

A Baker's Guide to Chocolate

A Collection of Recipes and Useful Information



A Prepared Pantry Publication

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- Pure Dark (Semisweet) Chocolate Chips
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- White Chocolate Wafers
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Some products may not be available during warm summer months.

A Baker's Guide to Chocolate

What's the difference between bittersweet chocolate and semisweet chocolate? Can I use Dutch cocoa in all my recipes calling for cocoa? Understanding the difference in chocolate and how they are used is essential to baking. In this guide, we'll identify the characteristics of those chocolates used in baking.



Cocoa is the dry chocolate powder derived from chocolate liquor. It comes in two types: natural and Dutch process. Dutch processed cocoa is processed with an alkaline. It is slightly darker, smoother, and more easily dissolved than natural cocoa. In many recipes, natural cocoa and Dutch cocoa are not interchangeable. Natural cocoa is slightly acidic and will therefore chemically react with baking soda to create carbon dioxide bubbles and some leavening power. Dutch cocoa is slightly alkaline, will not react with baking soda, and must rely on baking powder for leavening.

Bitter (unsweetened) baking chocolate is made from pure chocolate liquor. By specification, it must contain 50 to 58 percent cocoa butter though with inferior products, vegetable oil may be added. Depending on the producer, milk solids, vanilla, or salt may be added. I have a package in front of me that contains only chocolate and milk solids. Unsweetened chocolate has a bitter taste and relies on sweeteners in the recipe to make it palatable.

Sweet baking chocolate--bittersweet, semisweet chocolate--has sugar added. These products must contain 35 to 50% cocoa butter but may have as little as 15% chocolate liquor. Because unsweetened chocolate has twice the chocolate liquor, we prefer to use unsweetened chocolate in most of our baking.

Bittersweet and semisweet chocolate can be used interchangeably in recipes though there is a difference in flavor. Often, bittersweet is a more expensive chocolate and to many, a better, richer-flavored chocolate.

Milk chocolate is made with ten percent chocolate liquor. It contains a minimum of twelve percent milk solids. Because it has such a low percentage of chocolate liquor, rarely is it melted and added to batter or dough.

White chocolate contains no chocolate liquor but is made with cocoa butter. Historically, the FDA has not regulated the manufacture of white chocolate so you need to read labels carefully. If the product was made with vegetable oil instead of cocoa butter, it will not perform the same as a product with cocoa butter.

Chocolate chips are made with chocolate liquor with only minimal amounts of cocoa butter. Instead, they are made with vegetable oil and stabilizers to help them hold their

shape. Without the cocoa butter, chocolate chips have a different taste and mouth feel. Chocolate chips will have a firmer set in puddings, pie fillings, and sauces than baking chocolate. Chocolate chips can be purchased in milk chocolate and semi-sweet chocolate.

Tips for Great Brownies

1. What's the best way to melt butter and chocolate together? We like to use the microwave. With many recipes, you can melt the chocolate and butter in the mixing bowl and have a one-bowl recipe. Melt the butter first. Chop the chocolate into bits and add that to the melted butter. Stir gently. If the chocolate is not entirely melted, heat again.

2. Why is the consistency of my batter different each time I make my favorite recipe? It could be the heat of the melted butter and chocolate mixture. The warmer the melted butter and chocolate mixture, the thinner the batter.

3. Can I leave the nuts out of my brownie recipe? Yes but the texture of the brownies will be different. Without the nuts, the brownies will be much denser.

4. How do I make my brownies less cake-like and more dense and moist? Try reducing the flour by one-third. It's all that butter, eggs, and sugar compared to a relatively small proportion of flour that makes brownies dense. Brownies seem to be very forgiving and allow for experimentation.

5. How do I tell when my brownies are done? The appearance of the brownies in the pan will change with a dryer, less-glossy look. The brownies will be firmer. Most cookbooks tell you to stick a knife or a toothpick in the center of the cake. If it is cake-like and done, it will come out clean. A dense brownie will still have some moist crumbs sticking to the toothpick when it is done. Brownies over baked for even a couple minutes will be much drier.

6. Will my brownies continue to bake in the pan? Yes. Heavy glass pans retain heat better and will cause brownies to continue cooking longer. You can always pull the pan out just a few minutes early.

7. Will the type of pan that I use affect baking times? Yes. Baking times is one of the great variables in baking. The pan as well as the oven, the shelf location, and the ingredients, affect baking times. Check your baked goods at least five minutes before the allotted time. Dark pans tend to bake quicker than light pans. A silver pan may take much longer to bake.

8. Can I drizzle chocolate over my brownies? Yes. Carefully melt the chocolate over a double boiler or in the microwave with one teaspoon of shortening added for each three ounces of chocolate or 1/2 cup of chips. The shortening will help the chocolate set up.

9. How do you prepare the pan for brownies? We usually line our pan with parchment paper or foil. Here's how you do it: Lightly grease the pan with butter or shortening, then line the pan with parchment paper or foil. The butter or shortening will hold the paper in place. Make certain that the paper protrudes up the sides of the pan. After the brownies

are baked and have partially cooled, grab the edges of the paper and lift the cake to a cutting board. Cut the cake into nice, neat squares on the cutting board using a ruler.

10. Do you like your brownies extra chewy? Try using bread flour instead of all-purpose flour. Bread flour has a higher gluten content than does all-purpose. Gluten creates the chewy texture that we find in good bread and will make your brownies chewier. Be sure and mix your brownie batter for several minutes to develop the gluten strands.

11. Measure your flour properly. Carefully spoon the flour into your measure. If you did and scoop, you will pack the flour and the brownies will turn out more cake-like.

12. Can I double my batch? Certainly. A recipe calling for an 8 x 8-inch pan can be doubled and baked in a 9 x 13-inch pan. A recipe calling for 9 x 13-inch pan can be doubled and baked in half-sheet pan, 12 x 18-inches. If you take a recipe that calls for a 9 x 13-inch pan and multiple it by 1.5, you can use a 10 x15-inch pan.

13. How long do I need to let my brownies cool? On a wire rack in the kitchen, they should cool for four or five hours. We cheat and often put them in the refrigerator after a half hour. We've even been known to put them in the freezing compartment for a half hour. The brownies should be completely cooled before cutting or trying to lift the cake from the pan.

14. How do you make nice, clean cuts when cutting brownies? We usually trim the edges so that the cookies will be uniform. Use a sharp knife and wipe the blade with a damp cloth after each cut.

15. How do you store brownies? For short-term storage, layer them between wax paper or parchment sheets inside of a container with a tight-fitting lid. You can store your brownies this way for up to five days. For longer-term storage, freeze them. Wrap them individually in plastic wrap and put them in a heavy plastic bag. They will last for several months.

A Father and Son's Secrets to Great Chocolate Chip Cookies

My father lives high on a ridge overlooking the Tanana Valley and the town of Fairbanks, Alaska. On a clear day, he can see across the mountain ranges to the massive mountain, Denali. He takes care of my sweet mother who is confined to a wheelchair. And he bakes.

Fluffy white snow piles up under the eaves beginning in late September and lasting until late April. The thermometer can drop to forty below though usually, with temperature inversions, it's much colder in the valley than on the ridge. The deeper the snow and the colder the temperatures, the more inviting baking is. He bakes bread and he bakes cookies—cookies for friends, for family that stops in regularly, and for the grandkids.

He makes great cookies. He uses worn-out recipes that my mother perfected decades ago, like a boiled raisin and applesauce cookie. He makes oatmeal drop cookies and lots of chocolate chippers. His cookies are softer and better than most. If you ask him what his secret is, he'll tell you: "Always under bake them." He gets his cookies out of the oven just a bit before they look done. They continue to cook on the hot sheet before he can remove them to a wire rack. And after they have cooled, they always seem to be just right. If you bake them until they look done you're likely to have dry, crusty cookies.

I've been making cookies since my mother gave me a cookbook for my eighth birthday, but still, there's not much that I can add to my Dad's expertise. But I've discovered great chocolate. The best chippers can only be made with the best chocolate. Buy the best chocolate you can find and afford. There is an amazing difference in chocolates, not just the major brands but the expensive brands as well. Do your own taste tests to find the best. If your chocolate doesn't taste very good or if it is bitter, if it's waxy or grainy, if it doesn't have the right "mouth-feel" so that it melts in your mouth, if it's not intense, then it's not right for cookies. The cookie should showcase the chocolate, not mask mediocre chocolate.

Start with a good recipe. Use only the best chocolate. Don't over bake your cookies. Chances are, you'll have great chocolate chip cookies.

Drizzle a Little Chocolate

It's really easy to drizzle a little chocolate (or frosting) on your cookies, cakes, or pastries. Here's how: Place 1/2 cup chocolate wafers (you can use chips) in a small heavy-duty plastic bag. Microwave the bag and the wafers for 40 seconds on high heat. Knead the wafers to mix the melted chips through those that are not melted. Microwave again for 10 to 15 seconds or until the wafers are completely melted.



Cut a tiny corner from the plastic bag and squeeze a narrow stream of chocolate through the cut corner. You'll quickly get the knack and be able to create decorative patterns of your choice. You can use the same technique with frosting.

Frequently Asked Questions about Chocolate

What is bloom and does it hurt the chocolate?

Bloom is that white frosted look that chocolate sometimes gets in storage. It is bits of cocoa butter on the surface of the chocolate that is often caused by

temperature fluctuations in storage or transit. For baking purposes, the chocolate is unaffected.

Can I substitute chocolate chips for baker's chocolate in a recipe?

Unsweetened baking chocolate is much too intense to be used interchangeably with chocolate chips, even semisweet chips.

It is true that melted semisweet chocolate chips will have a little different flavor and intensity than melted semisweet baking chocolate but in our experience, you can substitute the chips for the chocolate. Use 1/3 cup of unmelted chocolate chips as a substitute for two ounces of baking chocolate.

What makes good chocolate, good?

Chocolate is a proprietary product with each producer having its own process usually shrouded with secrecy. Accordingly, there is a great deal of difference in brands with the better quality brands usually offering better chocolates. Try different chocolates to find the ones that you love.

Cocoa butter is critical to good chocolate. Usually, you'll want to avoid any chocolate product that has added fat, usually listed on the label as hydrogenated fat. That means that they are substituting vegetable fat for the cocoa butter. While other fat is sometimes added to coating chocolates to alter handling characteristics, you'll be happier with a pure product in your baking.

Is white chocolate really chocolate?

That depends on the product and your definition of chocolate. The FDA does not recognize or regulate the term "white chocolate" as it does other chocolate products. White chocolate does not contain cocoa solids. It should contain cocoa butter along with sugar, flavors, and milk solids. Be aware of lesser products that do not use cocoa butter. Even more so than in dark chocolate, there is a great difference in quality in those products labeled white chocolate or vanilla chips.

How to Make Chocolate Covered Caramel Apples

Caramel apples are a special treat and a fabulous gift. They are not hard. All you need is some good quality apples, caramels, and some great chocolate. With just a little practice, you can make some gorgeous apples. The ones in the pictures were dipped in caramel, then chocolate, and drizzled with almond bark. But use your imagination. How about caramel apples rolled in cinnamon candy bits or chopped pecans?



What you'll need

- Individually wrapped caramels
- Apples
- [Chocolate for coating](#) (Available at The Prepared Pantry.)
- [Craft Sticks](#) (Available at The Prepared Pantry.)
- Almond bark or white chocolate (optional)
- Nuts, candies, or sprinkles (optional)

Directions

If you use store-bought caramels, the little square kind that come individually wrapped, it's easy to make gorgeous caramel apples. Here's how

Use about 14-16 ounces (or 1 lb) of individually wrapped square caramels for 5 large or 6 medium-sized apples. Add 2 tablespoons of water to the melting caramels.

1. Choose the best apples that you can find. They should be free from bruises and firm. Tart apples contrast with the candy coating well. We prefer smaller granny smith apples. It makes for a better serving size. Remove the stem of the apples by twisting and pulling or by cutting with a sharp scissors. Press [craft sticks](#) for handles into the stem end of the apples.

Dry the apples completely. If the apples are damp the caramel will not stick to the apples.

Place buttered or oiled waxed paper on a cookie sheet or several large plates. Set aside.

Melt the caramels over very low heat, stirring occasionally as they soften.

While holding the pan to its side to make the caramel deeper, twist the apples through the caramel. By grasping the sticks, you can roll the apples on an angle so that the caramel

does not need to be deep enough to immerse the apples. Let the excess caramel drip off of the apple. Scrape the caramel off of the bottom of the apple. More caramel will drip down the apple as it sits. Set them vertically on the waxed paper to cool.

2. Melt enough chocolate to twist the caramel covered apples through the chocolate. Use the very best chocolate that you can buy. You can buy [melting wafers](#) specifically made for candy coatings. (Avoid those melting chocolates designed for thin, hard coatings.) When the chocolate is melted, dip the caramel coated apples. Again, set on waxed paper to cool or roll the coated apples through chopped nuts or crushed candies.

Once cool, consider melting white chocolate or almond bark and drizzling the white chocolate over the apples in an attractive manner.

Notes:

Don't cook either the caramel or chocolate coating. Cooking will change the consistency; it only needs to melt.

If the coating seems too thin, it's too hot. Remove the pan from the heat and let it cool.

If the coating is not adhering properly to the apple, it is too cool. Heat the topping further.

The coatings will set up faster in the refrigerator.

Once cool, the apples can be placed in individual plastic bags and a ribbon tied around the stick.

They do not have to be refrigerated unless you would prefer to do so. If refrigerated the apple itself will be cold, but it may make the coatings harder than desired.

Chocolate Chip Pumpkin Muffins

Hanna in Production told us that her favorite cookies were moist Chocolate Chip Pumpkin Cookies. We made them. They are good. (You can find the recipe in The Baker's Library on our site.)

Why not chocolate chip pumpkin muffins? These are really good. (We usually send goodies from the test kitchen home with employees. Allison in Production said that her husband went nuts over these muffins.)



Pumpkin makes baked goods very moist and scrumptious. And of course, chocolate makes everything better. This medium-sweet muffin is great for brunch or as an after school treat. Because it has pumpkin and part whole wheat flour, it is better for the kids (of all ages) than most.

Ingredients

- 1 1/3 cups all-purpose flour
- 3/4 cup whole wheat flour
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon cloves
- 1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
- 3 large eggs
- 1 cup canned pumpkin
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 3/4 cup brown sugar
- 3/4 cup chocolate chips
- turbinado sugar for topping

Directions

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees. Grease 1 regular-sized 12-muffin tin.

In a large bowl, stir together the flour, salt, baking powder, cinnamon, cloves, and nutmeg.

In another bowl, stir together the eggs, pumpkin, vegetable oil, extract, and brown sugar until smooth.

Form a well in the dry ingredients and pour in the liquid mixture. Stir to combine. (Do not over-stir. Some lumps are acceptable.) Fold in the chocolate chips.

Spoon the batter into muffin tin. Sprinkle the turbinado sugar over the muffins. Quickly place the muffins in the oven and reduce the heat to 375 degrees. Let bake for 12 to 15 minutes or until the tops are lightly browned and a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Let cool for a few minutes and then remove the muffins from the pan to a rack to cool.

Baker's note: *Baking times will vary depending on how well your oven holds the heat. The high creates a burst of steam in the batter that helps the muffins rise with well-domed tops.*

Banana Chocolate Chocolate Chip Muffins

This muffin is scrumptious, one of our favorite chocolate muffins. The bananas give it a tender moistness and the nuts and chocolate chips are just right. This may be a little indulgent for breakfast but we're sure they won't go to waste.

Yes, this muffin is as good as it sounds---a chocolate muffin with chocolate chips and walnuts with the added flavor and moistness of ripe bananas. This is a great mid-morning snack. It's a fairly sweet muffin but not as sweet as a cookie or cake and still maintains its muffin character. Keep this recipe.

Ingredients

1 3/4 cups all-purpose flour
1/4 cup cocoa
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 tablespoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon baking soda

2 large eggs
1/4 cup vegetable oil
1/3 brown sugar
2/3 cup sour cream
2 tablespoons milk
1 cup ripe bananas, mashed (about two smaller bananas)
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1/2 cup walnuts, chopped
2/3 cup semisweet chocolate chips

Directions



Preheat the oven to 425 degrees.

In a medium bowl, mix the flour, cocoa, salt, baking powder, and baking soda.

In another bowl, mash the bananas. Whisk two large eggs and add those to the bananas. Add the oil, milk, brown sugar, and sour cream. Blend well. Stir in the nuts and chocolate chips.

With a spatula, mix the dry ingredients into the liquid mixture. Stir until just combined. Spoon the batter into 10 to 12 well-greased muffin tins. Ten muffins will give you large, nicely-domed muffins. Fill any unused muffins cups half full of water.

Bake for eight minutes at 425 degrees. Reduce the temperature to 350 degrees and continue baking for another 6 to 10 minutes or until they test done with a toothpick. Let the muffins sit in the tins for a few minutes and then remove them to wire racks to cool.

Bakers note: *The burst of heat in the initial high temperature helps dome the muffins.*

Cranberry Chocolate Chip Cookies

A while back, we had dried cranberries (or craisins) dipped in rich chocolate. They were scrumptious. We set about to create the same flavors in a chocolate chip cookie. We added some nuts to the recipe just for good measure and ended up with a real treat that wasn't quite so decadent. This recipe belongs in your kitchen. These cookies are very good.



Ingredients

2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
1/2 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 cup granulated sugar
1/2 cup brown sugar
1 cup (2 sticks) butter
2 large eggs
1/2 teaspoon almond extract
1 cup dried cranberries
1 1/2 cups semisweet chocolate chips
1 cup chopped nuts

Note: We prefer our super cranberries, cold-processed with more juice and less sweeteners but you may use any that you have available.

Directions

Preheat to 375 degrees

In a medium bowl, mix together the flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt until well dispersed.

Cream the sugars and butter together. Add the eggs, one at a time, beating after each addition. Beat the mixture until light and creamy. Add the extract.

Add the dry ingredients to the creamed ingredients, mixing until combined. Add the cranberries, chips, and nuts.

Drop heaping teaspoons two inches apart on an ungreased sheet. Bake for 9 to 10 minutes. Cool on a wire rack.

Sweet Chocolate Braided Bread

While challah is a traditional bread baked for the Jewish Sabbath, it has become popular with everyone, everywhere. It's attractive and has a firm, egg-rich texture that works for dinner, sandwiches, or French toast. It is typically braided with three, four, or six strands of dough. (The braided strands are symbolic of love.)



Challah is really very easy to make. There is a sense of satisfaction in working the dough by hand and crafting such an attractive bread and it certainly will impress your guests.

In this version, we added chocolate for the dough and a chocolate cream cheese filling and then we drizzled the bread with a chocolate cream cheese glaze. It may not be real challah but it is absolutely scrumptious—maybe our best chocolate bread ever.

Sweet Chocolate Braided Bread Recipe

(Braiding bread is not complicated; it just looks impressive. To see illustrations for braiding bread, check out the next article.)

This recipe can be doubled.

Ingredients

3 to 3 1/2 cups bread flour
1 packet instant active dry yeast
3/4 cup water, heated to 110 degrees
1/3 cup brown sugar
1/3 cup cocoa
4 tablespoons butter
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 large egg at room temperature

For the filling

5 ounces cream cheese
1 ounce semi-sweet baking chocolate, melted
3 tablespoons granulated sugar
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1 egg yolk
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/8 teaspoon nutmeg

Chocolate glaze directions follows.

Directions

Mix about one cup of the flour, the yeast, and the heated water until smooth. This will hydrate the instant yeast. If you are using other than instant yeast, hydrate the yeast separately.

Add the brown sugar, cocoa, butter, salt, and egg and mix. Add enough of the remaining bread flour to make a soft but not tacky dough. Knead until the gluten is developed, about four minutes with a stand-type mixer at medium speed. Set the dough in a greased bowl, cover, and let it stand until doubled, about one hour.

To make the filling, beat the cream cheese until soft and smooth. Add the melted chocolate while it is still hot and mix until smooth. Add the sugar, flour, egg yolk, vanilla, and nutmeg and mix until smooth.

Once the dough has risen, use a knife to divide the dough into three equal pieces. Roll the dough pieces with a rolling pin to rectangles 15 inches by 5 inches. Spread one-third of the filling down the center of each leaving a one-inch border with no filling. Roll the rectangle into fifteen-inch long ropes with the filling inside. Pinch any seams together and roll the ropes with your hands on the counter until smooth.

Braid the three ropes as if you were braiding pigtails. (Some people find it easier to create a symmetrical shape if they start braiding from the center.) When you get to the ends, wet them, pinch them together, and tuck them under. You should have a neat, symmetrical loaf when you are through. You can shape the loaf somewhat with your hands. If you don't like how the loaf looks, simply pull the braids apart and start again. Prepare a large baking sheet by greasing it and sprinkling it with cornmeal. Place the loaf on the pan, cover the loaf, and let it rise until doubled, about one hour.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Bake the bread for 20 minutes then cover the bread with a large sheet of aluminum foil and bake for another ten to fifteen minutes to until done. The bread should “thump” when tapped on the bottom and the interior of the loaf should register 190 degrees with an insta-read thermometer. Let the bread cool on a wire rack.

While the bread is cooling, make the glaze. With a hand-held mixer, beat one ounce cream cheese with one teaspoon vanilla. Add 1 1/2 cups powdered sugar and 2 tablespoons cocoa with enough warm water to make a glaze of drizzling consistency. Drizzle the chocolate glaze generously over the bread.

Baker's notes: To quickly bring an egg to room temperature, place it in a cup of warm water.

How to Braid Bread (Challah)

While challah is a traditional bread baked for the Jewish Sabbath, it has become popular with everyone, everywhere. It's attractive and has a firm, egg-rich texture that works for dinner, sandwiches, or French toast. It is typically braided with three, four, or six strands of dough. (The braided strands are symbolic of love.)



Challah is really very easy to make, especially from a mix. There is a sense of satisfaction in working the dough by hand and crafting such an attractive bread and it certainly will impress guests.

You may use a mix or the recipe of your choice. Mix the bread according to the recipe or package instructions. Since you will be handling the dough, you should have a slightly firmer dough than most doughs.

Place the bread dough in a greased bowl, cover, and let rise until doubled—about 1 1/2 hours.

Prepare a large baking sheet by greasing and sprinkling with cornmeal. Use a lighter colored sheet to help keep the bottom from burning.



Once raised, use a knife to divide the dough into three equal pieces (or four if you choose to make a four-braid bread). Roll the pieces under the palms of your hands into three long ropes as shown. You may need to let each rest for five to ten minutes to allow the dough to relax to get the proper shape. Using this mix, you should have three ropes nearly 24-inches long. If you want the loaf to be larger in the center and less rectangular shaped, make the ropes thicker in the middle and tapered toward the ends.

Braid the three ropes as shown in a common three strand braid just as if you were braiding pigtails. (Some people find it easier to create a symmetrical shape if they start braiding from the center.) When you get to the ends, wet them, pinch them together, and tuck them under. You should have a neat, symmetrical loaf when you are through. You can shape the loaf somewhat with your hands. If you don't like how the loaf looks, simply pull the braids apart and start again.

Place the finished loaf on the prepared sheet. (The formed loaf will be about 12-inches long but after rising and baking, you will have a finished loaf of about 24-inches so be sure to allow room on your sheet for expansion.) Cover the loaf and let rise until doubled, about one hour.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

Prepare a glaze by whisking one egg with one-half tablespoon of water. Just before baking and when the loaf has fully doubled, remove the plastic wrap and gently brush glaze over the entire surface of the loaf. Sprinkle the top with poppy seeds or sesame seeds as desired. (Tip the loaf so that you can sprinkle seeds on the sides as well.)



Bake the bread for 20 minutes then cover the bread with a large sheet of aluminum foil to protect the top. Continue baking for another 20 to 30 minutes or until the bread crust is a deep golden brown. The interior of the loaf should register 190 degrees with an insta-read thermometer.

Use an egg turner to loosen the bread from the pan and transfer the loaf to a wire rack to cool.

Note: If you choose to bake two loaves, reduce the baking time by five to ten minutes.

Three-in-One Chocolate Chip Cookies

This recipe makes a dense blondie bar cookie or a chewy chocolate chip cookie. The difference is how you bake it. The recipe makes blondies that are chewy and moist or quality chocolate chip cookies in either a drop cookie or refrigerator cookie. The refrigerator cookie has a little different appearance and texture than does the drop cookie. It is thinner, more wafer-like, crisper, and more formal looking. Because the refrigerator cookie is sliced with many of the chips and nuts cut into smaller pieces, these cookies have a more formal, flecked appearance.



Which do we prefer? We love rich, moist bar cookies and these blondies are very good. But then, that's just our preference. To see another rich, moist bar cookie, check out Hermits in a Bar.

If you like, you can divide this recipe. Place about half of the dough in an 8 x 8-inch baking pan to make bar cookies and use the rest of the dough for drop or refrigerator cookies. This is an ideal solution for a smaller family: bake a half-batch of bar cookies now and refrigerator cookies several days later.

Blondie Chocolate Chip Cookies

Ingredients

1/2 cup butter
3/4 cup granulated sugar
1/4 teaspoon salt
2 large eggs

1/2 cup butter
3/4 cup brown sugar
1/2 tablespoon vanilla extract

2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
1/2 teaspoon baking soda

1 cup walnuts
1 cup milk chocolate or semi-sweet chocolate chips

Directions

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees

Cream 1/2 cup of the butter, sugar, and salt together. Add the eggs one at a time, beating after each. Beat until light and fluffy.

In a medium microwave-safe bowl, melt the second 1/2 cup of butter in the microwave until it is mostly melted, about 45 seconds at high power. Stir in the brown sugar to make a thick syrup. Stir in the vanilla extract.

Measure the flour by spooning it into the measuring cups. (If you scoop the flour from the bag, it will be packed and you will have too much flour.) Mix in the baking soda so that it is dispersed.

Beat the brown sugar mixture into the creamed sugar mixture. Add the flour mixture in two or three additions mixing only until combined. Add the chocolate chips and nuts.

Line an 8 1/2 x 13-inch baking pan with parchment paper or aluminum foil. If you use aluminum foil, press the foil into the pan with it extending from both ends of the pan. Grease the foil. Spread the batter in the pan. The dough is heavy and thick. Use a spatula to pat the dough down and distribute it evenly in the pan.

Bake for 24 to 28 minutes or until the top is golden brown. Remove the pan to cool on a wire rack. After the cookies have cooled for 45 minutes or so, remove the cookies from the pan by grasping the ends of the foil or parchment paper and lift from the pan. Remove the cookies to a cutting board and cut them into the desired sizes and shapes using a ruler to measure the cuts uniformly and a sharp, serrated knife to cut through the nuts cleanly.

Chocolate Chip Drop Cookies

Use the same recipe to make chocolate chip drop cookies. Instead of baking in a pan, drop rounded spoonfuls of dough on a greased baking sheet. Bake for nine to eleven minutes at 350 degrees. Remove the cookies to a wire rack to cool.

Chocolate Chip Refrigerator Cookies

Use the same recipe to make chocolate chip refrigerator cookies. Roll the dough into two logs in wax paper with the logs being about 1 3/4 inches in diameter. Refrigerate the logs for a couple hours. Slice the logs into 3/8-inch thick slices with a sharp, serrated knife. Place the slices on a greased baking sheet. Bake for ten to twelve minutes at 350 degrees. Remove the cookies to a wire rack to cool.

White Chocolate Chip and Macadamia Nut Cookie Recipe

Macadamia nut cookies are a classic especially for the holidays. Because macadamia nuts are rich, these are especially rich and scrumptious cookies. These cookies are easy to make.



Ingredients

1 cup (two cubes) butter
3/4 cup granulated sugar
1/2 cup brown sugar
1/4 teaspoon salt
2 large eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla

2 1/3 cups all purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking soda

1 cup white chocolate chips
1 1/3 cups macadamia nuts, about 6 ounces, coarsely chopped

Directions

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Lightly grease two baking sheets.

Cream together the butter, sugars, and salt. Add the eggs and vanilla and beat until smooth and light.

Stir the flour and baking soda together in another bowl. Add the flour mixture to the butter and sugar mixture and beat until combined.

Add the white chocolate chips and macadamia nuts. Place rounded mounds of dough about the size of walnuts on the prepared pans. Bake for ten minutes or until the edges of the cookies just begin to brown. Remove them to a wire rack to cool. Makes about four dozen cookies.

Baker's note: Be sure to use the best quality macadamia nuts and white chocolate available.

Serious Chocolate Chunk Cookies

When I was in Alaska, my friend Mike Larson made a wickedly good chocolate chip cookie in his chain of stores. It was his secret recipe. This is very close to Mike's cookie.

These are serious chocolate chunk cookies, one of the best recipes that we have found. These are rich and chocolaty. With so much chocolate in these cookies, be sure and use good quality chunks.



Ingredients

1 cup butter
3/4 cup granulated sugar
3/4 cup brown sugar
2 large eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

2 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt

1 cup chopped walnuts
2 cups pure dark chocolate chunks

Directions

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees.

Cream the butter and sugar together. Add the eggs one at time, beating after each. Add the vanilla. Beat until light and fluffy.

In another bowl, stir the flour, baking soda, and salt together. Add the flour mixture to the creamed mixture and beat until well-combined.

Add the walnuts and chocolate chunks. Spoon the dough into walnut-sized mounds onto ungreased cookie sheets.

Bake for 9 to 10 minutes or until the cookies are light brown. Remove them to a wire rack to cool.

Yield: four to five dozen cookies.

Butterscotch Chip Oat Cookies

These are thin, slightly crisp cookies that showcase the butterscotch chips well. The oats give them a wholesome substance and make them a little chewy.



Ingredients

1/2 cup butter
1/2 cup brown sugar
1/2 cup granulated sugar
1 large egg
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 tablespoon cold water

1 cup all-purpose flour
1 cup quick oats
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt

1 cup butterscotch chips

Directions

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

Cream the butter and sugars together. Add the egg and beat until light and fluffy. Add the vanilla and water.

In another bowl, stir the flour, oats, baking soda, baking powder, and salt together. Add the flour mixture to the creamed mixture and beat until well combined.

Add the butterscotch chips. Spoon the dough in walnut-sized mounds onto ungreased cookie sheets.

Bake for 9 minutes or until the cookies are light brown. Let them sit for a minute or two on the pan and then remove them to a wire rack to cool.

Yield: four to five dozen cookies.

Macadamia and Raspberry Chocolate Chip Cookies

These are scrumptious, crunchy little cookies. Any cookie with macadamia nuts is a good cookie but adding rich chocolate and raspberry jam makes a wonderful trio.

Use only the best ingredients: macadamia nuts, raspberry jam, and chocolate. We prefer seedless raspberry jam but seeded will do.



Ingredients

1/3 cup butter
1/3 cup brown sugar
1/3 cup granulated sugar
1 large egg
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2/3 cup raspberry jam

1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt

1 cup chopped macadamia nuts
1 1/2 cups pure dark chocolate (semisweet) chips

Directions

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

Cream the butter and sugars together. Add the egg and beat until light and fluffy. Add the vanilla and raspberry jam.

In another bowl, stir the flour, baking soda, and salt together. Add the flour mixture to the creamed mixture and beat until well combined.

Add the nuts and chocolate chips. Spoon the dough in walnut-sized mounds onto ungreased cookie sheets.

Bake for 9 minutes or until the cookies are light brown. Remove them to a wire rack to cool.

Yield: four to five dozen cookies.

Peanut Butter Sandwich Cookies with Ganache Filling

This is really a recipe for peanut butter yoyo cookies—thin peanut butter wafers sandwiched with a creamy chocolate filling. This recipe is bound to be a hit at your house. It's one of our favorite recipes.

For the very best cookies, use a quality chocolate though good quality chocolate chips will make a fine cookie.



Ingredients

1/2 cup butter
1/2 cup granulated sugar
1/2 cup brown sugar
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 large egg
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
3/4 cup peanut butter

1 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking soda

Directions

1. Cream the butter and sugars together with the paddle attachment of your mixer. Add the salt, egg, and vanilla and beat until smooth. Add the peanut butter and mix.
2. Add the flour and baking soda and beat until combined.
3. Refrigerate the dough for 20 minutes to firm up slightly.
4. Divide the dough into two portions. Using wax paper, roll each portion into logs 1 1/2-inches in diameter. Refrigerate for two hours or until firm.
5. Preheat the oven to 325 degrees. Cut cookies into slices just thicker than 1/4 inch. Place them on a greased baking sheet and bake 12 to 14 minutes or until the cookies just start to brown on the edges. Cool on a wire rack.

For the filling:

Mix 1/4 cup whipping cream, one tablespoons butter, and 2 tablespoons of light corn syrup in a heavy saucepan. Heat until it simmers. Remove the pan from the heat and immediately add six ounces of semisweet baking chocolate chopped into pieces. Stir until the chocolate is melted into a smooth sauce. The filling will thicken as it cools.

This can also be made with one cup of semisweet chocolate chips though the lack of cocoa butter in the chocolate chips will affect the flavor. If you use chocolate chips, increase the butter to two tablespoons.

Sugar Crusted Currant or Cranberry Scones

4 cups all purpose flour
1 1/2 tablespoons baking powder
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 cup sugar
3/4 teaspoon salt
2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
1 cup butter cut into pieces
3/4 to 1 cup currants or dried cranberries,
depending on taste
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 egg
2/3 cup half or half, condensed milk, or
buttermilk



For the Topping:

3 tablespoons butter, melted
1/2 cup sugar

1. Preheat the oven to 425 degrees. Grease a large baking sheet or cover it with parchment paper.
2. In a large bowl, stir together the flour, baking powder, baking soda, sugar, salt and cinnamon. Use a pastry knife to cut the butter into the dry ingredients and continue cutting until the mixture is coarse and uniform. Stir in the currants or cranberries.
3. In another bowl, stir together the vanilla extract, the egg, and the milk. Form a well in the dry ingredients and pour in the liquid mixture. Stir to combine then remove to a floured counter and knead until uniform. (Do not over-knead. Too much kneading will develop the gluten in the flour and make the scones tough.)
4. Divide the dough into two pieces and press each into 3/4 inch thick circles. Cut each circle into six wedges and place them on the prepared baking sheet. Melt the 3 tablespoons of butter and brush on the scone wedges. Sprinkle them with the sugar to cover.
5. Let bake for 15 to 18 minutes or until the tops are lightly browned. Remove to a rack to cool.

Chocolate Walnut Refrigerator Cookies

This is a good chocolate cookie recipe, one that everyone will like. As far as chocolate intensity goes, we would rate this cookie as “medium”—not overly chocolate and not light. Like many refrigerator cookie recipes, this one produces a light, crisp, yet tender cookie.

This is an extra large recipe. Refrigerate or freeze any dough that you don't use immediately. As with most cookies, it is important not to over bake these cookies.



Ingredients

3 3/4 cups all purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 cup butter
2 cups brown sugar
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 large eggs
3 ounces unsweetened chocolate
1 1/2 cups chopped walnuts

Directions

Measure the flour by scooping some into a bowl and then spooning the flour into the measuring cup. (If you measure packed flour, you will have too much.) Add the baking powder and baking soda and stir to combine.

Cream the butter, sugar, and salt together. Add the extract. Beat in the eggs until the mixture is light and fluffy. Melt and add the chocolate.

Add the flour mixture and the nuts. With the mixer or your hands, mix the dough into a single mass.

Divide the dough into three parts. Place each on sheets of waxed paper and roll the dough in the waxed paper into 1 3/4-inch diameter logs. Refrigerate the logs for at least two hours or until firm.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Remove one log from the refrigerator and cut it into slices a bit thicker than 1/4 inch. Put the slices on an ungreased baking sheet with room for expansion. Bake for 9 the cookies just begin to lose their glossy appearance. Repeat with the rest of the dough.

Double Chocolate Sandwich Cookies

We love ganache and these chocolate cookies pair perfectly with this rich, smooth chocolate. Be sure and use a good quality chocolate.

Ingredients

1/2 cup butter
1/2 cup granulated sugar
1/2 cup brown sugar
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 large egg
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
3/4 cup pure dark chocolate chips or semisweet chips
1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
3 tablespoons cocoa powder
1 teaspoon baking soda



Directions

1. Cream the butter and sugars together with the paddle attachment of your mixer. Add the salt, egg, and vanilla and beat until smooth. Add the peanut butter and mix.
2. Add the flour, cocoa, and baking soda and beat until combined.
3. Refrigerate the dough for 20 minutes to firm up slightly.
4. Divide the dough into two portions. Using wax paper, roll each portion into logs 1 1/4-inches in diameter. Refrigerate for two hours or until firm
5. Preheat the oven to 325 degrees. Cut cookies into slices just thicker than 1/4 inch. Place them on a greased baking sheet and bake 11 minutes or until the cookies are done. Cool on a wire rack.

For the filling:

Mix 1/4 cup whipping cream, one tablespoons butter, and 2 tablespoons of light corn syrup in a heavy saucepan. Heat until it simmers. Remove the pan from the heat and immediately add six ounces of semisweet baking chocolate chopped into pieces or six ounces of Imported Gourmet Bittersweet Chocolate Wafers or Imported Gourmet Dark Chocolate Wafers. Stir until the chocolate is melted into a smooth sauce. The filling will thicken as it cools.

Baker's note: Six ounces of wafers is just over a cup; fill a one-cup measure to 1/2 inch above the rim.

Chocolate Raspberry Sandwich Cookies

Chocolate and raspberry makes a wonderful combination. In this case, it makes a scrumptious filling to sandwich between two sugar cookies. The filling is simply a ganache made with raspberry jam.



This is a very nice recipe to add to your collection. You can make the sugar cookies alone, without the filling. You can make plain sandwich cookies as we have, or dress them up for a special occasion. For Valentine's Day, cut the cookies into hearts and decorate them with candies or colored sugar. For Christmas, cut them into stars or other shapes.

Chocolate Raspberry Sandwich Cookie Recipe

This is a rich sugar cookie recipe with just a bit of almond flavor. The filling is made with chocolate, raspberry jam, and cream. You can make the sugar cookies alone, without the filling. You can make plain sandwich cookies as we have, or dress them up for a special occasion. These are very good cookies.

Ingredients

1 cup butter
1 cup granulated sugar
1/4 teaspoon salt
2 large egg
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/4 teaspoon almond extract

3 cups all-purpose flour
1/2 teaspoon baking powder

3 tablespoons whipping cream

Directions

Mix the filling first and refrigerate it to keep it thick. Mix 1/4 cup whipping cream and 1 tablespoon of light corn syrup in a heavy saucepan. Heat until it simmers. Remove the pan from the heat and immediately add three ounces of semisweet baking chocolate chopped into pieces. Stir until the chocolate is melted into a smooth sauce. Add 1/2 cup raspberry jam and stir until smooth. The filling will thicken as it cools.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

Cream the butter, sugar, and salt together with the paddle attachment of your mixer. Add the eggs one at a time, beating after each. Beat for five or six minutes or until the mixture is light and lemon-colored. Add the extracts.

Mix the flour and baking powder together in another bowl. Add the flour mixture to the creamed mixture along with the cream. Mix until combined. Do not over mix. Refrigerate the dough for at least one hour.

Roll the dough to a thickness of 1/4-inch on a lightly floured countertop. Cut into shapes with a cookie cutter. Sprinkle with decorative sugars if desired.

Bake on an ungreased baking sheet for about 12 minutes or until done. (The edges will be very lightly browned.) Let the cookies cool on a wire rack.

Match up the cookies back-to-back in pairs. Spoon filling between the cookies to make sandwiches. Ganache is flavorful and a thin layer is sufficient. Store the cookies in a cool place.

Chocolate Pintos Cookies Recipe

This is a wonderful, hand-formed cookie that is loved by both adults and children. It's attractive and easy. The powdered sugar on these fudgy cookies seems to make them melt in your mouth. Add this recipe to your collection.

Ingredients

2 cups all purpose flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
1/4 teaspoon salt

1/2 cup shortening
4 ounces unsweetened baking
chocolate

2 cups sugar
4 large eggs
1/2 tablespoon vanilla

powdered sugar

Directions

1. Mix flour, baking powder, and salt together in a small bowl.



2. Place the chocolate in a microwave-proof bowl. Add the shortening and microwave until the chocolate melts, stirring once or twice.
3. Add the sugar to the chocolate mixture and stir until smooth or mix in a stand-type mixer with a paddlewheel attachment.
4. Add the eggs one at a time, beating between each egg until combined. Add the vanilla. Chill the dough for several hours.
5. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Form round balls about one inch in diameter from spoonfuls of the chilled dough. Roll the balls in powdered sugar. Place them on a lightly greased baking sheet with room to expand.
6. Bake for ten or eleven minutes. The cookies will still be soft. (Do not over bake.) Remove them to a wire rack to cool.

Makes four to five dozen cookies.

Cherry Chocolate Cookies

The wind had switched directions out of the north and the snow was starting to drift. The weather forecast was for thirty below. Why were we doing a Boy Scout campout in a Minnesota winter?

The kids didn't mind the weather; they were busy playing "King of the Mountain". They were going to go through lots of calories . . . but we had lots of cookies. By far, their favorite was a chocolate oat cookie with a cherry pressed into the top.



We've made these cookies for a lot of years now. They are a scrumptious chocolate cookie but the oatmeal makes them substantial. We've never met a cookie lover that didn't love these cookies. And they make great holiday cookies.

Cherry Chocolate Cookies

These make great holiday cookies but don't relegate them to December only. We've made these many times and they are always a hit. But then, cherries and chocolate are always a favorite.

Ingredients

1 1/3 cups butter
3/4 cup brown sugar
2 large eggs

1 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips, melted
1 teaspoon vanilla
2 cups quick or old-fashioned rolled oats
1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon baking powder
About one jar of maraschino cherries, drained
3/4 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips, melted

Directions

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

1. Cream the butter and sugar together. Add the eggs and beat until light and fluffy, scraping the sides once (about five minutes). Add the melted chocolate and vanilla.
2. Add the rolled oats. Add the flour, salt, and baking powder and mix until combined.
3. Drop spoonfuls of dough on an ungreased baking sheet. Press a cherry deep into the dough for each. Bake for 11 or 12 minutes. Remove immediately to a wire rack to cool. Once cool, drizzle the cookie with melted chocolate.

Baker's notes: *Chocolate can be melted easily in the microwave. Place the chocolate in a small bowl and microwave in thirty second intervals, stirring after each until smooth.*

For drizzling the chocolate, place the chocolate chips in a heavy duty, zipper-type plastic bag. Once melted, snip a tiny corner from the bag and squeeze the chocolate through the snipped corner to drizzle on the cookies.

Mayan Chocolate Chip Brownies

These are serious brownies. They are absolutely scrumptious, decadent brownies inspired by Haagan-Dazs's® Mayan Chocolate ice cream—dense, moist, and laced with cinnamon.

Good, quality chocolate always makes a difference in a brownie. Because there is so much cinnamon in this recipe, make sure that you use a top-notch cinnamon.



Ingredients

3 ounces unsweetened chocolate
1/2 cup butter
1 cup brown sugar
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 large eggs
2/3 cup all-purpose or bread flour
1/2 tablespoon ground cinnamon
1 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips

Directions

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Lightly grease an 8 x 8-inch baking pan.

1. Cut the chocolate into pieces. Melt the butter in the microwave or a double boiler. Add the chocolate. Let it sit for a minute and then stir. If the chocolate is not completely melted and mixture smooth, return it to the microwave or double boiler and heat until melted and smooth. Stir in the sugar and salt.
2. In a cup or small bowl, whisk the eggs together. Add the eggs and vanilla to the chocolate mixture. Stir until combined.
3. Add the flour and cinnamon. Stir until combined again. Fold in the chocolate chips.
4. Scrape the batter into the prepared pan. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes or until the brownies test done by sticking a toothpick or knife into the center of the pan. The brownies will be done when moist crumbs cling to the toothpick or knife. Let cool completely before cutting.

Baker's note: *If you are in a hurry to get to your brownies—and who isn't—stick the pan of brownies in the refrigerator to cool.*

Variations

Chocolate Chip Brownies. You can always leave the cinnamon out. They are still good brownies but the cinnamon does give them some zip.

Walnut Brownies. These brownies are designed for chocolate lovers. If you want to tone down the chocolate, replace the chocolate chips with walnuts.

Cream Cheese Swirl Brownies

We took our Fudgy Walnut Brownies, omitted the nuts, and swirled cream cheese through the batter. The result is another fudgy brownie made even more decadent with cream cheese.

If you are looking for a dark, rich, fudgy brownie that is different, this is it. If you like more cream cheese, try the variation.

This fancy-looking brownie is easy to make. It is a simple two-step recipe. Mix the batter for the brownies in one bowl and the cream cheese mixture in another. Pour the brownie batter and the cream cheese mixture into the pan in stages then swirl it with a spatula.

Ingredients

For the brownies:

5 ounces unsweetened chocolate
1 1/4 cup butter
1 1/4 cups brown sugar
1/2 teaspoon salt
3 large eggs
1/2 tablespoon vanilla extract
3/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons all-purpose or bread flour

For the cream cheese filling:

1 8-ounce package of cream cheese
1/4 cup granulated sugar
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 large egg yolks

Directions

Preheat the oven to 325 degrees. Lightly grease a 9 x 13-inch baking pan. Dust with flour or line with parchment paper.

Cut the chocolate into pieces. Melt the butter in the microwave or a double boiler. Add the chocolate. Let it sit for a minute and then stir. If the chocolate is not completely melted and mixture smooth, return it to the microwave or double boiler and heat until melted and smooth. Stir in the sugar and salt.



In a bowl, whisk the eggs together. Add the eggs and vanilla to the chocolate mixture. Stir until combined.

Add the flour. Stir until combined again. Set aside.

For the cream cheese filling, beat the cream cheese until fluffy. Add the sugar and vanilla and beat in. Add the egg yolks and beat until smooth. Set aside.

Pour half of the chocolate batter into the prepared pan. Spoon half of the cream cheese filling onto the batter in pools. Pour the rest of the chocolate batter over the cream cheese pools. Spread smooth. Spoon the remaining cream cheese filling in pools over the top of the brownie batter.

Hold a table knife or spatula vertically and cut through the batters just until the two batters are swirled together. Do not over mix.

Bake for 45 to 50 minutes or until the brownies test done by sticking a toothpick or knife into the center of the pan. The brownies will be done when moist crumbs cling to the toothpick or knife. Let the brownies cool completely before removing them from the pan.

Baker's note: *If you are in a hurry to get to your brownies—and who isn't—stick the pan of brownies in the refrigerator to cool.*

Variation

Cream Cheese Brownies. Make twice as much cream cheese filling by doubling that portion of the recipe. Instead of swirling the cream cheese through the brownie batter, spoon all of the cream cheese filling on top. The result will be a double-decker brownie: chocolate on the bottom and cream cheese on top.

Mrs. Wilson's Chocolate Chip Refrigerator Cookies

Everyone needs a good chocolate chip cookie in a refrigerator recipe. This is it. It is a tender cookie with a texture just a bit like sandies—not chewy or gooey like some chocolate chips. It's more of an elegant cookie but the kids sure like it.

Again, this is an extra-large recipe so that you can freeze or refrigerate what you don't make immediately.

Use good quality chocolate chips in this recipe. The chips make a real difference.



Ingredients

3 3/4 cups all purpose flour
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1 1/2 cups butter
3/4 cup brown sugar
3/4 cup granulated sugar
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon almond extract
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 large eggs
1 3/4 cups good quality chocolate chips, either dark chocolate or milk chocolate

Directions

Measure the flour by scooping some into a bowl and then spooning the flour into the measuring cup. (If you measure packed flour, you will have too much.) Add the baking powder and baking soda and stir to combine.

Cream the butter, sugar, and salt together. Add the extracts. Beat in the eggs until the mixture is light and fluffy.

Add the flour mixture and mix in. Add the chocolate chips. With the mixer or your hands, mix the dough into a single mass.

Divide the dough into three parts. Place each on sheets of waxed paper and roll the dough in the waxed paper into 1 3/4-inch diameter logs. Refrigerate the logs for at least two hours or until firm.

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Remove one log from the refrigerator and cut it into slices a bit thicker than 1/4 inch. Use a sharp, serrated knife to cut through the chips. Put the slices on an ungreased baking sheet with room for expansion. Bake

for 9 to 11 minutes or until the edges of the cookies just begin to turn brown.
Repeat with the rest of the dough.