## Keeping Your Spirals Sparkly

These cookies keep beautifully at room temperature. Just tuck them into a tin. They stay crisp and lovely for nearly a week. You can also freeze the baked, unfrosted logs. Wrap them tightly in plastic wrap first. They will keep for a month this way.

Thaw the logs on the counter before you slice them. Then make your icing and drizzle it on. I once frosted a log before freezing it. The icing got all sticky and soft. It was a good lesson to learn! Batch cooking the dough is simple too. Make the logs and shape the troughs ahead of time.

See also Pesto Turkey Noel Open Sandwich

Cover the baking sheet and chill it for a day. This matters because it saves you time on a busy day. You can just fill, bake, and enjoy. **Have you ever tried storing it this way? Share below!**

## Simple Fixes for Happy Baking

First, if your dough is too crumbly, do not worry. Your hands are your best tool. Just knead it gently until it comes together. I remember when my dough cracked while rolling. I simply pinched it back like clay. It baked up perfectly.

Second, the jam can be thick. Whisking it with lemon juice helps a lot. This makes it smooth for piping. If it is still lumpy, warm it for five seconds. Third, slicing can make cookies crumble. Let them cool until just warm first. Use a very sharp knife and a gentle sawing motion.

Fixing small problems builds your cooking confidence. It also makes sure every bite tastes wonderful. **Which of these problems have you run into before?**

## Your Quick Questions, Answered

### **Q: Can I make these gluten-free?**

A: Yes. Use a good gluten-free flour blend. The dough may be a bit more delicate.

### **Q: Can I make them ahead?**

A: Absolutely. You can freeze the unfrosted logs. Slice and ice them the day you serve.

### **Q: What if I don't have raspberry jam?**

A: Any seedless jam will work. Apricot or strawberry are lovely choices.

### **Q: Can I make a half batch?**

A: You can. Just halve all the ingredients. The baking time will be the same.

### **Q: Any optional tips?**

A: A tiny pinch of cardamom in the dough is nice. \*Fun fact: This trick comes from my Swedish friend, Ingrid.\* **Which tip will you try first?**

## From My Kitchen to Yours

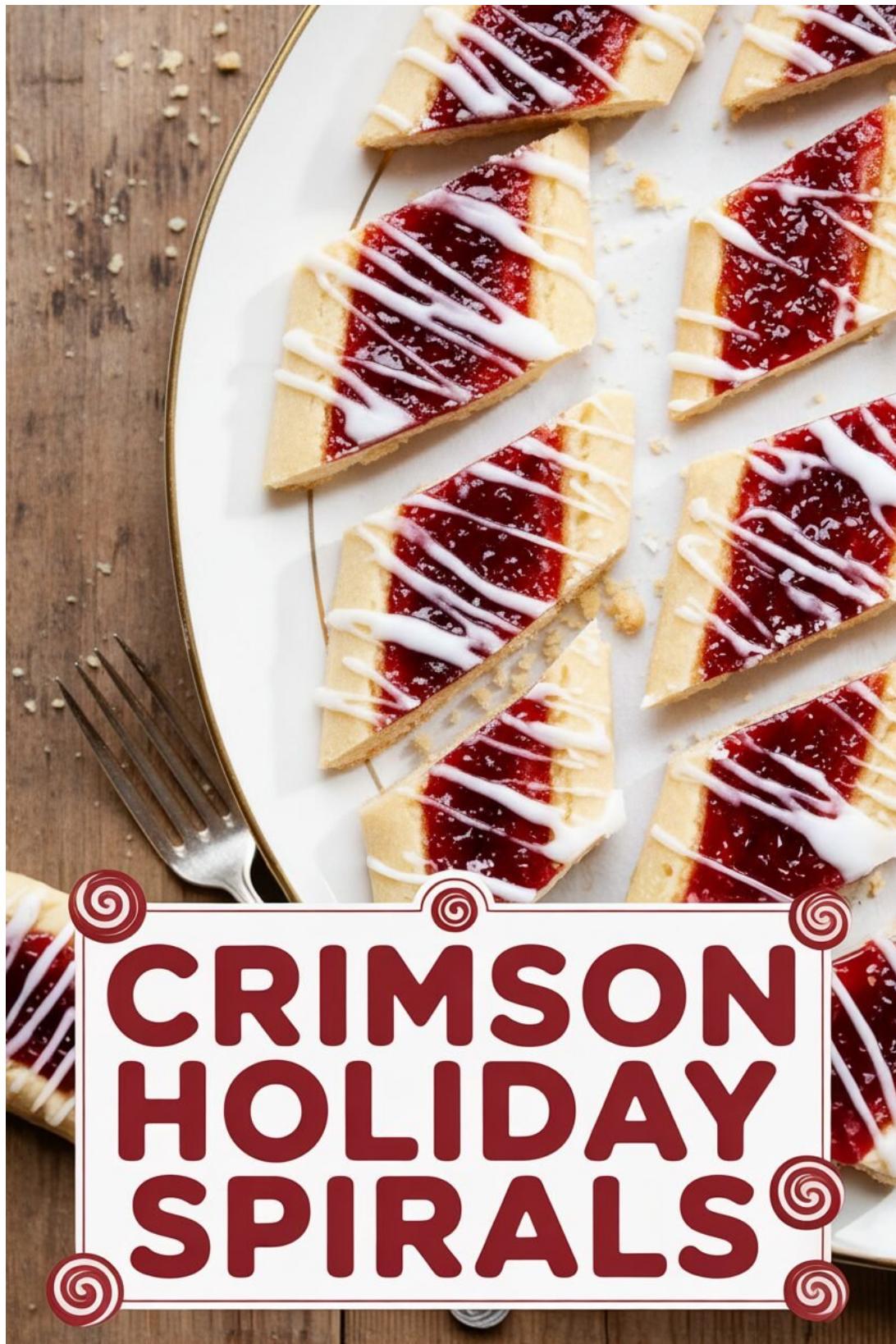
I hope you love making these pretty spirals. They always remind me of holiday ribbons. Baking is about sharing joy and creating memories. I would love to hear about your baking adventure.

Tell me all about it in the comments below. **Have you tried this recipe?** Share a picture if you can. I will be here, reading every one.



Crimson Holiday Spirals | 10

Happy cooking!  
—Elowen Thorn.





Crimson Holiday Spirals | 12

Crimson Holiday Spirals