

## Strategies Applied:

- You can roll out the dough and freeze logs of it. Thaw in the fridge overnight and proceed with the recipe.
- **Flour:** Last bought on sale for \$1.29 for 5 lb in February '12 – a surprise because flour is generally the cheapest right before a big Holiday, especially Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter. Prior to the February stock up, \$1.49 was the best price I'd seen around the previous Holidays. A five pound bag has 20 cups sifted and about 17 cups not sifted. (This is why many bakers sift or weigh their flour. I generally just stir well and lightly spoon into cup. (Some recipes will actually say to scoop the flour, in which case you should use that method.) One pound = 4 cups = \$.26 a pound, two cups are 13 cents.
- **Baking Items:** These amounts are all so small, we're talking pennies here. The baking soda is 1 cent for 1/2 teaspoon, while the powder is almost 2 cents, the salt less than a penny. Watch for coupons and sales on these items around the Holidays.
- **Butter:** On sale at any major Holiday, the lowest sales seem to be around Easter - I stocked up just this week for butter at \$1.49 a pound. The normal sale price in our area is \$1.99 a pound, regular price \$2.29 up to \$3.29.
- **Sugar:** Often on sale before any Holiday, especially at Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter. I'm not a heavy year round baker, so I try to stock up at these times. You'll especially see the smaller bags on sale. Last bought 10/11, 4 lb for \$1.69, 42 cents a pound. I look for prices of \$1.49 to \$1.69 per pound, on sale, and often with a manufacturer's coupon or a store coupon.
- **Eggs:** Often on sale during almost any Holiday that normally includes baking, especially Easter. I sometimes find coupons or specials giving discounts or free eggs when you buy other items. (Sausage is a good example.) Stock up when they're inexpensive because they last for weeks in the fridge. The date on the container is a 'buy' date, and you can expect them to last a good six weeks to two months at home past that date. Never store your eggs in the door; they keep best in a colder part of the refrigerator, in their own box. Last bought for \$1.49 a package on a store coupon sale (and yes, I went more than once to the store) these eggs cost 25 cents.
- **Vanilla:** Believe it or not, liquor is often cheaper than vanilla, but there is a strategy to buying vanilla less expense: for the past few years McCormick has had great coupons combined with Catalina offers (buy so many, get a coupon back to get so much money off your next grocery purchase, always in the Spring.) Check your coupon matching sites weekly so you don't miss this - it's often unadvertised. Your store will likely have the best sales, then, too. I never thought of Vanilla as being seasonal before...but now I get free Vanilla if I buy several smaller packages - I just keep putting it my larger bottle. I never have enough to get me through, though, all year long...I'll count it as about 20 cents.
- **Chocolate:** Last bought Nestle's chocolate chips for \$1.99 for the 12 oz bag in 10/11, then right before Easter, 2012 for \$1.25 a bag with a coupon. I like to keep a small box in my cupboard with my baking supplies, chocolates, extracts, baking powder and soda so it's always within

reach and I'm not shuffling bottles, bags and boxes every time I want something. I generally put an extra set of measuring spoons and a spatula in there, too. I call it my "kit." Watch for big sales on chocolate and chocolate chips starting a bit before Thanksgiving and continuing through Christmas, and again right before Easter. You can generally count on a 12 to 18 month shelf life on supermarket chocolate, perhaps even longer if stored properly. Now and then you'll see a "bloom" on chocolate. This affects the texture and mouthfeel of the chocolate – it's still safe to use, but not at its premium. I'll estimate the total on the chocolate, because I'm not exactly sure how much my last baking chocolate was. I'm guessing 36 cents a square and 32 cents for a total of 68 cents.

- **Nuts:** For me, these are really a freezer item – I bag them in a Ziploc to keep them as fresh as possible. The big brands have coupons, especially around Thanksgiving and Christmas, and the best sales seem to coincide with these times. Watch your prices here carefully when shopping for nuts, it really can be worthwhile to bring along your calculator. They'll likely be nuts in three different places in your store, perhaps four: The health aisle, the bulk bins/produce aisle, the baking aisle and the snack aisle. You'll find them priced by pounds and ounces and in different package sizes, so in order to find the best deal, you'll have to be great at figuring in your head if you don't have the calculator on hand. Their price alone may seem like a bit of a splurge, but I'm making a real effort to include more nuts in my diet – they are highly recommended for a healthy diet. I actually didn't use any nuts this time, but had I done so, I would have grabbed the hazelnuts from Aldi out of my freezer - cost would have been about \$.75