

FOR ME, FOR YOU

BY KATE MISS

THE ONLY CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIE I WILL
EVER NEED TO KNOW HOW TO MAKE FOR THE
REST OF MY LIFE



Thank you all for the wonderful responses to the blog redesign! I'm so glad you like it. As a token of my appreciation, how about the world's greatest cookie recipe in return? When I say "the world's greatest cookie recipe", this ain't no hyperbole my friends, this is the real deal. The holy grail of cookie recipes. The once in a lifetime chance to have access to what my friend Shirley describes to me as "The Only Chocolate Chip Cookie I Will Ever Need to Know How to Make For The Rest of My Life".

Let's step back for a second as a recipe like this don't just show up on your

greatest thing you can ever do for a vacation, by the way). Upon arriving at their apartment, we discovered an adorable plate of chocolate chip cookies set out for us that Shirley had baked, displayed in a way that would make Martha Stewart proud and any tired traveler thank the gods. See evidence below:



Not only did we inhale them (I couldn't even wait to take the photo before inhaling one, obviously), but we discovered a bag of extra dough in the freezer, which we shamefully inhaled some of as well. Needless to say I found these cookies to be magnificent. They were the perfect consistency -not too cakey or soft, a little crisp on the outside and gooey on the inside. Caramely and rich, with a sprinkle of sea salt on top. I dreamed about these cookies later. I dreamed about these cookies for almost *three effing years* until last weekend, trying to figure out what to bring to a potluck, the thought occurred to me to ask Shirley for the recipe. Why I didn't ask sooner is beyond me. I guess maybe at the time I wasn't really as into baking as I am now and I thought she just possessed magical skills that caused these cookies to be so good, rather than secret tricks. So I emailed her, and within hours I had the beast of a recipe below in my inbox. I asked her if I could share the recipe on my blog, let the secret out, and she said, "Of course. I don't want anyone to deal with a mediocre cookie ever again. Why? The tragedy can be avoided!" Indeed.



I've put Shirley's recipe along with my own notes in italics. I baked two batches and tried different things, which I note below. (Best blog research ever?) Don't let this recipe intimidate you. The only thing it requires is a little patience due to the refrigerating, and some planning to get everything at room temperature before you dive in. This is no "I want cookies in my mouth hole asap" recipe. This is a "I want the best damn chocolate chip cookies that have ever graced this earth and I am willing to practice some patience to get them in my mouth hole" recipe.



The Only Chocolate Chip Cookie I Will Ever Need to Know How to

by Emily Menander, adapted from Jacques Torres (Kate: I totally had this link and recipe wrong before, sorry about that!)

Secret 1: The use of a mix of cake flour and bread flour. Cake flour is finer, and bread flour has gluten, both important. Use them and no other.

***Kate:** I'm fairly certain this is one of the keys to this recipe being so great. It took me ages to find cake flour at my huge grocery store as it's not super popular and they hid it on the top shelf that I had to have someone help me get down, but dig dig dig as it's necessary!*

Secret 2: Chilling. This is key — KEY! — to cookie texture success. The reason is that letting the dough rest allows all the eggs and the butter and the liquids to ooze and soak and hydrate into all the dry goodness. 24 hours is minimum, 36 is preferable (and noticeably better).

Also, the flavor gets crazy! Deep, caramel-y, toffee-y, and they bake up so much more deliciously brown. Plus, it lets the outside get crisp and crackly and keeps the middle almost underdone when you pull them out — they set up and turn into soft, chewy heaven.

***Kate:** I baked one batch after only four hours of chilling and they were great – like SO great people begged me for the recipe at the potluck. Then I tried 12 hours, 24 hours, and 36 hours. While 36 was DEFINITELY in-freaking-credible (so true about the caramel-y-ness), if you can only wait four hours, it won't be the end of the world. This also makes SO many cookies that you could make half and then half later, like I did.*

Secret 3: All ingredients. Room temperature. Do it. (Note: The misconception with room-temperature butter: it actually doesn't mean letting it sit out until it's supersoft and melty. You should be able to press a slice of butter with your finger and easily make a dent, and it should crack faintly.)

Secret 4: Did you know? People make their cookies way too small! It's silliness! If you make them too small, they dry out too quick, and they get too crunchy. We want gooey and chewy! The way to achieve that is to scoop your dough out into golf-ball sized — or slightly larger — portions. I use a 1/3 c measuring cup for extra big cookies.

Secret 5: The chocolate. Sorry, Toll House. And don't even think about the generic supermarket brand. I only use Ghiardelli 60% Cacao chips — they're pretty widely available the best chips you can buy at a grocery store. However, if

Secret 6: The sprinkle of salt on the top. Makes all the sweetness sing.

Secret 7: Wait. I mean, sure, have one piping hot out of the oven, but the flavors actually meld and deepen once they cool. These are definitely cookies that get better the next day.

Secret 7 1/2: Always err on taking them out too early rather than too late – also essential for middle-softness. They continue to cook on the sheet for a few minutes, so don't overdo it – underdone is better than overdone, every time (and you can always pop them in for a minute more if you like).

Stick to these secrets, and you will ace chocolate chip cookies forever.

2 cups minus 2 Tbsp. cake flour (8 1/2 oz)*
1 2/3 cups bread flour (8 1/2 oz)*
1 1/4 tsp. baking soda
1 1/2 tsp. baking powder
1 1/2 tsp. coarse salt, such as kosher
2 1/2 sticks (1 1/4 cups; 10 oz.) unsalted butter, softened
1 1/4 cups (10 oz.) light brown sugar
1 cup plus 2 Tbsp. (8 oz.) granulated sugar
2 large eggs
2 tsp. vanilla extract
1 1/4 pounds bittersweet chocolate chips or chunks, preferably about 60% cacao content, such as Ghirardelli
Sea salt or kosher salt for garnishing

(* to those questioning the weight of the flours – they are indeed correct. Different flours have different weights, so just because you are weighing out the same oz doesn't mean you are using the same amount, if that makes sense. Trust Shirley on this one.)

Combine flours, baking soda, baking powder, and salt in a bowl. Whisk well; then set aside.

Using a mixer fitted with paddle attachment, cream butter and sugars until very light and fluffy, about 3 to 5 minutes. Add the eggs, one at a time, mixing well after each addition. Mix in the vanilla. Scrape down the sides of the bowl with a rubber spatula as needed. Reduce the mixer speed to low; then add dry ingredients, and mix until just combined. (Unless you have a plastic guard that sits around the rim of the bowl, this will make a big mess at first, with flour flying

plastic wrap against the dough, and refrigerate for 24 to 36 hours. The dough may be used in batches, and can be refrigerated for up to 72 hours.

When you're ready to bake, preheat oven to 350°F. Remove the bowl of dough from the refrigerator, and allow it to soften slightly. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper or a nonstick baking mat.

Using a standard-size ice cream scoop – mine holds about 3 fluid ounces, or about 1/3 cup – scoop six mounds of dough onto the baking sheet, making sure to space them evenly. Sprinkle lightly with sea salt, and bake until golden brown but still soft, 15 to 20 minutes. Transfer the baking sheet to a wire rack for 10 minutes, then transfer the cookies onto the rack to cool a bit more.

***Kate:** my oven is a class-act pile of junk, so one batch was cooked at 400 for 15 minutes and I think it turned out the best! One was cooked at 300 for 25 and it was kind of mediocre. So, in my opinion, hotter and faster seems to be better. At least in my crazy oven.*

Repeat with remaining dough.

Yield: About 24 (5-inch) cookies. ***Kate:** Mine made more like 18. But I have a cookie dough eating problem.*

Go forth and make cookies, people.

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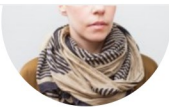
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