

**Divine Wisdom
From The Cookie Goddess**

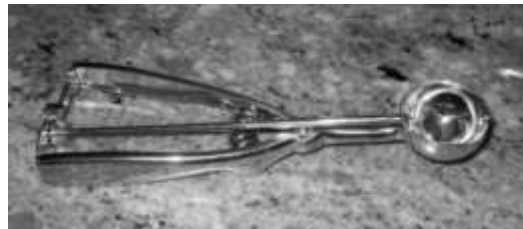


The Tools

Baking Sheets – The best ones are aluminum, uncoated. Aluminum distributes heat more evenly, and the light color makes it less likely for your cookies to burn. You don't need airbake or Teflon or anything like that. You can get Wilton baking sheets at craft stores, or you can get sheet cake pans at a restaurant supply store for very little. They'll work better, and last longer.

Parchment Paper – You NEED this. Not only does it make cleanup incredibly easy, but also speeds up the baking. You can fill up sheets of parchment paper with cookies and just remove the baked cookies by sliding the parchment paper off the sheet, then putting the prepared sheet onto the pan and into the oven. This is even easier if you use the Wilton type sheets that have no lip edge.

Cookie Scoops – This is how you make your cookies all the same size and nicely shaped. Sometimes you'll find them in stores besides restaurant supply, and of course you can order them online. They come in different sizes, and the size number indicates how many scoops make up a quart; therefore, the larger the number, the smaller the scoop. I use a size 60 scoop for competition cookies, and a 50 for other times. The two sizes are close enough so baking times and temperatures can stay the same, but the 60 size makes more cookies!



Metal Spatula – A flexible spatula is best for taking cookies off the parchment paper without tearing it, in case you're using the same sheet of paper for multiple batches of cookies. It's also best for taking the cookies off of an unpapered sheet without leaving the bottoms attached to the metal if you didn't take my advice about the PARCHMENT PAPER!!!



Potholders, Trivets, and Cooling Racks

You need the potholders to take the hot baking sheets out of the oven. I hope you have some of these anyway! Trivets give you a place to put the hot sheets down without destroying your kitchen counter or table. Cooling racks are where you put the cookies after you take them off the baking sheet. If you have a small space, wait for the stacking cooling racks to go on sale. They always do at some point.



Electric Mixer – If you have a handheld mixer, it won't be able to handle the Marching Band size batches of cookies. Use the smaller recipes! You can do some of this by hand, you're younger and stronger than I am, but really, it's a good tool to have. A stand mixer is even better. Yeah, it is.

Measuring Cups and Spoons – Again, something you should have on hand anyway. You can get them pretty much anywhere. The metal ones will last longer. You should also have a liquid measuring cup, because liquid volume is different from solid volume, and, just because.

Mixing Bowls – You can use pretty much any bowls you want, as long as they're large enough. Don't use your pots and pans, though. Ingredients will migrate to the edge of the bottom where you can't mix them in.

Rubber or Silicone Spatulas – For scraping dough or ingredients off the edges of the mixing bowl or out of measuring cups. Again, right there in the supermarket or department store.

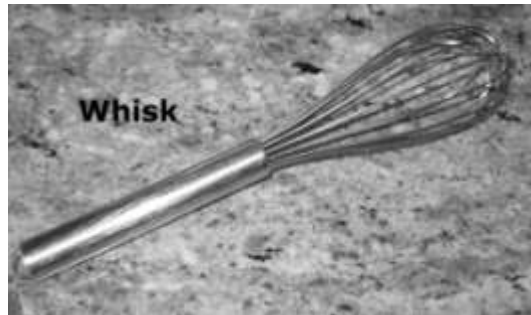


The Techniques

Measuring – Um, yeah. You use the measuring cups and spoons to measure your ingredients. I usually measure the dry ingredients first, because I can wipe off the cups and spoons to use them for the liquid ingredients or shortening. If you do it the other way around, you actually have to wash and dry them or do math to use the clean cups and spoons you have left. Your ingredients should be level with the top of the measure (or the line, in the case of liquid measures).

Mixing – Most of the time, a cookie recipe will call for the butter and/or shortening to be “creamed” with sugar, followed by eggs, and then the dry ingredients. So you want to get those dry ingredients mixed up together really well in a separate bowl so you don’t get chunks of baking soda or baking powder or whatever in your cookies.

Older recipes insisted that you sift your flour before measuring it, then sift it again with the other dry ingredients. I don’t have time for that. I just measure and use a whisk or a spoon (if the whisk is dirty. . .it’s way better than a spoon) to get the dry ingredients together.



Creaming, BTW, means mixing the butter/shortening with sugar until it’s fluffy almost like whipped cream. It looks like this:



Eggs are a matter of their own. Break them into a bowl before you add them to the creamed mixture. You never know if you're adding pieces of shell if you put them directly into the mixing bowl. And cracking them one-handed looks cool until you're trying to get all the little bits of shell out, so don't do it!



Tap the egg on the side of the bowl. Turn the egg crack side up, put your thumbs into the crack, pull the shell apart, and drop the egg into the bowl from the bottom. That way the tiny shell pieces are at the top, under your thumbs, rather than in with the egg. If some shell gets in anyway, use a large piece of shell to fish it out – it'll cut through the egg white and get it out better than anything else.

Baking – Preheat the heck out of your oven. Don't go by the little light that tells you it's preheated. That's just measuring the air temperature. The heat will continue to cycle on and off for about 15 minutes afterwards, until the walls, door, and shelves of the oven are hot enough to keep the temperature steady. Give it a half hour.

Cookies generally need to be about 2 inches apart from each other. Unless you have a huge oven and giant baking sheets, this means about 12 per sheet.



Bake them for the amount of time in the recipe, and let them sit on the baking sheet for at least a minute before moving them onto the cooling rack. If you have enough baking sheets, you can let them cool completely on the sheets. That gives them a little more time to set up on the inside without getting burned or overcooked. If you don't, give them at least that full minute on the sheet before you try to move them.

The Ingredients

Flour – Unbleached All-Purpose Flour is good for any of these recipes. In some of them you'll see Whole Wheat Flour as an ingredient, but that's only because my recipe software doesn't recognize the kind I really like to use, King Arthur White Wheat Flour. It's a softer, more finely ground wheat flour. If you can't find this, don't use regular whole wheat, use the all-purpose flour.

Sugar – Sugar is sugar. Except for confectioner's sugar, which is sugar and corn starch. Don't use that. Any kind of granulated sugar works, as does any kind of brown sugar. There's a difference in flavor between light and dark, the dark has a molasses-y taste, but otherwise it's up to you. Personally, I stick with light brown.

Fat – Most of the cookies call for butter, vegetable shortening, or both. Don't scrimp on the shortening. I've tried store brands, and I guarantee that if you don't use Crisco, your cookies will be sub-standard. You can play with the balance of the two fats, though, or substitute one for the other all or in part if you want to change the softness of the cookies. Shortening makes a more cakey cookie, butter makes a flatter, crisper one. (Butter has a higher water content, which evaporates during cooking, that's why.)

Eggs – Eggs do a couple of things in a recipe. They bind the other ingredients together, and also provide a slight rising action. Too few, and your cookies may not puff up. Too many, and the cookies come out dry. All the recipes here use large eggs.

Salt/Baking Powder/Baking Soda – This is chemistry, boys and girls! Salt and baking powder or soda plus heat causes a chemical reaction that creates bubbles in the dough, and it's more responsible for the puffiness of your cookies than the eggs. Leave out the baking powder or soda, and you will make hockey pucks. Some cookies call for both – I have no idea why, but you don't argue with success.

Everything Else – Again, don't scrimp. The best cookie recipe can be ruined by cheap chocolate chips, dried out raisins, expired spices. . .

The Recipes – Marching Band Favorites (80-90 Cookies)



Chocolate Chip Cookies

Recipe By: Betty Crocker, 1956, Alison Meyer

- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 1/2 cups wheat flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2/3 cup shortening
- 2/3 cup butter
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 cup packed brown sugar
- 2 eggs
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- 2 cups semisweet chocolate chips

Preheat oven to 375 degrees.

Mix flours, baking soda, and salt in a large bowl

Cream together shortening, butter, and sugars. When fluffy, add eggs one at a time.

Add the flour mixture by large spoonfuls to the creamed mixture. Mix completely.

Add chocolate chips.

Line cookie sheets with parchment paper. Using a #50 or #60 cookie scoop, drop batter about 2" apart onto cookie sheets.

Bake 9 minutes. Cool at least 1 minute on baking sheets before removing to wire racks to cool. (If possible, cool completely on baking sheets. The longer, the better.)

Cookie Goddess Oatmeal Raisin Cookies

Recipe By: Quaker Oats Box (original), Alison Meyer

6 cups oats (not quick-cooking!)
1 cup all-purpose flour
1 cup white wheat flour
2 teaspoons salt
1 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
12 ounces raisins
3/4 cup shortening
3/4 cup unsalted butter
2 cups packed brown sugar
1 cup granulated sugar
2 eggs
1/2 cup water
2 teaspoons vanilla

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Combine oats, flours, salt, baking soda, then mix in and separate raisins.

Beat together shortening and sugars until creamy. Add eggs one at a time, then mix in water and vanilla, .

Line a cookie sheet with parchment paper, or grease well. Using a #50 or #60 cookie scoop (about 1 1/2 Tbsp) drop batter onto sheets at least two inches apart.

Bake for 13 minutes. Cool on baking sheet 1 minute. Remove to wire racks to cool.

Gingies

Recipe By: Betty Crocker, 1956, Alison Meyer

6 cups flour
2 teaspoons baking soda
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon allspice
1 teaspoon ginger
1 teaspoon cloves
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1/3 cup shortening
1 cup brown sugar -- packed
1 1/2 cups molasses
2/3 cup water

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Sift the dry ingredients together and set aside.

Mix the shortening, brown sugar, and molasses thoroughly. Stir in the water.

Add the dry mixture, mix thoroughly. Dough will be stiff.

Chill dough. (If you want. I've made these without chilling.)

Using a cookie scoop, drop dough about 2 inches apart on a parchment-lined baking sheet.

Flatten the cookies with the bottom of a 2 inch diameter drinking glass dipped in sugar.

Bake about 13 minutes and cool completely on sheets.

Peanut Butter Cookies

Recipe By: Alison Meyer

2 1/2 cups flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 1/2 teaspoons baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 1/2 cups shortening
1 cup butter
1 cup peanut butter
1 cup sugar
1 cup brown sugar
2 eggs
1 cup chopped peanuts

Preheat oven to 375 degrees

Mix flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt together. Set aside.

Cream together shortening, butter, peanut butter, and sugars. Add eggs, one at a time. Mix in peanuts.

Using a #50 cookie scoop, drop batter onto parchment paper lined baking sheets. Press tops down with a fork to make a criss-cross pattern.

Bake 11 minutes. Cool 1-5 minutes or completely on baking sheets before removing to wire racks.

Pina Colada Cookies

Recipe By: Alison Meyer

- 7 cups flour
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 cups shortening
- 3 cups sugar
- 2 eggs
- 20 ounces canned pineapple
- 14 ounces coconut flakes
- 2 packages pina colada mix (powdered)

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Line cookie sheets with parchment paper.

Mix together flour, baking soda, and salt. Set aside.

Cream shortening and sugar together. Add eggs one at a time. Add pineapple and its juice, coconut, and pina colada mix to the creamed sugar and shortening.

Add flour mixture. There is a lot of batter, and it may overflow a standard mixer's bowl. Finish mixing by hand in a larger bowl if necessary.

Using a #60 cookie scoop, drop batter onto prepared cookie sheets about 2 inches apart. Bake 9 minutes, and allow cookies to cool at least two minutes on the sheets before removing them to cooling racks.

Snickerdoodles

Recipe By: Betty Crocker, 1956

5 1/2 cups flour
4 teaspoons cream of tartar
2 teaspoons baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 cup butter
1 cup shortening
3 cups sugar
4 eggs
1/4 cup brown sugar
2 tablespoons cinnamon

Preheat oven to 375.

Mix together flour, cream of tartar, baking soda, and salt. Set aside.

Cream together butter, shortening, and sugar. Add eggs, one at a time.

Add dry mixture to creamed mixture a cup or so at a time. Mix thoroughly.

Line baking sheets with parchment paper.

Mix brown sugar and cinnamon together in a small bowl. Using a #50 cookie scoop, scoop batter into cinnamon sugar. Coat tops of the scooped batter entirely, then place on cookie sheets 2 inches apart.

Bake 9 minutes. Cool 1-5 minutes on pans, then remove to wire racks.

Drop Cookies

Cranberry and Vanilla Chip Cookies

Recipe By: Pillsbury Healthy Baking book

Servings: 48

1 3/4 cups flour
1 cup rolled oats
1 1/2 teaspoons baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup butter -- softened
1 1/3 cups sugar
2 eggs
1 cup dried cranberries
2/3 cup white chocolate chips

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line cookie sheets with parchment paper.

Mix flour, oats, baking soda, and salt. Set aside.

In a large bowl, beat butter and sugar until well blended.

Add egg; mix well.

Add flour, oats, baking soda and salt; mix until well combined.

Stir in cranberries and white chocolate chips.

Drop dough 2 inches apart onto prepared baking sheets.

Bake for 9-11 minutes or until edges are golden brown.

Cool 1 minute on sheets, then remove to wire racks. Store tightly covered.

Double Chocolate Drops

Recipe By: Judy Haight/Alison Meyer

Serving Size: 60

1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/4 teaspoon salt
4 Tbsp cocoa
1/2 cup shortening
2 ounces unsweetened chocolate
1 cup packed brown sugar
1 egg
1/2 cup buttermilk
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 cup semisweet chocolate chips
1/2 cup walnuts -- chopped

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line cookie sheets with parchment.

Stir together flour, baking powder, soda, and salt. Set aside.

Melt shortening and cocoa; cool.

Stir in brown sugar, egg, buttermilk, and vanilla; mix until smooth.

Stir dry ingredients into saucepan mixture. Mix well. Stir in chocolate chips and nuts.

Drop by teaspoonful 2 inches apart onto greased cookie sheet.

Bake for about 10 minutes.

My variation:

Use 6 oz white chocolate chips instead of chocolate chips Use macadamias instead of walnuts.

Molasses Crinkles

Recipe By: Betty Crocker, 1956

Serving Size: 48

3/4 cup shortening
1 cup brown sugar -- packed
1 egg
1/4 cup molasses
2 1/4 cups flour -- sifted
2 teaspoons baking soda
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon cloves
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1 teaspoon ginger

Cream shortening, sugar, egg, and molasses.

Sift remaining ingredients together and add.

Chill dough.

Preheat oven to 375 degrees.

Roll dough into balls about the size of large walnuts. Dip tops in sugar.

Place, sugar side up, 3 inches apart on greased baking sheets.

Sprinkle each cookie with 2 or 3 drops of water to produce a crackled surface.

Bake until just set, not hard, about 10-12 minutes.

Pignoli Cookies

Recipe By: Cooks.com

Serving Size: 30

1/2 cup sugar
1/2 cup confectioner's sugar
1/4 cup flour
1/8 teaspoon salt
8 ounces almond paste
2 egg whites
1 cup pignolia (pine nuts)

Preheat oven to 300 degrees. Line cookie sheets with parchment paper.

Mix sugars, flour, and salt. Set aside.

Break almond paste up into small pieces. Mix with egg whites in an electric mixer at medium speed.

Fold in sugar mixture.

Using a #50 cookie scoop, drop batter into pignoli nuts until covered. Place on cookie sheets 2" apart.

Bake 20-25 minutes, until golden. Cool completely on cookie sheets, then remove to racks. Cookies will taste best the day after they're made.

Bar Cookies

Creme De Menthe Brownies

Recipe By: Polly Lee

Serving Size: 64

- 1 cup unsalted butter -- divided
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 4 eggs
- 1 cup flour
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 16 ounces chocolate syrup
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 2 tablespoons creme de menthe, or 1 tsp mint extract
- 2 tablespoons milk
- 2 cups powdered sugar
- 6 ounces semisweet chocolate chips

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Cream 1/2 cup of the butter with the sugar. Add eggs one at a time.

Mix flour and salt in a separate bowl and add to creamed mixture alternately with the chocolate syrup. Stir in vanilla.

Pour batter into a 9x13 pan and bake for 25 minutes. Cool completely.

Mix creme de menthe or mint extract, 1/4 c of the butter, and the powdered sugar. Add milk or water until consistency is spreadable. Spread on cooled brownies and refrigerate.

When creme de menthe frosting is set, melt chocolate chips and remaining 1/4 c butter together. Pour onto brownies and spread evenly over top.

These are very rich, and should be cut into small pieces!

Hermits

Recipe By: Betty Crocker, 1956

Serving Size: 72

| | |
|-------|-------------------------|
| 1 | cup shortening |
| 2 | cups packed brown sugar |
| 2 | eggs |
| 1/2 | cup coffee -- cold |
| 3 1/2 | cups flour |
| 1 | teaspoon baking soda |
| 1 | teaspoon salt |
| 1 | teaspoon nutmeg |
| 1 | teaspoon cinnamon |
| 2 1/2 | cups raisins |
| 1 1/4 | cups nuts |

Mix together shortening, sugar, and eggs. Stir in coffee. Sift dry ingredients together and add to creamed mixture. Stir in nuts and raisins.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Spread mixture in a greased 8x8 pan. Bake 30-35 minutes.

World Domination Brownies

Recipe By: Alison Meyer

Serving Size: 24

1/2 cup unsalted butter
2 tablespoons vegetable shortening
1/2 cup cocoa
2 cups sugar
3 eggs -- lightly beaten
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 1/2 cups flour
1 teaspoon salt
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 cup chopped pecans

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Lightly grease a 9x13 aluminum pan. If you are using a glass pan, preheat to 325 degrees and allow an additional 5 minutes or so to baking.

Put the butter, shortening, and cocoa in a 4 quart or larger heavy-bottomed saucepan. Cook over low heat, stirring, until butter and shortening are just melted and cocoa is well-mixed. Remove immediately from heat.

In a separate bowl, mix flour, salt, and baking powder.

Using an electric mixer, thoroughly mix in the sugar. Add the beaten eggs slowly, stopping occasionally to make sure they are incorporated into the batter before adding more. Mix in the vanilla.

Pour the flour mix and the nuts into the saucepan. Mix most of the way with the electric mixer, then finish mixing by hand.

Spread the batter in the prepared pan and bake for 35 minutes.

Place the pan on a cooling rack and cool completely before cutting.

NOTES : For the neatest brownies, use a plastic knife for cutting.

Thanks to Nancy MacLearie for this hint!