

CHOCOLATE CHIP/CHUNK COOKIES

Because these cookies are so big, this recipe only makes about 1 dozen cookies, therefore, I usually triple the recipe. You can always freeze the dough for later use and these cookies go fast, so at least make a double recipe.

This recipe is very versatile - I use the basic recipe with a variety of different chips, chunks, nuts, fruits, etc. See "MARK'S TIPS" section at the end of this recipe.

You will need 2 large bowls, strong electric hand or stand mixer, and sturdy wooden or bamboo spoon/spatula (for mixing in chips/chunks & nuts) if you don't have dough hooks for the mixer.

INGREDIENTS:

2 1/8 cups (2 cups + 2 Tbsp) all purpose flour
1/2 tsp salt
1/2 tsp baking SODA
12 Tbsp unsalted REAL butter (1 1/2 sticks), softened,
NOT melted (do NOT use margarine!!!)
1 cup packed brown sugar (light, dark or combination)
1/2 cup granulated sugar
1 large egg + 1 egg yolk
2 tsp vanilla
1-2 cups semi-sweet or bittersweet chocolate
chips, minis, and or chunks or mixture thereof
1 cup chopped pecans (optional)

Note: For white chocolate chip-cranberry cookies, I use one cup of each.

DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat oven for 15 minutes to 325 degrees - remember no less than 15 minutes!
2. In one bowl, mix (whisk together) flour, salt and baking soda together in a medium bowl and set aside.
3. In another bowl cream together butter and sugars until thoroughly combined. Mix for a couple of minutes.
4. Mix in egg, yolk, and vanilla.
5. Add dry ingredients and mix until just combined.
6. Stir in chips/chunks and/or nuts, dried fruit, etc., to taste.

7. Refrigerate the dough for a couple of hours. This is not necessary, but I've found that it helps keep the cookie from flattening out - I believe it has something to do with the butter re-solidifying.
8. Use about a 1/4 cup amount of dough to form a ball - this is the equivalent of a FIRMLY packed 2 1/2-inch diameter ice cream scoop or a ball about the size or slightly larger than a golf ball. Place on cookie sheet, about 6 - 8 to a sheet (See **TIPS** section below).
9. Bake until very light golden brown and outer edged start to brown, but centers are still soft and puffy. Depending on the size of the cookie and your oven, this should take from 11 to 15 minutes - cookies will continue to bake on cookie sheet after removing from oven. If you are doing two sheets at a time, swap the sheets half way through. Note that you may have to increase your total cooking time to about 20 minutes or so.
10. Allow to cool for several minutes on hot cookie sheet before attempting to move them to a cooling rack or the cookies will fall apart.
11. Dough can be refrigerated for up to 2 days or frozen for up to a month - shaped or not. Frozen/chilled dough takes an extra minute or two to bake.

TIPS:

1. You can make these cookies any size you like, just remember to adjust the baking times accordingly.
2. Dough will be very stiff and will burn out most cheap hand mixers. I suggest getting a Kitchen Aid 7 or 9-speed hand mixer and order dough hooks from them if they don't come with the mixer. I've had the same mixer for years and really used it a lot and it is holding up very well. It is worth the \$60-\$70 price tag. Of course, you can also use a bamboo or similar STURDY spatula to mix in the chips and nuts, but you'd better be pretty strong! I usually wind up putting on some nitrile surgical gloves (NON - powdered - some people are allergic to the powder or latex) and mixing everything by hand. The dough can be sticky, so the gloves are mandatory.
3. Chocolate chip cookies have always been difficult for me, mainly the part about getting them to puff up and stay that way after removing them from the oven, but this recipe seems to work well.
4. Also, maintaining a consistent oven temp is also very critical. This can be difficult in most ovens as the temp cycles up and down throughout the baking cycle. In one case, even though my oven dial was set to 300 degrees (325 on the thermometer inside the oven), the temp would go up as high as 375, causing the cookies to cook too fast and flatten out.
5. Get a good oven thermometer at Bed, Bath, & Beyond or similar store - the dial on the oven console is notoriously inaccurate. Most of the new ovens with digital

readouts are much more accurate. It is important to allow the oven to preheat appropriately and completely - no less than 15 minutes!

6. Between batches of cookies and opening the oven door, make sure you allow the oven temp to normalize back to 325 degrees before putting in the next batch.
7. Instead of just putting the dough directly on the cookie sheet, I use a Llorente silicone sheet and the surface is lightly textured. I believe the small raised ridges help keep the cookie dough from spreading out too much and therefore maintain their height and thickness. I have looked everywhere and even on the Internet for more of these silicone sheets, but they only have the smooth ones now - most people are familiar with the Silpat brand. So, I suggest trying parchment paper, which is available at most grocery stores.
8. DO NOT use one of those "Air Bake" cookie sheets with the insulated layer of air - use a standard, flat, steel or aluminum cookie sheet - Sam's has sturdy aluminum 1/2 sheets (that's 1/2 of a full-sized commercial sheet, about 18" x 13") for very reasonable prices. They work great and are well worth the investment if you do a lot of baking.
9. You don't have to use chocolate chips. Sometimes I use white chocolate chips and dried cranberries (no nuts) - many people really like that combination. Recently, I tried some cookies using the new Hershey's Sea Salt & Caramel chips and Nestle's chocolate CHUNKS and they turned out great! Speaking of CHUNKS, I've started using them now exclusively because they don't have the additives like the chips and they melt better. I've only found them in larger stores, though. Also, only buy name-brand chips or chunks like Hershey's, Nestle, or Ghirardelli - it has been my experience that store brand/generic chips, especially the white chocolate variety, have a very funny taste to them. By the way, you can get big bags of dried cranberries at Sam's or Costco.
10. One of the most important keys to baking a good cookie is to have lots of chips, nuts, dried fruit, etc., so don't scrimp on them. They also keep the cookie from flattening out.
11. Since this cookie contains so much sugar, when baking the chocolate chip/chunk variety, I usually use a mixture of chips/chunks - Ghirardelli Bittersweet, Nestle semi-sweet & Nestle Milk Chocolate Morsels (not semi-sweet). Usually the bittersweet chips are large, and the other two are medium or regular/standard-sized chips. You can also get the Milk Chocolate MINI Morsels, which are very tiny.

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