*Cookie Story:* Our family would not be here if it weren’t for cookies. Back when Oma was dating Opa in high school, she used to make him chocolate chip cookies to show how smitten she was with him. Turned out his love language was/is cookies and the rest is history. (And she still makes him chocolate chip cookies frequently!) This year we wanted to honor Oma and Opa and come up with a holiday chocolate chip cookie. One of Oma’s favorite holiday cookies is a fruitcake bar, so we took some elements of a fruit cake bar (orange zest, dried fruit/cranberries, pumpkin seeds) and melded them with a chocolate chip cookie to come up with this:

**Oma and Opa’s Holiday Chocolate Chip Shortbread Cookies**

**By Luca Chickadel**

Makes about 100 cookies

*Ingredients:*

300 g unsalted butter, softened

120 g powdered sugar

Zest of 2 medium oranges

456 g of cookie base (2/5 of 1 bag of energy cookie base)

110 g dried cranberries, roughly chopped

70 g unsalted pumpkin seeds

110 g mini chocolate chips

organic cane sugar, granulated, for sprinkling on top

*Instructions:*

Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit.

Line baking sheets with parchment paper.

1. Wash and dry oranges, then zest them. Roughly chop cranberries. Set aside.
2. In a large bowl, cream together unsalted butter and powdered sugar.
3. Add the zest of 2 oranges to the sugar mixture.
4. With beaters (or stand mixer) on low setting, mix in cookie base.
5. Fold in chopped cranberries, pumpkin seeds and mini chocolate chips
6. Turn the dough onto a sheet of waxed paper or parchment paper and divide into two sections to make it easier to work with. Gather each dough section and lightly press together into two dough balls.
7. Between two sheets of waxed paper or parchment paper, roll out each section of dough until it is approximately ¼ inch thick, about an 8x 10 rectangle. Dough wll be soft. If it is too soft, refrigerate it for 30 minutes or so.
8. Cut the dough into about 1 ¼ inch square cookies.
9. Gather ragged edges and reroll them to ¼ inch thick to then trim more 1 ¼ inch squares.
10. Place the squares onto a parchment lined baking sheet, spaced apart at least one inch.
11. Sprinkle each cookie square with about 1/8 teaspoon of granulated sugar.
12. Bake 8-9 minutes. Watch for slight browning to begin and take them out.
13. COOL COMPLETELY ON THE BAKING SHEET.