

Chocolate Chip Cookies

Yields about 45 cookies

This popular cookie is a perfect candidate for an oven test-bake. I baked one batch in my electric oven on the "standard bake mode" and another batch in the same oven on "convection bake mode." Both batches were baked with the rack in the center of the oven. The standard batch set at 350° finished in 12 minutes and had a rich golden color. After cooling, they set up perfectly, crisp on the outer edge yet tender in the center. The convection set at 325° finished in 11 minutes and emerged puffy and a tad bit deeper golden color. After cooling, the puffiness dissipated, and like the other batch it was crisp on the outer portion of the cookie and tender in the center. Thumbs-up for both batches.

- 2 cups + 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 1 cup light brown sugar
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- 2 teaspoons pure vanilla
- 2 large eggs
- 2 cups (12 ounces) semisweet chocolate chips
- 1 cup chopped nuts

Instructions: Place the rack in the center of the oven; preheat

the oven to 350°.

Combine the flour, baking soda and salt in a small bowl; set aside. Beat the butter, sugars and vanilla in a large mixer bowl on low speed, about 1 minute. Maintaining the same speed, add the eggs, one at a time, blending in well after each addition, about a minute. Continuing on low speed, gradually blend in the flour mixture, about ¼ cup at a time. Add the chocolate chips and nuts on low speed just until incorporated into the dough, 10 to 15 seconds. Drop by slightly rounded tablespoons or use an ice cream scoop #50 (1 tablespoon capac-



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ity) to drop 1 level scoop of the dough onto parchment-lined baking sheets.

Bake for 9-12 minutes, or until barely golden brown. Cool on baking sheets for 2 minutes; remove the cookies to wire racks to cool completely.

Per cookie: 140 calories, 1 g protein, 17 g carbohydrate, 8 g fat (4 g saturated), 11 mg cholesterol, 32 mg sodium, 1 g fiber.

COOKIE TEST

My rendition of the ever-popular chocolate chip cookie is a good way to test your oven after it's been calibrated, or to test an oven thermometer that you might have purchased.

How these cookies bake will allow you to judge how the calibrated adjustment affects your baking.

- ▶ If your cookies that you baked in your new oven baked too fast or too slow, adjust the temperature up or down accordingly.
- ▶ If the cookies that are closest to the left side of the oven or the back of the oven are darker than the ones on the right side or in front, then rotate the pan half way through baking.
- ▶ If the bottoms of the cookies are too dark, be sure that the rack placement is at least a few inches above the heat source. (see "Rack placement," page F4)



▶ If you have an oven door window, it's a good idea to check the baking process through the window with about one-quarter of the estimated baking time remaining. Is the crust browning too soon? (Lightly cover the portion with aluminum foil.) Are the cookies browning too much on one side of the baking sheet? (Rotate the

pan.) Is the puff pastry lifting? (If not, raise the temperature 25 degrees.) If a range of time is given, check at the earliest number for doneness.

- ▶ Avoid opening the oven door since heat escapes when you open it, triggering the element to kick in to compensate for the loss. This causes temperature fluctuations that can result in uneven baking.