

Chewy Oatmeal Cookies

YIELD: 50 cookies

BAKING TEMPERATURE: 350°F

BAKING TIME: 13 to 17 minutes (see Variations)

This recipe makes a flat, chewy, golden-brown cookie that stays moist and soft for days, making it great for shipping off to the kids at college. Feel free to adjust the spices to taste; if you're a fan of ginger or nutmeg, up the ante!

- 3/4 cup (1 1/2 sticks, 6 ounces) unsalted butter
- 1 1/4 cups (9 3/8 ounces) packed light or dark brown sugar
- 3 tablespoons (2 ounces) dark corn syrup
- 3/4 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1 tablespoon cider vinegar
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- 1 large egg
- 1 1/3 cups (4 5/8 ounces) old-fashioned rolled oats
- 1 1/4 cups (5 ounces) traditional whole wheat flour
- 2 cups (9 to 12 ounces) dried fruit: diced dried apples, chopped dates, dried cranberries, raisins, chopped dried apricots or the dried fruits of your choice
- 1 cup (3 3/4 ounces) chopped pecans or walnuts

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Lightly grease 2 baking sheets or line with parchment paper.

Cream the butter, sugar, corn syrup, baking soda, baking powder, salt, spices, vinegar and vanilla. Beat in the egg. Add the oats, flour, dried fruit and nuts, and stir to combine. Drop the dough by heaping tablespoonfuls onto the prepared baking sheets.

Bake the cookies, reversing the pans midway through (top to bottom, bottom to top), until they're beginning to brown around the edges but are still soft in the center, 14 minutes. Remove them from the oven and transfer them to a rack to cool.

NUTRITION INFORMATION PER SERVING (1 COOKIE, 26G): 5g whole grains, 104 cal, 5g fat, 1g protein, 10g complex carbohydrates, 6g sugar, 1g dietary fiber, 12mg cholesterol, 50mg sodium, 100mg potassium, 25RE vitamin A, 1mg iron, 18mg calcium, 44mg phosphorus.

VARIATIONS: For a soft, puffy (rather than flat and chewy) cookie, grind $\frac{1}{3}$ cup of the oats in a food processor before adding to the dough.

Baking time makes a difference: 14 minutes in the oven yields a cookie that's crisp at the edges and soft in the center. A minute or so less in the oven makes a cookie that's soft from edge to edge; 2 to 3 minutes more, a cookie that's more crisp than chewy.

To make 16 bake-sale-size (4-inch) jumbo cookies, drop the dough by $\frac{1}{4}$ -cupfuls onto the baking sheets. Bake in a preheated 350°F oven for 20 to 22 minutes.

ENSURING CHEWY COOKIES

Not sure just how long to bake those chewy cookies? If you're after a chewy, soft cookie, it behooves you to bake a single cookie first, and let it cool. Does it have the exact degree of chewi-

ness you're after? If it's too crisp or crunchy, reduce the baking time by 30 seconds to 1 minute, and try again. Nail down the exact time before you bake the whole batch; this may seem time

consuming, but it's better than baking an entire batch of crunchy cookies that were supposed to be soft and chewy.