



## COOKIE BAKING TIPS

*These are the general guidelines I follow to get thick, soft, and yummy cookies. You certainly don't need to do all of these to make something delicious, though—just choose what works best for you!*

Read through the entire recipe before starting. Be sure you have all of the ingredients and enough time to complete the recipe.

Measure ingredients by weight to ensure you have the correct amount. This will also help with consistency from batch to batch, too. King Arthur Flour's site has a handy master weight chart for many ingredients. They also have an excellent guide for baking at high altitudes.

Use high-quality ingredients (particularly when it comes to chocolate and cocoa). Your cookies will only be as good as the ingredients you use.

Using unsalted butter will ensure that you will put the same amount of salt in each time. However, if you aren't worried about being consistent, salted butter is fine: just subtract  $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp salt from the recipe for every stick of salted butter that you use.

Bring eggs to room temperature by placing them in warm water. (This is also a good way to test the freshness of the eggs—if they sink completely or sink and stand up a little bit, they're good; if they float to the top, they have gone bad.)

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Use imitation vanilla for cookies. The nuanced flavor compounds in natural vanilla extract begin to bake off at around 280 to 300 degrees. Imitation vanilla has only one flavor: vanillin (the predominant flavor in vanilla), and it doesn't bake off in cookies. (For everything else, use the real stuff if you can!)

Make sure your leaveners (baking soda, baking powder, cream of tartar) are fresh, otherwise your cookies won't rise very much.

Line your cookie sheets with parchment paper to make cleanup quick and easy.

Use a cookie scoop to make cookies uniform in size. It is also faster than using a spoon.

The wetness of the dough indicates how much cookies will spread. Wet and sticky dough will spread quite a bit; dry and firm dough won't spread much at all.

Chilled dough spreads slower than room-temperature dough. Refrigerating dough results in thicker, softer cookies.

Use an oven thermometer to be sure you are baking your cookies at the correct temperature. Some ovens can vary by as much as 50° F!

Drop cookies are easy to adjust for size. Just bake larger cookies a little longer and smaller cookies a little shorter! If your cookies are especially large, make sure the prepared dough is puck-shaped rather than perfectly round so that it bakes evenly.

