

TWO RECIPES FOR EXCELLENCE

The two made-from-scratch recipes below fit our definition of an excellent cookie: full of the flavor of browned grain, with fresh-tasting ingredients, a crisp shell, moist innards, and chocolatey chips that melt smoothly.



Clinton cookies

Fit for a President

Hillary Rodham Clinton's statement "I suppose I could have stayed home and baked cookies" no doubt led some people to believe she never had. In fact, she has said, making oatmeal chocolate-chip cookies was a Christmas Eve tradition in her family. The recipe she submitted to Family Circle magazine was entered in a (Hillary) Clinton-(Barbara) Bush bake-off that the magazine sponsored during the 1992 Presidential campaign. Three weeks before the election, Family Circle announced that its readers had chosen Clinton, with 55.2 percent of the vote (to her husband's 43 percent).

- 1½ c. unsifted all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 1 c. solid vegetable shortening (we used Crisco)
- ½ c. granulated sugar

Preheat oven to 350°. Combine flour, salt, and baking soda. Beat together shortening, sugars, and vanilla until creamy. Add eggs, beating until light and fluffy. Gradually beat in flour mixture and rolled oats. Stir in chocolate chips. Drop

- 1 c. firmly packed light brown sugar
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 2 eggs
- 2 c. old-fashioned rolled oats
- 12-oz. pkg. semisweet chocolate chips (we used Nestlé)

batter by well-rounded teaspoonfuls onto cookie sheets. Bake 8 to 10 minutes or until cookies are done. Cool cookies on sheets for two minutes before placing them on wire rack for further cooling. Yield: 7½ dozen cookies.

MJ sez:

I always add more chips; a big handful of butterscotch chips enhances the recipe beautifully

A classic, with variations

Which came first, the cookie or the chip? As Nestlé tells it, Ruth Wakefield, proprietor of the Toll House Inn outside Whitman, Mass., made the first documented chocolate-chip cookie in 1933 when she substituted chocolate-bar shavings for walnuts in her Butter Drop Do cookies. The result was such a hit that she sent her recipe to Nestlé, which printed it on the wrapper of its semisweet chocolate bar. In 1939 Nestlé gave bakers a break, introducing *Semi-Sweet Chocolate Morsels*, the first chips. More than two generations later, Ruth Wakefield's recipe is still printed on every bag of Nestlé chips. We followed it to make the cookies in the Ratings. Then we fiddled with it, improving the nutrition and assessing the consequences to the cookies' taste. Below, the original recipe followed by our variations.

Toll House cookies

- 2¼ c. all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 c. (2 sticks) softened butter
- ¾ c. granulated sugar
- ¾ c. firmly packed brown sugar

Preheat oven to 375°. In a small bowl, combine flour, baking soda, and salt; set aside. In a large mixing bowl, beat butter, sugar, brown sugar, and vanilla extract until creamy. Beat in eggs. Gradually beat in flour mixture. Stir in choc-

- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 2 eggs
- 12-oz. pkg. (2 cups) Nestlé Semi-Sweet Chocolate Morsels
- 1 c. chopped nuts (we omitted them)

olate morsels and nuts. Drop by rounded measuring tablespoonfuls (we used rounded teaspoonfuls) onto ungreased cookie sheets. Bake 9 to 11 minutes until edges are golden brown. Yield: using tablespoons of dough, 5 dozen cookies.

- 1 Substitute margarine for butter.**
You'll cut saturated fat by two-thirds. The cookie is slightly greasier and has less butter flavor.
- 2 Substitute shortening for butter.**
You'll cut saturated fat by more than half. The cookie is lighter and puffier, with a delicate crispness. It's also a bit less chewy. Although the butter flavor is gone, the cookie still tastes rich.
- 3 Leave out the eggs.**
The cookie's cholesterol, low to begin with,

- becomes even lower. The cookie is very dense, chewy, and greasy, with lots of browned-butter flavor.
- 4 Halve the butter; add four tablespoons of water.** You'll halve saturated fat. The cookie is airy but slightly tough and hard, and it loses its browned-butter flavor.
 - 5 Halve the butter; leave out the eggs; add six tablespoons of water.** Don't bother. You'll halve saturated fat and decrease cholesterol, but the cookie is tough and hard, and tastes a bit of raw flour.

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