

Peanut Butter Sandwich Cookies

From America's Test Kitchen episode: *Great American Classics*.

Makes 24 cookies

Do not use unsalted peanut butter for this recipe.

INGREDIENTS

COOKIES

1 1/4 cups (6 1/4 ounces) raw peanuts, toasted and cooled

3/4 cup (3 3/4 ounces) all-purpose flour

1 teaspoon baking soda

1/2 teaspoon salt

3 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted

1/2 cup creamy peanut butter

1/2 cup (3 1/2 ounces) granulated sugar

1/2 cup packed (3 1/2 ounces) light brown sugar

3 tablespoons whole milk

1 large egg

FILLING

3/4 cup creamy peanut butter

3 tablespoons unsalted butter

1 cup (4 ounces) confectioners' sugar

INSTRUCTIONS

1. FOR THE COOKIES: Adjust oven racks to upper-middle and lower-middle positions and heat oven to 350 degrees. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper. Pulse peanuts in food processor until finely chopped, about 8 pulses. Whisk

flour, baking soda, and salt together in bowl. Whisk butter, peanut butter, granulated sugar, brown sugar, milk, and egg together in second bowl. Stir flour mixture into peanut butter mixture with rubber spatula until combined. Stir in peanuts until evenly distributed.

2. Using #60 scoop or tablespoon measure, place 12 mounds, evenly spaced, on each prepared baking sheet. Using damp hand, flatten mounds until 2 inches in diameter.

3. Bake until deep golden brown and firm to touch, 15 to 18 minutes, switching and rotating sheets halfway through baking. Let cookies cool on sheets for 5 minutes. Transfer cookies to wire rack and let cool completely, about 30 minutes. Repeat portioning and baking remaining dough.

4. FOR THE FILLING: Microwave peanut butter and butter until butter is melted and warm, about 40 seconds. Using rubber spatula, stir in confectioners' sugar until combined.

5. TO ASSEMBLE: Place 24 cookies upside down on work surface. Place 1 level tablespoon (or #60 scoop) warm filling in center of each cookie. Place second cookie on top of filling, right side up, pressing gently until filling spreads to edges. Allow filling to set for 1 hour before serving. Assembled cookies can be stored in airtight container for up to 3 days.

TECHNIQUE

FILLING COOKIES EVENLY SCOOP IT WARM

Using a #60 scoop or a tablespoon measure, portion warm filling onto the bottom cookies (turned upside down).



SQUISH IT GENTLY

Rather than smearing the filling with a knife or offset



spatula, top it with a second cookie and press gently until it spreads to the edges.



TECHNIQUE

PERFECTING THE PEANUT BUTTER SANDWICH COOKIE

Many recipes for peanut butter sandwich cookies disappoint with soft, dull-tasting cookies and overly sweet fillings. Here's how we improved the concept.

Super-Crunchy Cookies Fewer eggs and more baking soda add up to thin, flat, extra-crisp cookies.

A Smooth—but Not Runny—Filling Creaminess was crucial, but so was a filling that didn't squish out the sides. Our formula: peanut butter, butter, and enough confectioners' sugar to firm up the texture.



Big Peanut Flavor Replacing some of the flour with chopped toasted peanuts made the cookies extra nutty.

TECHNIQUE

WHAT'S WITH THOSE FLOURLESS PEANUT BUTTER COOKIES?

Since we knew that the starch granules in flour mute the flavor of peanut butter, we briefly turned our attention to an Internet sensation: flourless peanut butter cookies, made with just peanut butter, sugar, egg, and sometimes a bit of

baking soda. Indeed, when we tried a sample batch of our cookies sans flour, they tasted super peanut-y and baked up looking much like traditional peanut butter cookies. Why didn't these flourless cookies melt right off of the cookie sheet? Because peanut butter contains approximately 20 percent carbohydrates and 25 percent protein, components that absorb moisture and harden into a stable network in the heat of the oven. But without the sturdier structure that only starch from wheat flour can provide, these cookies fell apart in our hands before we could even take a bite.



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