

Chewy Cookies, Theme and Variations

The Theme (Chewy Vanilla Cookies)

- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1 tablespoon water
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
(for Variations, other flavorings to taste)
- 1 cup salted butter (2 U.S. sticks), melted
- ½ cup Karo light corn syrup
- 2 cups sugar
(for Variations, 1 – 2 cups add-ins)
- 3¾ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon salt (1 teaspoon if using unsalted butter)

In a large bowl, beat together the eggs, water, vanilla, melted butter, corn syrup, and sugar. (When making a Variation recipe, add other extracts and flavorings with the vanilla, and stir in the add-ins after the wet ingredients have been combined.)

Stir together the flour, baking soda, and salt. Add to wet ingredients and mix well. The dough will be sticky and quite moist.

Drop onto lined or ungreased cookie sheets, using about 2 teaspoons of dough per cookie. Bake at 325 degrees F for 7 to 9 minutes. Do not overbake. Allow cookies to sit for a few minutes out of the oven, then remove them to cooling racks. Store in air-tight containers when completely cool.

The cookies should be flat, textured, and amazingly chewy. They're wonderful hot out of the oven, but even better the next day.

Notes

I like to save dishes by cracking the eggs directly into the bowl and beating them there before adding the other ingredients.

Because the butter is melted, this works quite well mixed by hand instead of with an electric mixer. I like to use a [Danish dough whisk](#).

I melt the butter in the microwave, in a 2-cup glass measuring cup. I then can easily measure the corn syrup by adding it until the butter rises to the 1½ cup mark. This saves a dish, makes the syrup easier to pour out of the cup, and helps cool the butter. You don't want the butter to be so hot it cooks the eggs.

The cookies look nicer if I line the pans with [Swiss Teflon baking sheets](#). You could probably use parchment paper instead.

You can form the cookies the old-fashioned way, using two spoons, but I love my [Oxo Good Grips cookie scoops](#) for ease of use and consistency of cookie size I usually use the small (2 teaspoon) scoop, but the medium (1½ tablespoon) works well too; I just add a couple of minutes to the baking time. If I get the large (3 tablespoon) scoop that's on my Christmas list, I'm going to make cookies big enough to use for homemade ice cream sandwiches....

When storing the cookies, I like to separate the layers—with parchment, plastic wrap, waxed paper, or whatever works for you. I find that coffee filters fit most of my containers perfectly. Otherwise, the cookies tend to stick together.

These cookies freeze very well. Sometimes I freeze them individually on a cookie sheet, then put them loosely in a plastic bag for storage. If you freeze them first, you don't need to worry about them sticking together, and you can take out a few at a time, as you wish.

It also works great to make and freeze balls of dough for baking later. However, in our house, the frozen dough is likely to get eaten as is before it has a chance to get into the oven.

The beauty of this recipe, besides that it produces delicious, chewy cookies, is its flexibility.

The Variations

SUBSTITUTIONS

Water The amount of water can be altered as needed, but the recipe is fairly forgiving and 1 tablespoon seems to work well despite variations in the amount of liquid extracts used.

Vanilla I use vanilla in every recipe, even when adding other flavorings or extracts.

Salted butter Unsalted butter works just as well if you increase to 1 teaspoon the salt added with the dry ingredients.

Karo corn syrup This is not the much-maligned high fructose corn syrup, which has had some of its glucose converted to fructose. Other brands of corn syrup may contain some HFCS, but not Karo. The light corn syrup has some added salt and vanilla, but not enough to worry about when you're making substitutions. If you want the flavor and don't mind the price, you can substitute honey or molasses (not blackstrap). I think corn syrup is hard to find in Switzerland, but there's probably some version of glucose syrup or golden syrup that will do. I haven't tried maple syrup yet, but I think it would be delicious.

Sugar Use white or brown sugar according to your taste. I use white sugar for the lightly-flavored cookies, and dark brown sugar for the rest.

Add-ins The sky's the limit.

All-purpose flour In my baking, I often like to substitute [white whole wheat flour](#) for some or all of the all-purpose, but I haven't yet experimented much with that for this recipe. First things first.

VARIATIONS ON THE THEME

Chewy Chocolate Chip Cookies Use brown sugar, with chocolate chips (large, small, dark, milk, whatever) as the add-in. Don't skimp on quality when it comes to the chips! My favorites are Ghirardelli and Guittard.

Chewy Double Chocolate Chip Cookies Use the Chocolate Chip recipe but with 1/4 cup cocoa in place of an equal amount of the flour. I prefer [Black Cocoa](#) from King Arthur Flour.

Chewy Mint Chocolate Chip Cookies Use the Double Chocolate Chip recipe and add peppermint extract to taste.

Chewy Hazelnut Chocolate Chip Cookies Use the Double Chocolate recipe, adding [hazelnut flavoring](#) to taste. Think Nutella....

Chewy Mocha Chocolate Chip Cookies Use the Double Chocolate recipe, but replace the water with extra-strong coffee. (Or use [espresso powder](#). I love this, but find it has a tendency to clump into a very solid rock after being opened.)

Chewy M&M Cookies Use either the Chocolate Chip or the Double Chocolate Chip recipe, but with M&M's instead of the chips. I prefer the mini M&M's. Our children's choir went wild over this.

Chewy Butter Crunch Chocolate Chip Cookies Use the Chocolate Chip recipe but make the add-in half chocolate chips (I prefer the minis for this one) and half Heath English Toffee Bits (or use leftover crumbs from making Almond Butter Crunch candy).

Chewy S'more Cookies Just like the Butter Crunch Chocolate Chip recipe, but use small marshmallows instead of the Toffee Bits. For larger cookies, cut-up mini marshmallows might give a better texture; for my small cookies, I used [Kraft Marshmallow Bits](#).

Chewy Lemon and Honey Cookies Substitute honey for the corn syrup in the Vanilla recipe, and add lemon peel (fresh or dried) and/or [Boyajian lemon oil](#) (also available at [King Arthur Flour](#)) to taste, with the liquid ingredients. I like to add a little yellow food coloring, too.

Chewy Strawberry Lemon Cookies Add cut up dried strawberries to the Lemon and Honey recipe.

Chewy Almond Cherry Cookies Use the Vanilla recipe, adding almond extract to taste (I use at least 1 tablespoon), and dried cherries.

Chewy Cranberry Tangerine Cookies Use the Vanilla recipe, with dried cranberries as the add-in and tangerine (or orange) extract to taste. I used tangerine because I happen to have some tangerine extract, but when that's gone I'll use Boyajian orange oil.

Chewy Gum Drop Cookies Use the Vanilla recipe and add cut-up gum drops. I like to use the spice drops and cut them in thirds or quarters. This can get a bit sticky and tedious, but is worth it. This is a variation people seem to have strong feelings about, pro and con. For me, it was a successful attempt to recreate the best of a long-lost recipe my mother used to make on rare occasions. I absolutely loved to taste the dough, up until the point where she added coconut, at which time the cookie was ruined as far as I was concerned. You are welcome to use coconut as an add-in for your own cookies.

Chewy Gummy Worm Cookies Like the Gum Drop variation— but with a different flavor. Cutting up gummy worms is a lot easier than cutting up gum drops.

Chewy Speculaas Cookies Use the Vanilla recipe with brown sugar, and mix [Speculaas Spice](#) in with the dry ingredients. (When I can't get it from Switzerland, I buy mine at King Arthur Flour.) If you believe speculaas cookies should always be crispy and in windmill shapes, think of these as Biscoff cookies. Using one tablespoon of the spice mix gives a strongly-flavored result that tastes more like traditional speculaas cookies; using less might more closely approximate the Biscoff flavor.