

Solutions To Make Perfect Holiday Cookies

An infinite variety of cookie recipes are made during the holidays. Some cookies are soft, some are crisp, some spread during baking and some hold their shape. In order to produce the characteristics we want and correct faults, it is useful to know what causes these characteristics.

Crispness

Cookies are crisp if they are very low in moisture.

The following factors will contribute to crispness:

1. Low proportion of liquid in the mix. Most crisp cookies are made from still dough.
2. High sugar and fat content.
3. Evaporation of moisture during baking due to high temperature and/or long baking.
4. Small size or thin shape, so the cookie dries faster during baking.
5. Proper storage. Crisp cookies can become soft if they absorb moisture.

Softness

Softness is the opposite of crispness, so it has the opposite causes, as follows:

1. High proportion of liquid in mix.
2. Low sugar and fat.
3. Honey, molasses, or corn syrup included in formulas. These sugars are hygroscopic, which means they readily absorb moisture from the air or from their surroundings.
4. Underbaking.
5. Large size or thick shapes, retains moisture.
6. Proper storage. Soft cookies can become stale and dry if not tightly covered or wrapped.

Chewiness

Moisture is necessary for chewiness, but other factors are also required. In other words, all

chewy cookies are soft, but not all soft cookies are chewy.

1. High sugar and liquid content, but low fat content.
2. High proportion of eggs.
3. Strong flours or gluten developed during mixing.

Spread

Spread is desirable in some cookies, while others must hold their shape. Several factors contribute to spread or lack of spread.

1. Sugar: High sugar content increases spread. Coarse granulated sugar increases spread, while fine sugar or confectioners' sugar reduces spread.
2. Leavening: High baking soda or baking powder content encourages spread.
3. Temperature: Low oven temperature increases spread. High temperature increases spread. High temperature decreases spread because the cookie sets up before it has a chance to spread too much.
4. Liquid: A slack batter — that is, one with a high liquid content — spreads more than stiff dough.
5. Flour: Strong flour or activation of gluten decreases spread.
6. Pan grease: Cookies spread more if baked on a heavily greased pan.

Mixing Method

1. Measure ingredients accurately. Have all ingredients at room temperature.
2. Place the fat, sugar, salt, and spices in the mixing bowl. Cream these ingredients at low speed. For light cookies, cream until the mix is light and fluffy, to incorporate more air for leavening. For a dense, chewier cookie, cream only slightly.

3. Add the eggs and liquid and blend in at low speed.

4. Sift in the flour and leavening. Mix until just combined. Some recipes require that the liquid and flour be added in steps in order to blend uniformly.

Dropped Cookies

Dropped cookies are made from a soft dough. They are fast and easy to make up.

1. Make all cookies of uniform size and thickness.
2. Drop the cookies onto the prepared baking sheets. Allow enough space between cookies for spreading.
3. Rich cookies will spread by themselves. If the formula requires it, flatten the mounds of batter slightly with a weight dipped in sugar.

Bagged Cookies

Bagged or pressed cookies are also made from soft dough. The dough must be soft enough to be forced through a pastry bag, but stiff enough to hold its shape.

1. Fit a pastry bag with a tip of desired size and shape. Fill the bag with the cookie dough.
2. Press out cookies of desired shape and size directly onto prepared cookie sheets.

Rolled Cookies

Cookies rolled and cut from a stiff dough. Leftover scraps when re-rolled make inferior, tough cookies.

1. Chill dough thoroughly.
2. Roll dough out 1/8-inch thick on floured canvas. Use as little flour as possible for dusting, to prevent tough cookies.
3. Cut out cookies with cookie cutters and place on prepared baking sheets. Cut as close together as possible to reduce the quantity of scraps.

Molded — Balled — Icebox Cookies

These cookies are called molded because they are sometimes

tamped out with special cookie molds. They are also called balled cookies, because the individual portions of dough may be rolled into balls by hand. The dough may also be rolled into cylinders in waxed paper and refrigerated until ready to bake hence the name icebox cookies.

1. Roll the dough out into long cylinders about one-inch thick, or whatever size is required. (Refrigerate the dough if it is too soft to handle or if being stored for future use.)
2. With a knife cut the roll into pieces as recipe states.
3. Place the pieces on prepared baking sheets, leaving two-inches of spaces between each.
4. Flatten cookies with a weight (such as a glass) dipped in granulated sugar or flatten with a fork.

Sheet Cookies (often referred to as bar cookies)
Sheet cookies vary so much that it is nearly impossible to give a single procedure for all of them. Some of them are almost like sheet cakes, only denser and richer. They may even be iced like sheet cakes. Others consist of two or three layers added and baked in separate stages. The following procedure is only a general guideline.

Sheet Cookies (often referred to as bar cookies)

1. Spread cookie mixture into prepared sheet pans. Make sure the thickness is even.
2. If required, add topping or brush with an egg wash.
3. Bake as directed. Cool.
4. Cut into individual squares or rectangles.

Preparing The Pans

1. Use clean, unwarped pans. Place dough on a cool cookie sheet.
2. Lining the sheets with parchment or nonstick sheets is

fast, and it eliminates the necessity of greasing the pans.

3. A heavily greased pan increases the spread of the cookie. A greased and floured pan decreased spread.

4. Some high-fat cookies can be baked on ungreased pans.

Baking

1. Most cookies are baked at a relatively high temperature for a short time. Preheat the oven.
2. Too low a temperature increases spreading and may produce hard, dry, pale cookies.
3. Too high a temperature decreases spreading and may burn the edges or bottoms.
4. Even a minute of overbaking can burn cookies, so watch them closely. Also, the heat of the pan continues to bake the cookies even after they are removed from the oven.

Cooling

1. Remove cookies from pans while they are still warm, or they may stick.
2. If cookies are very soft, do not remove from pans until they are cool enough and firm enough to handle. Cookies may be soft when hot but become crisp when cool.
3. Do not cool too rapidly or in cold drafts, or cookies may crack.

Storing

1. Cool completely before storing.
2. Store each type of cookie separately.
3. Freeze cookies up to nine-12 months in a foil-lined container separating each layer with plastic wrap. Tightly seal container, label and freeze. Thaw cookies in refrigerator or at room temperature.

Come Clean For Great Coffee

A clean coffeemaker is essential to good tasting coffee. Mineral deposits from the water settle into the coffeemaker's water chamber, affecting the hardness of the water used to brew the coffee.

If the brewing water gets too hard, the coffee may begin to taste strange. The harder the

water that goes into the coffeemaker, the more frequently the equipment should be cleaned.

At a minimum, the coffeemaker's pot and filter container should be cleaned once a week. Refer to the coffeemaker's manual for specific cleaning instructions.

30TH ANNIVERSARY CHRISTMAS & TOOL SALE

December 2 through 23

Contractors, Farmers and Home Owners
Get Up To 20% Discount Off Of Our Regular Prices.

All Wedding Gifts Get
10% Discount On Less than \$200.00 Worth

All Other Farm Hardware Tools, Toys, Cookware, Wagons, All Gifts, Dog Kennels, Hot Beds, Water Bowls, All Plumbing Parts, Tobacco Twine and Paper

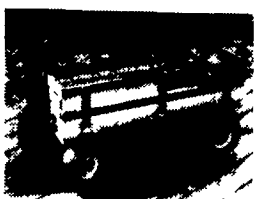
\$200.00 Get 10% Discount Plus A Free Mug

\$350.00 Get 15% Discount Plus A Free Rain Gauge

\$1,000.00 Get 20% Discount Plus A Free Hand-Painted Saw Blade

Check Our Special Prices On DeWalt and Makita Cordless and Power Tools

VALLEY ROAD SPEEDER WAGONS



MODEL 350-*
10" Air Tires,
20"x40" Bed
\$157
With Racks

MODEL 1300-*
13" Air Tires, 24"x48"
Bed Brakes
w/Racks.....**\$193**
w/o Racks.....**\$173**

Small MODEL 175-*
10x175 Wheels, 16"x36"
Bed **\$97** w/Racks

*Will Ship U.P.S. Anywhere In The U.S. (Except Model 1300) - You Pay Shipping In Advance Or We Will Bill.

Valley Hardware

Feed Carts - Express Wagons - Hardware - Martin Senour Paint - Kendall Motor Oils
958 Vintage Road, Christiana, PA 17509
Special Hours: December 2-23: Mon., Wed., Thurs. and Sat. 6:30 AM-4:00 PM;
Tues. & Fri. 6:30 AM-7:00 PM

Husqvarna VIKING Designer II



Personalize your Designer II for your sewing needs and desires. Let your Husqvarna Viking dealer guide you to your ultimate sewing machine, no more, no less. The Husqvarna Viking Exclusive Sensor System, Sewing Advisor and Selective Thread Cutter make your sewing easier. Choose the sewing theme that suits your sewing interest best or make your own theme. The accessory options are endless. You will soon find new themes at your local Husqvarna Viking dealer.

UNLIMITED OPPORTUNITIES

Read the Accessory User's Guide and watch the video to see all the accessory feet, notions, needles and more. Everything to make your sewing faster, easier and even more creative.

Visit www.husqvarnaviking.com for projects, hints, tips and accessories. Click on software to update your Designer II over the Internet.

FREE Thread Kit w/Purchase & This Ad!

FRED STROBEL'S Sewing Machines
890 East Lincoln Avenue, Myerstown, PA 17067
717-866-5555 or 1-800-888-5552

