



# 500 cookies

the only cookie compendium you'll ever need

philippa vanstone

**APPLE**

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# introduction

Susannah Blake

The modern-day cookie is said to be an American invention, although versions of these sweet confections can be found throughout the world, with every country boasting its own speciality. The earliest cookies can be traced back centuries – the Romans made a cookie consisting of a pasta-like dough that was fried and served with honey, while other cookies have been traced back to 7th-century Persia, one of the first countries to cultivate sugar.

The term 'cookie' was first used in the United States, and is derived from the Dutch word *koekje* which signifies the little cakes that were brought to New York by early settlers. However, generations of immigrants from Germany, Eastern Europe, Scandinavia, England, Scotland and Ireland have also made their mark on the history of the cookie.

## the earliest cookies

The largely British term 'biscuit' is derived from the Latin *panis biscoctus*, meaning 'bread twice-cooked'. These savoury Roman biscuits were baked twice to dry them out, giving them a longer life, thus making them ideal for feeding armies and travellers. Sweet cookies such as German *zwieback*, Jewish *Mandelbrot*, and Italian *biscotti* and *cantucci*, which are all twice-baked, undoubtedly evolved from these early biscuits.

Pretzels date back as far as c.E. 610. They were invented by monks in a monastery in France, where they were used to symbolise the marriage bond. The twisted strands of dough are furthermore said to symbolise a child's arms folded in prayer; the holes the Holy Trinity.

Gingerbread is thought to have been first baked in Europe at the end of the 11th century, after crusaders introduced the spicy ginger root. It then became a speciality of medieval Germany, and by the 17th century gingerbread baking was recognised as a profession –

only professional gingerbread makers were permitted to bake the spicy confection in both Germany and France. It was also in medieval Germany that the tradition of crafting cookie dough into shapes at Christmas became a tradition. However, the first gingerbread 'men' are credited to the court of Elizabeth I of England, where important visitors were favoured with gingerbread likenesses of themselves. Gingerbread houses first appeared in Germany in the early 19th century after the brothers Grimm published their first collection of fairytales, including the story of Hansel and Gretel.

Recipes for shortbread and shortcake have been popular since the 16th century. Petticoat tails, the classic shortbread baked in a round and marked into wedges, resembles a crinoline petticoat and is thought to date back to the 12th century. The American butter cookie bears a strong resemblance to this traditional shortbread.

Cookies made of whisked egg whites and ground nuts have been popular since the Middle Ages, and gave rise to macaroon-type cookies. Furthermore, the discovery that beaten egg aerated cookie mixtures giving a lighter texture, led to the evolution of sponge biscuits, boudoir biscuits, Lisbon biscuits and Naples biscuits and jumbles.

During the 19th century sugar, flour and chemical raising agents such as bicarbonate of soda became readily available and affordable, leading to the development of many sweet cookie recipes. Industrialisation then made the manufacture of cookies in factories possible, beckoning in the era of mass-produced cookies. Cookies today are found in tiny, bite-size shapes, as traybakes cut into squares and bars, or as giant cookies that are served like cake; they can be served plain, dusted with sugar, coated in chocolate, spread with icing, drizzled with glaze, decorated with sweets or sandwiched with a rich creamy filling. Whatever your taste, you'll find them all here to bake, sample and serve – straight from your kitchen.



## advice for readers

### how to use this book

Each of the chapters in this book is comprised of two sections: a series of base recipes and a number of variations on each of the base recipes – with a slight modification of the original recipe, the addition of a cup of raisins or substitution of melted chocolate for white chocolate chips for example, you can create a host of new and exciting cookies.

### wrapping, serving & storing

We have suggested that parchment paper be used to wrap dough and line standard baking trays where a non-stick baking tray is not available. Cling film can also be used to wrap dough that requires refrigerating. Foil is recommended for dough that needs to be wrapped and refrigerated in a specific shape. Serving and storage information is indicated at the end of each recipe – though please note that these are only approximates.

### sugar, eggs & chocolate

Unless the recipe indicates that eggs should be beaten, combine them into the recipe whole. When recipes call for brown sugar, ensure that you pack the sugar when measuring it out in order that the correct amount is used. Finally, we recommend that unrefined sugar be used in recipes contained in the Wholesome chapter, as this chapter is comprised of recipes whose ingredients and preparations offer healthier options. Replace dark and milk chocolate according to taste.

### refrigerated vs fresh dough

If cooking from refrigerated dough, preheat the oven to the temperature indicated 15 minutes before you want to bake the prepared cookie dough.

# equipment

You need only a few basic pieces of equipment to make most cookies.

## **scales, measuring jugs & spoons**

Baking is an exact science, so correct measuring equipment is essential. If the proportions of ingredients are incorrect the cookies may not work, so always use accurate weighing scales, calibrated measuring jugs and proper measuring spoons.

## **mixing bowls & spoons**

You will need a large bowl and wooden spoon for mixing most doughs. Small-sized bowls are useful for melting butter or chocolate or for mixing small quantities such as frosting. A large metal spoon is useful for folding ingredients into delicate mixtures.

## **sieves**

You will need a large sieve for sifting dry ingredients such as flour and a small sieve for dusting icing sugar or cocoa over baked cookies.

## **rolling pin**

Useful for making rolled cookies, although you can use a straight-sided bottle instead. Mini rolling pins are easy for children to use.

## **cookie cutters**

You can cut out rolled cookie dough by hand using a sharp knife, though it's much easier to use cookie cutters. They are available in all shapes and sizes, including rounds, hearts, stars and Christmas trees.

## **baking sheets & trays**

Most cookies are best baked on a flat baking sheet. Baking trays, which have a lip around all four sides, can be used as well, but the flat shape of the sheet allows air to more effectively circulate around the cookie.

## **palette knives & metal spatulas**

Useful for transferring uncooked rolled cookies onto baking sheets, or transferring baked cookies to a wire rack. Small palette knives are good for spreading cookies with filling or icing.

## **timers**

When baking cookies, timing is crucial, so it's advisable to always use a timer. Accurate digital timers are inexpensive and well worth the investment.

## **wire racks**

After baking, most cookies should be transferred to a wire rack to cool.

## **other equipment**

Electric mixers can be great time-savers for mixing cookie doughs – these can be bought quite cheaply as well. A whisk is essential for whisking egg whites and helpful for removing lumps from mixtures. Marble pastry boards can be useful for rolling out cookie dough. Piping bags and nozzles are useful for making piped cookies as well as for decorating baked cookies. For piping icing and melted chocolate, you can usually use a small plastic bag with the corner snipped off. A pastry brush is useful for brushing glazes on to unbaked or baked cookies.

# ingredients

Most cookies are made using three basic ingredients: butter, sugar and flour with the frequent addition of other ingredients such as eggs, chocolate, nuts and vanilla.

## butter & other fats

Unsalted butter is usually best for cookie-making. For rubbed-in cookie mixtures use cold, firm butter; for creamed mixtures, use butter at room temperature; for melted mixtures, dice the butter before gently warming. Margarine, white cooking fats and mild-tasting vegetable oils are sometimes used instead of butter and are a good choice for those with a dairy intolerance or allergy.

## sugar & other sweeteners

There are many different types of sugar, all of which add their own unique taste and texture to cookies. Refined white sugars add sweetness, while unrefined brown sugars add flavour. The texture of the sugar will also affect the cookie. Caster sugar is most frequently used for cookie-making, but granulated sugar and coarse-textured sugars such as demerara sugar and moist sugars such as muscovado sugar are also used. Icing sugar is generally used for dusting cookies and making icing.

Light golden syrup, maple syrup, honey and treacle can also be used in cookies, either in place of, or alongside, sugar. They give a distinctive taste and texture and are a frequent addition to melted cookie mixtures.

## flour & flour alternatives

Most cookies are made with plain flour or self-raising flour – this gives them a lighter texture. Wholemeal flour is sometimes used, but produces cookies with a heavier,

denser texture. Non-wheat flours, often combined with wheat flour, can also be used. These include cornmeal, oatmeal, cornflour and rice flour. Rolled oats and ground nuts are common alternatives to flour.

## eggs

These enrich cookie mixtures and bind ingredients together. For the best results use eggs at room temperature. When whisking egg whites be sure to use a clean, grease-free bowl.

## other ingredients & flavourings

Dried fruits such as raisins, sultanas, apricots and cranberries are a popular addition to cookie mixtures. They are naturally sweet, so you may be able to use less sugar in the actual cookie mixture. Different dried fruits are often interchangeable in recipes.

Nuts are another popular addition, either whole, chopped, flaked or ground. They add a nutty taste, texture and bite.

Seeds such as sunflower, sesame and poppy are often stirred into basic cookie doughs, particularly wholesome and savoury cookie doughs.

Chocolate is widely used in cookie-making, usually as a flavouring, but also as a topping and sometimes as a binding ingredient. Unsweetened cocoa powder can be stirred into basic cookie doughs or used to dust baked cookies. Chocolate chips or chocolate chunks can be stirred into mixtures, and plain, milk or white chocolate can be melted and stirred into mixtures or used to coat or decorate baked cookies. There is a wide selection of various qualities of chocolate available on the market.

Other cookie flavourings include spices, herbs, vanilla, coffee, citrus zest, almond essence and orange essence.

# making cookies

With all the hundreds of different cookies in the world, there are still only five main types of mixture: creamed, rubbed-in, melted, whisked and all-in-one. These mixtures can then be used to make eight different types of cookie.

Creamed mixtures are made with soft butter beaten with sugar until fluffy, then blended with flour, eggs and other ingredients. Creamed cookies include classic butter cookies.

Rubbed-in mixtures are made with cold, firm butter, which is rubbed into the flour, then bound together with eggs, milk or another liquid. Scottish shortbread is one of the classic cookies made using the rubbed-in method.

Melted mixtures are made of butter melted with sugar or syrup, which is then combined with dry ingredients. Classic melted cookies include flapjacks or gingerbread.

Whisked mixtures are made of whisked eggs and sugar (or a meringue mixture), into which the dry ingredients are folded. Classic whisked cookies include macaroons.

All-in-one mixtures are made by putting all the ingredients in a bowl and beating them together. These cookies can usually be made in a food processor, with any chunky ingredients such as dried fruit and nuts stirred in at the last minute.

## drop cookies

Usually made with a soft creamed or all-in-one mixture, drop cookies are made by dropping spoonfuls of cookie mixture onto a greased baking sheet. They may be soft or firm, and are usually thick. Drop cookies can also be made using melted mixtures. The mixture usually spreads out on the baking sheet and results in large, flat, thin, crisp cookies. Melted drop cookies are often pliable when they come out of the oven and may be shaped while still warm, either rolled around a wooden spoon handle to make tubes, draped over a rolling pin to make curls or moulded over a foil-covered orange to make a basket.

## rolled cookies

Made with a firm cookie dough that can be rolled out on a floured surface, these cookies may be made with a creamed, melted or rubbed-in mixture, which is usually chilled before rolling out. They're great for making with children, who will enjoy cutting shapes out of the dough using cookie cutters.

Rolled doughs are also great for making into multi-coloured cookies. Divide the dough into two pieces before chilling and knead a few drops of food colouring or 1 tablespoon cocoa powder into half the dough. Chill, then roll out the two different doughs to equal thickness. Using a large cookie cutter, cut out cookies from each sheet of dough and then, using a smaller cutter, cut out the inside of the cookies. Carefully swap over the cookie centres so that each cookie has a different coloured middle.

Alternatively, make spiral-patterned cookies. Brush the sheet of plain rolled dough with egg white and lay the coloured sheet of dough on top. Roll up tightly to make a log, then slice the dough to make swirly cookies.

## pipéd cookies

Usually made with soft creamed mixtures that are soft enough to press through a piping bag, piped cookies may also be made with whisked mixtures. Piping gives them a professional look, and also makes them very quick and easy to shape. Popular shapes include rosettes, swirls and fingers.

## shaped cookies

Firm doughs can be shaped by pressing into moulds or baking trays, or by rolling bite-sized pieces of dough into balls or thin fingers. Fingers of dough can then be shaped into twists or

knots. Classic moulded cookies include shortbread, for which special moulds are available, while hand-shaped cookies include pretzels and lovers' knots.

#### **bars and traybakes**

Increasingly popular and most often based on creamed, rubbed-in or melted mixtures baked in a baking tray, these cookies can vary enormously in shape, size and texture. Usually cut into squares, bars, fingers or wedges, they may be soft and squidgy, sticky and chewy, or firm and crisp. Bars and traybakes may also be layered, perhaps with a cookie base and an indulgent topping. Classic traybakes include brownies, blondies, flapjacks and the multi-layered millionaire's shortbread.

#### **icebox cookies**

The dough for these cookies can be stored in the refrigerator for one to two weeks, so you can make a few freshly baked cookies at a time, or just prepare the dough in advance to save time later. The dough is usually firm, made from creamed, rubbed-in or melted mixtures, and may be kept in a container and scooped on to a baking tray or shaped into balls. Alternatively, it may be rolled into a log shape, wrapped in clear film and then sliced into cookies when you're ready to bake it.

#### **no-bake cookies**

Rather than baking, these cookies are set by chilling or cooling. Dry ingredients such as broken cookies, breakfast cereal, nuts, dried fruit and marshmallows are stirred into a melted mixture – usually a combination of butter, chocolate and/or syrup – then pressed into a mould or baking tray and cooled until set.

#### **baking, cooling & storing**

Different types of cookie need to be baked at different temperatures, so always follow the recipe instructions. Traybakes are usually cooked in a low to moderate oven (between 160°C / 325°F / Gas mark 3 and 180°C / 350°F / Gas mark 4). Drop cookies are usually baked in a moderate oven (about 180°C / 350°F / Gas mark 4) to allow them to spread while they cook. Rolled, piped and freezer cookies are usually cooked in a moderate to hot oven (between 180°C / 350°F / Gas mark 4 and 200°C / 400°F / Gas mark 6). Some cookies such as biscotti and cantucci are baked twice, first as a loaf of dough, which is then sliced and the individual cookies are returned to the oven to crisp up.

Oven temperatures tend to vary from model to model so always check the cookies a couple of minutes before their baking time is up to avoid overcooking. The temperature within the oven can also vary, so move the baking sheets around halfway through cooking to ensure even cooking. Never bake more than two sheets of cookies at a time because it may cause the oven temperature to drop.

Cookies baked on a baking sheet should usually be left to firm up for a few minutes, before transferring to a wire rack to cool. This allows air to circulate around the cookies and prevents warm moisture condensing and making the cookies soggy. Traybakes are usually best left to cool in the tray before cutting into pieces and removing – although placing the baking tray on a wire rack will help to speed up the cooling process.

Most cookies are best eaten straight from the oven, but they also store well. As soon as the cookies are cool, pack them into an airtight container. This will help to keep soft cookies moist and dry cookies crisp. Unfilled and undecorated cookies can also be frozen. Freeze them in a single layer on baking trays, then transfer them to an airtight container and freeze until required. To thaw, transfer to a wire rack and leave at room temperature for 30 minutes.



## classic cookies

These are the cookies and bars that have been sampled and loved for decades – from peanut butter cookies to tollhouse bars, biscotti to the legendary neiman marcus chocolate chip cookie. These are the simple essentials to any cookie-maker's repertoire.



## scottish shortbread

see variations page 41

Buttery, crumbly and simple to make – you'll love this version of classic shortbread. You can use the recipe to make cookies or as a base for cheesecakes or other desserts.

200 g (7 oz) plain flour  
2 tbsp rice flour  
175 g (6 oz) unsalted butter

100 g (3½ oz) caster sugar  
2 tsp vanilla essence  
2 tsp granulated sugar

Pre-heat the oven to 150°C (300°F / Gas mark 2). Line a 18 x 28-cm (7 x 11-in) tin with foil. Sift the plain flour into a large bowl and add the rice flour.

Beat the butter and the caster sugar until smooth. Add the vanilla essence and stir in the granulated sugar. Work the dough until it starts to clump together, then press it into the tin.

Bake for 45 to 50 minutes. The shortbread will look cooked before it actually is, so ensure that it bakes for the full 45 minutes.

Remove from the oven, sprinkle with granulated sugar and cut into fingers. Cool for 20 minutes and remove from the tin.

Store in an airtight container for up to five days.

*Makes 1½ dozen*

# almond biscotti

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This twice-baked Italian biscuit can be enjoyed with coffee or served with sorbet as a dessert.

300 g (10 oz) plain flour  
200 g (7 oz) caster sugar  
1 tsp baking powder  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp salt

3 eggs  
2 tsp vanilla essence  
100 g (3 $\frac{1}{2}$  oz) whole blanched almonds

Pre-heat the oven to 150°C (300°F / Gas mark 2). Grease and flour two baking sheets. Mix the dry ingredients together in a large bowl. Whisk the eggs and vanilla essence together then stir into the dry ingredients. Add the almonds and stir them into the dough. The dough should be sticky.

Divide the dough between the baking sheets and shape into two flat loaves about 25 cm (10 in) long and 5 cm (2 in) wide. Bake for 35 to 40 minutes until pale golden. Remove from the oven onto a chopping board and immediately slice into thin pieces about 1 cm ( $\frac{1}{2}$  in) wide. Lay the slices back onto the baking sheets and cook for 10 to 15 minutes. Turn over each slice and cook for a further 10 to 15 minutes, or until the slices are golden brown. Remove from the oven and allow to cool.

When cool, store in an airtight container. The biscotti will keep for a couple of weeks.

Makes 3 $\frac{1}{2}$  dozen

