Chocolate Chip Cookies

Make-ahead · Serves a crowd · Makes about 30–32 cookies

Ken's note: TBD

A starting formula: medium-thick, fully baked, with soft centers. Classic butter and vanilla — brown butter is an option to try, not the method here. Bake two first and adjust from there. Don’t cut the sugar; it isn’t just sweetness.

Ingredients

- 2¾ cups all-purpose flour, spooned into the cup and leveled (do not scoop or pack)
- ½ tsp baking soda
- ½ tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp fine table salt or fine sea salt (not coarse kosher salt)
- 1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, softened but still cool
- 1 cup packed light brown sugar
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 cup dark chocolate chips or buttons (see note)
- Optional: ½ cup chopped walnuts for half the dough, or 1 cup for the full batch

Method

1. Heat the oven to 350°F, rack in the center. Line a light-colored baking sheet with parchment. Whisk together the flour, baking soda, baking powder, and salt.
2. Beat the butter and both sugars on medium speed 2–3 minutes, scraping the bowl, until creamy and slightly lighter, not whipped. The butter should indent under a finger but still feel cool — not shiny or partly melted. Beat in the eggs one at a time, then the vanilla. Mix in the dry ingredients on low just until incorporated, then fold in the chocolate. For a split batch, divide the dough in half and add ½ cup walnuts to one half.
3. Portion 2 level tablespoons of dough per cookie into rounded mounds; don’t flatten. Space the centers at least 3 inches apart. Bake two first, keeping the rest of the dough away from the oven heat.
4. Bake about 12–15 minutes, checking at 12. The edges should be lightly golden and the centers set and matte, not wet or glossy. Cool on the pan 5–10 minutes, then move to a rack. Judge the texture after they cool, then repeat on cooled sheets. If the test cookies spread too much, refrigerate the remaining dough 30 minutes and try again.

Notes

Make-ahead. Cover and refrigerate the dough overnight; portion it first for easier handling. Chilled dough may need a little more time in the oven. Or freeze portioned mounds until firm, then bag them and bake from frozen at 350°F, starting with 2–3 extra minutes and using the same doneness cues. Frozen dough may spread less.

Measure the cup of chocolate without packing. Large buttons leave more air space than small chips, so the volume is intentionally approximate; chop oversized buttons if you like. Once completely cool, store airtight at room temperature for several days, or freeze.