
Tweaking Toll House Cookies

This beloved American chocolate chip cookie is classic and convenient. We wanted to make it chewy, too.

≧ BY MARCIA GRAY ≦

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Melted butter is the key to chewier back-of-the-bag-recipe chocolate chip cookies.

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TOLL HOUSE CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES

MAKES ABOUT 5 DOZEN COOKIES

We prefer Ghirardelli 60% Cacao Bittersweet Chocolate Chips for this recipe. This recipe also works well with halved or quartered macadamia nuts or chopped toasted walnuts. Though these cookies will not stick to most baking sheets, us-

ing parchment to line the sheets lets you easily “clean” the sheets between batches.

- 2¼ cup (11¼ ounces) all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 16 tablespoons unsalted butter (2 sticks), melted
- ¾ cup (5 ounces) granulated sugar
- ¾ cup packed (5 ounces) dark brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 large eggs
- 2 cups (12 ounces) semisweet chocolate chips or chunks
- 1 cup coarsely chopped pecans, toasted

1. Adjust oven racks to upper-middle and lower-middle positions and heat oven to 375 degrees. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper. Whisk flour, baking soda, and salt together in a large bowl. Add eggs, one at a time, whisking well after each addition. Stir flour mixture into butter mixture with rubber spatula until combined. Stir in chocolate chips and nuts until evenly distributed.

2. Drop by rounded tablespoons (or use a #70 scoop) one inch apart onto prepared baking sheets.

3. Bake until golden brown, 9 to 11 minutes, switching and rotating sheets halfway through baking. Let cookies cool on baking sheets for 2 minutes. Transfer cookies to wire rack and let cool completely, about 30 minutes. Cookies can be stored at room temperature in airtight container for up to 3 days.

TOLL HOUSE CHOCOLATE CHIP PAN COOKIES

MAKES 4 DOZEN BARS

Line 15 by 10-inch pan with foil sling and spray with nonstick cooking spray. Carefully spread dough into prepared pan with offset spatula. Bake until golden brown and slightly firm to the touch, 20 to 25 minutes. Cool completely in pan on wire rack, about 60 minutes. Remove bars from pan by lifting foil overhang and transfer to cutting board. Cut into 6 rows by 8 rows to make 48 bars.

2 • THE ART OF IMITATING

Here is a recipe many people are familiar with, as it is based on one that is commonly found on packages of chocolate chips. The cooled cookies are crisp on the edges and chewy-cakey inside; fresh from the oven they are mushy and melty. These are traditionally eaten as a mid-afternoon snack, and I am willing to uphold that practice, though I am even more willing to nibble on them just before bedtime, when I am cozily curled on the couch in my PJs and slippers and sipping warm orange tea. I do not recommend attempting to consume these with the serene dignity of maturity, for they are more suitably munched on with the blissful giddiness of youth, but devour as you please. Should you want to nourish your self as much as your soul, add soy flour and skim milk powder, two tablespoons each, and one tablespoon of wheat germ to the flour. If this modulation makes the cookies too dense for your liking, you can soften them in your tea, milk, or brandy.

TOLL HOUSE COOKIES

<i>2½ cups flour</i>	<i>2 cups chocolate chips (Don't let anybody shame or bully you into buying that hoity-toity fancy-pantsy chocolate. Use what you like or can afford.)</i>
<i>1 teaspoon soda</i>	
<i>1 teaspoon salt</i>	
<i>1 cup soft butter, or vegetable shortening if you must</i>	
<i>¾ cup sugar</i>	<i>1 cup chopped pecans or other nuts, preferably toasted, mix and match if you want, or use none.</i>
<i>¾ cup brown sugar</i>	
<i>1 teaspoon vanilla extract</i>	
<i>2 large eggs</i>	

Mix together the flour, soda, and salt. In a separate (and larger) bowl, cream the butter, sugars, and vanilla. Add one egg, mix it in well, then repeat with the other. Add the flour mixture and stir together with a strong wooden spoon until the flour is fully absorbed; use your hands if the dough starts to overwhelm the spoon. Similarly mix in the chocolate and the nuts. Drop mounds of the dough, about a tablespoon each, onto a cookie sheet using two teaspoons or one teaspoon and your index finger. (The cleanliness authorities of the day might warn against the sybaritic licking of your finger after each placement of dough, but I believe that doing just that could substantially enhance your daily demeanor.) Try to fit as many mounds as possible on the sheet, but not

HOW TO COOK A COOKIE • 3

so closely that they'll melt into each other. You will need to do this in two to four batches, depending on how many sheets you are using, for a total of four sheetfuls. Bake in a moderately hot (375°) oven for 9 to 11 minutes or until golden brown. Leave the cookies on the sheet for 2 minutes, then shuttle them to wire racks to cool.

Now, if you'd prefer to bake all that dough in one fell swoop, you can easily make bars instead by spreading the dough into a greased jelly-roll pan and baking it for 20 to 25 minutes or until golden brown and a little bit springy to the touch. Let the uncut bars cool completely in the pan on a wire rack, then, when you're ready, cut into squares, rectangles, or whatever shapes and sizes you see fit.