



EDITOR'S PICK

LET'S EAT

Take that cookie and stuff it: Como adds candy, doughnuts to the dough

By Victoria Davis, Special to the Cap Times Oct 17, 2021

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Annaliese Hermanson, owner of Como Cookie Co., takes a bite of her Funfetti Frosted cookie at her Fitchburg apartment.

RUTHIE HAUGE



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It's not every day that a personal trainer encourages their clients to eat an 8-ounce cookie. No, not an 8-ounce bag of cookies. A half pound, soft and sugary cookie, filled with Oreos, cake or doughnuts.

Como Cookie Company owner Annaliese ("Annie") Hermanson believes that those dedicated to pursuing a healthier lifestyle can have a great relationship with food, specifically her own sweet and crumbly creations.

"Balance is a big focus for the way I coach," said Hermanson. "I'm not just a fitness coach. I do mindset work, and work with people who have struggled with any sort of disordered eating in the past. ... You can literally have your life revolve around the gym and still eat giant-ass cookies, if you want to."

Hermanson is a bodybuilder and learned to bake from her mom, who owned a catering company when Hermanson was young. She has always been the one to bring snacks and treats to parties and hangouts. A friend suggested she take her passion for baking and turn it into a business.

"Two or three years ago, I was on my way to hang out with some friends and I was making chocolate chip cookies," Hermanson said. "I had some leftover Oreos and I had that moment of, 'Oh, I'll just put an Oreo inside of these cookies. See if it works.' And people really liked it."

In March of 2020, Hermanson began applying for licenses and permits to sell her extraordinary cookies, which range from fudge brownie cookies with a candy core to funfetti sugar cookies with doughnut centers.

“That’s the first really big one I made, where I put a doughnut in the middle, and it’s now a favorite,” said Hermanson. “I brought them to a party and people were like, ‘Holy crap. These are awesome.’”



Como Cookie Company's Funfetti Frosted cookie is made with sprinkled sugar cookie dough and stuffed with a doughnut.

RUTHIE HAUGE

That was also the reaction she received when she began selling at the Verona Downtown Farmers Market the following summer. Her cookies, ranging from 8 ounces to a pound, gained quick traction. It wasn’t long before Como Cookie Co. started renting a kitchen space and shipping all over the country, filling orders from Ohio, Texas and California.

“It was a lot more than I thought it would be, that's for sure,” said Hermanson. “But I've loved it a lot. I've learned so much about how running a business works.”

Simultaneously with her monstrous munchies, Hermanson's personal training business also took off about six months ago. She had to pull in the reins on Como Cookie's momentum, and until recently, she had time only for private orders rather than large shipments.

"We're coming back, and I'm hoping to get into FEED Kitchens in the next couple of weeks," said Hermanson, who is "priming Como for our launch as a full-time cookie company with nationwide shipping and regular cookie inventory, which will take effect Nov. 1."

Until then, Hermanson is open for email and **Instagram DM orders**. She's continued to advertise her "custom and novelty" cookies on social media with seasonal flavors, such as "Fall-Mond Spice" — pumpkin spice brown sugar dough filled with pumpkin spice wafer cookies, white chocolate chips, almonds and a sprinkled cake center.



Annaliese Hermanson pulls apart a Better than Bonfire cookie, the cookie version of a s'more, at her Fitchburg apartment. Hermanson owns Como Cookie Co., which introduces new cookie flavors each month.

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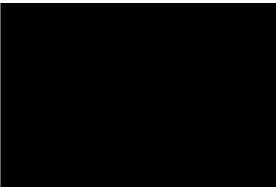
By Victoria Davis | Special to the Cap Times

Flavor of the month

Como Cookie Co. offers new flavors every month. Recent examples include the Funfetti Frosted sprinkled sugar cookie, Pumpkin Caramel Praline, “Better than Bonfire” s’mores-filled cookie and “Mega 1lb Parent Trap” with a peanut butter Oreo middle. Como Cookie never offers the same flavors twice except, in rare cases, by popular demand.

That was the case with her Christmas special, Sugar Cookie Crunch with M&Ms, white chocolate-covered pretzels and a melty, white chocolate core. Customers can also request their own custom-made cookies.

“For our custom order option, we can do pretty much anything that you can come up with,” said Hermanson. “Typically, I have people choose a dough flavor, two or three things to mix into it, and then some sort of a core, like if they've got some sort of favorite dessert.”



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By Victoria Davis

“I had one lady a couple weeks ago say, ‘I really like German chocolate cake. Can you do something like that?’ And that was pretty much my prompt. I made a chocolate cookie with a bunch of mix-ins and then like a German chocolate cake filling.”

Hermanson said she loves the process of putting new flavors together. “When we start working at full capacity again, we're going to have new flavors that stick around for about a week at a time.”

Customers can order a single 8 ounce cookie for \$6, a 4-pack for \$24, or a single 1-pound “Mega Cookie” for \$15. Hermanson hinted that an upcoming flavor will be based on Muddy Buddies, also known as Puppy Chow (usually made with Chex Mix cereal, chocolate, peanut butter and powdered sugar).

Hermanson knows her cookies are “ridiculous and huge.” Some of her most loyal customers are also personal training clients. The HQ Madison gym is a pickup location for her cookies.

“These are both big passions of mine and they play off each other really well,” Hermanson said. “It’s a fun first-session conversation. The gym doesn't have to be every single ounce of your life and you don't have to feel scared of a cookie every now and then.”

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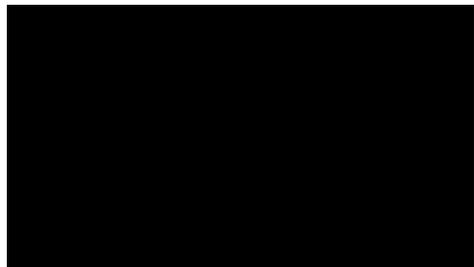
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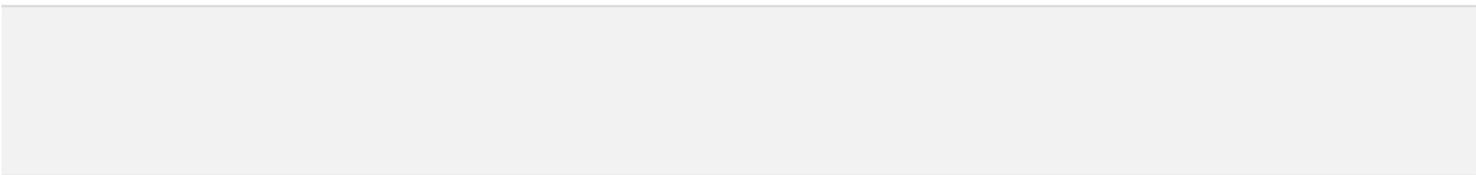
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