

COOKIES

Cookies and pies, like cakes, are served as desserts. Rich in calories, they will satisfy your appetite at the end of a meal. Both desserts originated in other countries.

Cookies came to us from many lands. For instance, Scotland contributed its thick, rich shortbreads, while Finland gave us nut-studded butter strips known as *finska kakor*. In our own country, in colonial times, the early settlers made a large, flat chewy molasses cookie.

Pies, too, came from other countries, notably ancient Greece and Rome, and England, where "pyes" were baked in deep pans called "coffins." An American development was the round, shallow pan, which by 1790, was lined with pastry, filled and baked to become one of our most traditional desserts.

Types of Cookies

The stiffness and the method of handling the dough make it convenient to classify cookies into six basic types: drop, bar, rolled, refrigerator, pressed and molded. The dough for bar cookies and drop cookies is softer than the dough for the other types of cookies.

Drop cookies are made from a dough that is pushed from a spoon onto a cookie sheet. You should allow about 2 inches (5 cm) of space between the cookies to keep them from spreading into each other. Use the same amount of dough on the spoon each time so that the cookies will be uniform in size. It is best to use a cool cookie sheet so the dough will not spread before it is placed in the oven.



Drop Cookies

Bar cookies are made from a soft dough that is spread evenly in a pan and baked. You may cut them into any shape (square, rectangle or triangle) after they are baked. Brownies are probably the most popular bar cookies.



Bar Cookies

Rolled cookies are made from a stiff dough that has been rolled into a thin sheet. You may cut the rolled dough into various shapes with a cookie cutter. When you roll the dough, use only a small amount of flour on the board so that you will not have a hard cookie.



Rolled Cookies

You may find it easier to roll cookie dough that has been chilled. Roll only a small amount of cookie dough at a time so that you will avoid over handling, which causes toughness. Leave a small amount of space between the cookies when you place them on the cookie sheet.

For *refrigerator cookies*, a stiff dough is pressed with the hands into a long, smooth roll and chilled before slicing and baking. The fat in the cookie hardens, making it easy to slice the cookies from the roll. If you slice the cookies thinly, they will be crisp and crunchy. The refrigerator cookie dough may be stored in the refrigerator for several days before baking.



Refrigerator Cookies

Pressed cookies have a rich, stiff dough. The dough is packed into a cookie press and forced out through cookie discs (cutters) onto an ungreased cookie sheet. The dough will stick to the cookie sheet as you lift the cookie press from it. Leave a small amount of space between the cookies as you squeeze them onto the sheet.



Pressed Cookies

Molded cookies are made from a stiff dough. A small amount of dough is shaped and molded with the fingers to form the desired shape (such as, crescents, rolls or balls). As you form the molded cookies, space them evenly in rows on the cookie sheet and allow a small amount of space between cookies.



Molded Cookies



Ingredients and Preparation

Cookie doughs require the same basic ingredients that are used in cake batters, but the proportion of ingredients is different. You use flour, salt, leavening agents, sugar, shortening, eggs and liquid to make cookies. Cookies need less liquid and leavening and may need more fat than is used in cakes. Cookies have a crisp texture rather than the light texture of cakes. Each ingredient serves the same purpose in cookies as in cakes.

Ingredients in Cookies *All-purpose flour* is suitable for all cookies unless cake flour is specified. Flour provides the structure for cookies.

The *fat* or *shortening* is often used to contribute flavor as well as richness to the cookie. Butter or margarine is used to give a pleasing flavor to the cookie. Margarine can usually replace butter in most cookie recipes. Vegetable shortening is bland, so other ingredients, such as brown sugar, honey and molasses, are used to provide flavor. Chocolate, spices, coconut, nuts, fruits (usually dried or candied) and **extracts** (natural or artificial flavor essences, usually dissolved in alcohol) are also used for flavor.

Milk is the *liquid* most often used in cookies. It may be sweet milk, sour milk or buttermilk. Occasionally cream is used for some of the liquid and at the same time it contributes richness (fat) and a pleasing flavor. Some cookies require no added liquid.



Flour



Butter



Vanilla Extract



Milk

Mixing Cookies Cookies are usually mixed by methods similar to those used for cakes. Most cookies are mixed by the conventional method or a slight modification of it. Because a crisp, crunchy or chewy texture is characteristic of cookies, rather than a light, delicate texture, cookies require less creaming than cakes. The flour may be added all at once, instead of in four parts as in cakes.

Cookies such as macaroons and meringues do not contain fat and are mixed in much the same way as foam cakes.

The following steps will show you how the conventional method can be modified and still produce perfect cookies.

1. Blend the softened shortening, sugar (including molasses or syrup if used), eggs and melted chocolate (when used) thoroughly.
2. Stir in the liquid and flavoring all at once. (In a few recipes, the liquid and flour may be added alternately.)
3. Sift the flour, salt and leavening (including spices) together and stir them into the shortening-sugar-egg mixture.



Mixing Cookies

Baking Cookies Baking sheets are best for baking cookies because there are no sides to interfere with the circulation of heat.

The shiny and bright cookie sheet will give your cookies a delicately browned crust. You should not use cake pans because their deep sides will interfere with distribution of heat and the cookies will remain pale. However, you may turn a cake pan upside down and use the bottom of it for baking cookies. Because most cookies will spread a little as they bake, spacing is necessary to prevent them from running together. You should arrange cookies on cool baking sheets to avoid excessive spreading. Rolled cookies spread less, so spaces between them can be smaller. Drop and refrigerator cookies spread more and require greater space – usually about 2 inches (5 cm) – between them. When you arrange cookies, space them evenly and try to get as many cookies as you can on the sheet.

Bake the cookies in a preheated oven set at the temperature indicated in the recipe. When you bake one sheet of cookies at a time, place it on a rack near the center of the oven. When you want to bake two sheets of cookies at the same time, place the oven racks so that the oven is divided into thirds. During the last few minutes of baking, you may need to change the cookie sheets from one rack to the other so that the cookies will be browned evenly.

You should check for doneness of cookies when the minimum baking time is up. Cookies

are done when almost no imprint remains after they are touched lightly. Be careful that do not under bake or over bake cookies. Over baking will cause cookies to dry out and become too dark; under baking will leave the cookies doughy and pale. Properly baked cookies are delicately browned.

You should remove cookies from the sheet as soon as you take them from the oven, unless the recipe instructs otherwise. As the cookie cools, it becomes hardened, sticks to the pan and may break as you remove it. Use a wide spatula to remove the warm cookies onto a cooling rack.

To bake two sheets of cookies at the same time, position the racks in the oven so that the oven is divided into thirds. Why should you rearrange the sheets during baking?



Microwaving Cookies

Drop cookies and refrigerator cookies are not suited for baking in the microwave because they bake very unevenly. In addition, there is no savings in time because they must be cooked in very small batches.

Bar cookies and brownies, however, bake well in the microwave. Because of their high sugar content, though, timing is crucial to avoid overcooking. Cookies prepared in rectangular or square pans should have shields over the batter at each corner to keep from overcooking.

Nutrient Contributions

Flour, sugar and fat are the ingredients that you will use in the largest amounts in cookies. Their chief contribution is in calories or energy. Because all other ingredients are used in rather small amounts, you can count on cookies to contribute only to your energy needs. You need to include milk, fruits, cereals and meats in your daily eating pattern to meet your needs for vitamins, minerals and protein.

Storing Cookies

To keep the perfect eating quality of your cookies, store them in covered containers. Bar and drop cookies are made from soft dough and usually will have a soft texture. Cookies made from stiff dough, such as rolled and refrigerator ones, are crisp. In order that soft cookies remain soft and crisp cookies remain crisp, store each separately in the proper containers.

Soft cookies keep best in airtight containers. A slice of fresh bread or slices of apple or orange in the jar with the soft cookies will help to keep them moist. The fruit will need to be changed frequently. Crisp cookies should be kept in a can or container with a loose cover.

When you open a package of ready-to-eat cookies, retain their texture and flavor by folding the protective wrap tightly around the remaining cookies or store the cookies in covered containers, as you do home-baked cookies.

Convenience in Cookies

Cookie convenience comes in several forms: (1) ready-to-eat, (2) refrigerated or frozen and (3) as a mix. All of these can be ready to serve on a moment's notice. Cookie

mixes come in several varieties and usually require only the addition of the liquid and sometimes an egg. To some cookie mixes, you may add flavor ingredients such as coconut, nuts and extracts. For best results, follow the directions on the package and display your creative ability in shaping and decorating the cookies. You can throw cookie formulas out of balance when you add any extra amounts of basic ingredients such as flour, sugar and shortening.

Cookie doughs from the refrigerated case require only to be shaped (cut or sliced and spread in a pan) and baked. The ready-to-eat cookies are found in all grocery stores and bakeries. They are ready for immediate use without any further preparation.

The advantage in the use of these products may come from the time saved, but you should consider which of these items are really good buys and which are luxury items. You can create your own "cookie convenience" by preparing a double batch of cookies, part for immediate use and the rest to be frozen for later use.

As with most other convenience products, no clue to quality is given on the label. The reputation of the manufacturer and your experience are your best guides in their selection.

For Review

1. List and describe the six basic types of cookies.
2. List the basic ingredients for cookies.
3. What are three guidelines to follow when baking cookies?
4. How should you store soft cookies? Crisp cookies?