

Cookie Tips

- » The type of cookie sheet you use will influence the baking time. Stainless steel and other shiny bakeware reflects heat, which means your cookies will bake slower, while dark or dull bakeware (like those with a black finish) will absorb more heat and increase browning.
- » It's fine to substitute margarine for butter in a cookie recipe, but make sure it's at least 60% vegetable oil. Lower-fat products have less fat and more water than the recipe depends upon.
- » To lighten flour without sifting, stir it with a whisk.
- » Check the temperature of your oven occasionally, using an oven thermometer. It's not unusual for ovens to vary 25°F from the knob setting. Once you know how your oven is working, temperature-wise, you can adjust your settings.
- » When a recipe says to "cream" the fat and the sugars, it means to beat the mixture to a light, fluffy consistency. Doing this gives your cookies a lighter texture and more volume, because it incorporates air into the batter. An electric mixer is a big help here.
- » Freeze cookie dough for up to 6 months in a freezer container. Freeze baked cookies in a freezer container for up to 8 months. In the refrigerator, the dough will keep for up to a week in an airtight container.
- » When making rolled cookies, refrigerate the dough for at least five hours before rolling. This will make it easier to work with.



Why Buy Bulk Spices?

Want the freshest spices along with the most flexibility and fun while shopping? Then buying in bulk is for you. Comparison shop for a few spices, and you'll see why bulk is your best choice:

» Price

You'll pay from three to 10 times more for the same amount of spice if you buy it in bottles instead of in bulk! (You—and the environment—have to pay for all those jars and labels, after all.)

» Freshness

As you measure your spices from the bulk jars, relish the aroma, color and texture of each. You know that these spices are fresh because the stock is updated often. They're bright, not faded, richly aromatic, not faint. Your senses can't judge the color or aroma of prepackaged spices, because they're hidden away.

» Versatility

Whether you're stocking up on your favorite cooking staples or just buying a pinch of this or that for a particular recipe, when you buy in bulk, you'll always have the right amount. You don't have to buy an entire package of that exotic spice you'll use only once a year, and you don't have to purchase multiple packages of a basic pickling spice to last through canning season.

» Fun

With bulk spices, you can decide to buy a smidgen of something that strikes your fancy just for fun (chances are there will be plenty of enticing choices). Once home, you'll enjoy replenishing your spice jars, and you'll look forward to cooking with these wonderful, fresh seasonings. Shopping for bulk spices is an all-around satisfying experience!



spice
savy

Spice Cookies

Recipes for ...

- » Scandinavian Spice Cookies
- » Spicy Pumpkin Cookies
- » Anise Cookies

... and more!

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Q&A

I don't have time to measure out a long list of ingredients when making a quick batch of cookies, but I love the taste of spices. Any shortcuts?

Sure. Sometimes just one strong spice (like ginger or allspice) is enough. Other times, you can substitute convenient blends like Pumpkin Pie Spice or Apple Pie and Dessert Spice for a handful of cookie spices. Pumpkin Pie Spice would work well in a pumpkin or squash cookie recipe, for example, while Apple Pie and Dessert Spice would be great in an oatmeal cookie.

How much is "a dash?"

Recipes that call for a dash generally don't require an exact amount, but it's considered less than 1/8 teaspoon. So a quick shake or sprinkle will do.

Is anise the same as licorice?

No, though they share some components that make them smell and taste similar. Licorice comes from the root of the licorice plant, while anise is a seed-like fruit. Anise is delicious in fruit pies and compotes, cookies and cakes, slaws, and beverages. The British enjoy sweet "aniseed balls," while in New Zealand cooks whip up "anise wheel" treats, and Mexicans use anise in a hot chocolate beverage. It's been enjoyed in many cultures as a breath freshener, too. Anise oil is used in Italian cookies called pizzelles and to frost Italian "anise drops."

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Sugar and Spice and Very Nice Cookies



There's something mysteriously enticing about spice cookies. Perhaps it's the warmly fragrant prelude as they bake. Or maybe it's the delicious interplay between the sweet and spicy flavors. The best spice cookies deliver rich, distinctive (but not overwhelming) taste.

Scandinavian Spice Cookies

The subtly sweet flavor of this cookie lends itself well to the addition of spices. Here are two variations, but you get the idea; use the basic recipe as a backdrop for your favorite flavors.

1 cup all-purpose, unbleached flour ½ cup butter
1 teaspoon cardamom powder ¼ cup sugar
Dash of sea salt 1 teaspoon almond extract

In a small bowl, whisk together the flour, cardamom, and salt. In another bowl, cream the butter and sugar. Stir in the almond extract. Stir the dry ingredients into the wet ingredients and mix well. Form into a ball and chill in the refrigerator for 30 minutes or more. Preheat oven to 350°F. Form the dough into one-inch balls and roll in sugar. Place on ungreased cookie sheet. Flatten with a cookie stamp (or the back of a fork if you don't have a stamp). Bake until lightly browned, about 15 minutes. Makes about one dozen cookies.

Variation: Substitute ½ teaspoon cinnamon powder and ¼ teaspoon nutmeg powder for the cardamom, and replace the almond extract with 1 teaspoon vanilla extract.

Anise Cookies

The licorice-like bite of anise cookies is addicting, so you might want to double this recipe!

1 ½ cups all-purpose, unbleached flour 2 eggs
2 teaspoons anise seeds, lightly crushed (with a mortar and pestle or the back of a spoon) ¾ cups sugar
2 teaspoons vanilla extract

Preheat oven to 350°F. In a small bowl, whisk together the flour and anise seeds. In another bowl, cream together the eggs and sugar. Stir in vanilla extract. Gradually add the flour mixture to the egg mixture, beating until well blended. Drop batter by heaping teaspoonfuls onto greased cookie sheet, leaving room for cookies to spread. Bake until lightly browned, about 15 to 20 minutes. Makes about 2 dozen cookies.



Spicy Pumpkin Cookies

This recipe also works well with cooked and pureed squash or sweet potatoes in place of the pumpkin. Frost with cream cheese frosting, if you like.

1 ½ cup whole wheat flour ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
1 teaspoon baking soda ¾ cup maple syrup
½ teaspoon cinnamon powder 1 cup cooked and pureed pumpkin
¼ teaspoon nutmeg powder ½ cup raisins
¼ teaspoon cloves powder 1 egg
¼ teaspoon sea salt
½ cup butter



In a small bowl, whisk together the flour, baking soda, spices, and salt. In another bowl, cream butter and maple syrup together. Beat in the egg, pumpkin puree, and vanilla extract. Add the dry ingredients to the wet and blend. Stir in the raisins. Drop by heaping tablespoons onto a lightly greased cookie sheet. Bake at 325°F until lightly browned, about 12 to 15 minutes. Makes about 2 dozen cookies.

Quick Cream Cheese Frosting: Beat together 1 8-ounce package of softened cream cheese with 2 tablespoons honey, and 1 teaspoon vanilla extract.

Ginger Snaps

Ginger adds zing to this traditional namesake cookie. Bake a batch when you want your home wafted in its warm fragrance.

2 ¼ cups all-purpose, unbleached flour Dash of sea salt
1 teaspoon baking soda ¾ cup butter
2 teaspoons ginger powder ½ cup brown sugar
1 teaspoon cinnamon powder ½ cup sugar
¼ teaspoon cloves powder ¼ cup molasses
1 egg

In a small bowl, whisk together the flour, baking soda, spices, and salt. In another bowl, cream together butter, brown sugar, and sugar. Beat in molasses and egg. Add the dry ingredients to the wet and blend. Form into a ball and chill in refrigerator for 30 minutes or more. Preheat oven to 375°F. Shape heaping tablespoons of dough into balls, and place on lightly greased cookie sheet. Flatten with a drinking glass that has been dipped in sugar. Bake until bottoms are lightly browned, about 10-12 minutes. Makes about 2 dozen cookies.

