

# Chocolate Sugar Cookies

Turning a chewy sugar cookie into a chewy *chocolate* sugar cookie takes a little more than simply stirring in chocolate. BY CAROLYNN PURPURA MACKAY

I HAVE A THING for sugar cookies, especially the kind with crisp edges, chewy centers, and crunchy, crackled, sugary tops.

The ones I'm talking about require no laborious rolling out—just shape the dough into balls, dip in sugar, flatten, and bake. I hoped to create a chocolate version.

I started with the test kitchen's recipe for chewy brown sugar cookies. It's an unusual recipe: It calls for melted, browned butter, whereas most recipes use ordinary chilled butter. The browning adds flavor, while the melting adds chew. This recipe also uses lots of dark brown sugar and vanilla for extra flavor.

So I mixed  $1\frac{3}{4}$  cups of brown sugar, vanilla, and salt into 14 tablespoons of melted browned butter; then stirred in 1 ounce of cooled, melted chocolate and the eggs; and, lastly, added leavener and  $2\frac{1}{4}$  cups of flour. I repeated this test several times, increasing the amount of chocolate, but by the time the cookies were chocolaty enough (which took 4 ounces), they were no longer chewy. How about cocoa powder? After several experiments, I found that I was able to use  $2\frac{1}{4}$  ounces of cocoa to replace some of the flour (if I used too much cocoa, the cookies crumbled). Fortunately, since cocoa is more intense than bar chocolate, the flavor was just as good despite the reduction—plus, the cookies were chewy again.

Browning the butter was bothersome. I had to watch it like a dog on a squirrel or it would go from brown to burnt in an instant. With so much chocolate, was it even adding anything? I made two new batches of cookies, one with browned butter, the other with merely melted. As it turned out, few of us could tell the difference.

My chocolate sugar cookie recipe had come together quickly, but one problem remained. The results were inconsistent from batch to batch. Blame the butter. If it was too hot when I added it to the dough, the cookies spread too much. To foolproof my recipe, I melted most (but not all) of the butter and then stirred in the remaining cold butter to cool it down.

Using this technique, I was able to produce round, even cookies with deep chocolate flavor; nice chew; and fissured, sugary tops—every time. Now all I needed was a glass of milk.



These cookies get their intense flavor from cocoa and plenty of vanilla and dark brown sugar.

## CHOCOLATE SUGAR COOKIES

Makes 24 cookies

- $\frac{1}{3}$  cup ( $2\frac{1}{3}$  ounces) granulated sugar
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups plus 2 tablespoons ( $8\frac{3}{8}$  ounces) all-purpose flour
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup ( $2\frac{1}{4}$  ounces) unsweetened cocoa powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon baking soda
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon baking powder
- 14 tablespoons unsalted butter
- $1\frac{3}{4}$  cups packed ( $12\frac{1}{4}$  ounces) dark brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon salt
- 1 large egg plus 1 large yolk

1. Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 350 degrees. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper. Place granulated sugar in shallow dish; set aside. Combine flour, cocoa, baking soda, and baking powder in bowl.

2. Microwave 10 tablespoons butter, covered, in large bowl until melted,

about 1 minute. Remove from microwave and stir in remaining 4 tablespoons butter until melted. Allow butter to cool to 90 to 95 degrees, about 5 minutes.

3. Whisk brown sugar, vanilla, and salt into butter until no lumps remain, scraping down bowl as needed. Whisk in egg and yolk until smooth. Stir in flour mixture until just combined.

4. Working with 2 tablespoons dough at a time, roll into balls. Working in batches, roll balls in granulated sugar and divide between baking sheets. Using bottom of drinking glass, flatten cookies to 2 inches in diameter. Sprinkle each sheet of cookies with  $1\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoons remaining granulated sugar.

5. Bake 1 sheet at a time until cookies are slightly puffy and edges have begun to set, about 15 minutes, rotating sheet halfway through baking (cookies will look slightly underdone between cracks). Let cookies cool on sheets for 5 minutes, then transfer to wire rack. Let cookies cool completely before serving.