

Mother Grains Chocolate Chip Cookies

Makes 16 cookies

Ingredients

- 8 tablespoons (1 stick/115 g) unsalted butter, at room temperature
- ½ cup (100 g) granulated sugar
- ½ cup packed (112 g) dark brown sugar
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 large egg
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ¾ cup (100 g) sorghum flour
- ¾ cup (105 g) all-purpose flour
- 1 cup (175 g) bittersweet chocolate chips
- Coarse sea salt such as Maldon or fleur de sel (optional)

Whenever someone new to ancient grains asks where to start, I recommend making a familiar staple, like chocolate chip cookies. I've made these using every grain in the book, including all heirloom wheat varieties I came across while developing these recipes. I know these cookies so well, I use them as my measuring stick.

Each flour may behave a bit differently, but I can confidently say that, with the exception of corn, the cookies work beautifully with all mother grains. Every version taught me something new and distinctive about its featured flour: what the flour tastes like, how it responds to fat, if it browns quickly or slowly, and if it creates a chewy or crispy texture. It was pretty hard to decide which chapter these cookies belong in, but I finally settled on placing them here, in the sorghum chapter, to underline how an unusual flour can be used in traditional recipes. I've also included on page 253 a list of seven variations showing how to make them with other grains.

Because it's gluten-free and therefore less structured, I blend sorghum flour with all-purpose flour in a one-to-one ratio. The same ratio applies if trying the recipe with other gluten-free grains, such as buckwheat or rice. These cookies are sublime with rye, and their texture is remarkable with spelt. But when made with sorghum flour, this recipe yields beautiful golden rounds, with crispy edges and tender centers. Sorghum's complex, sweet notes will have you making this cookie time and time again.

Instructions

- In a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, cream the butter and sugars on medium-high speed for 2 to 3 minutes.
- Add the baking soda and kosher salt and mix for another minute.
- Add the egg and vanilla and mix to combine.
- Add the flours and mix on low speed until a uniform dough forms.
- Add the chocolate chips and mix until well distributed in the dough. The dough will be very soft at this point.
- Transfer the dough to a sheet of parchment paper or plastic wrap.
- Flatten it into a disk, wrap tightly, and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes (and up to 2 days)—chilled dough will be much easier to work with.
- Place two oven racks in the middle positions and preheat the oven to 350°F.
- Line two baking sheets with parchment paper.
- Divide the chilled dough into sixteen equal portions, about 1½ ounces (45 g) each.
- Working quickly so that the dough doesn't warm up, round each portion with your hands. You can freeze the cookie dough balls for up to 2 weeks in a freezer bag to be baked from frozen at a later time. Keep in mind that frozen cookies may take longer baking time.
- Place the cookies on the prepared baking sheets, at least 3 inches apart to prevent the cookies from touching as they spread when they bake. If desired, top each cookie with a few flakes of coarse sea salt. Exercise restraint—it's still salt.
- Bake for 8 minutes. Then rotate the sheets, switch their positions in the oven, and bake for another 8 minutes, until the cookie edges are brown but the centers are still a little gooey. Rotating and switching the sheets halfway through the baking process will ensure that the cookies bake evenly.
- Let the cookies cool completely on the baking sheets or enjoy while still warm. The cookies will keep in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 2 days.

Variations

Barley Chocolate Chip Cookies

Soft-textured cookies that look very appealing. Hints of vanilla come through. Very kid friendly.

Replace the sorghum and all-purpose flours with:

- ½ cup plus 2 tablespoons (80 g) barley flour
- ½ cup plus 2 tablespoons (90 g) all-purpose flour

Buckwheat Chocolate Chip Cookies

Sober version of this cookie. Really highlights the affinity between chocolate and buckwheat. The earthy flavor of buckwheat comes through. For the more adventurous baker.

- Replace the sorghum and all-purpose flours with:
- ½ cup plus 2 tablespoons (95 g) buckwheat flour
 - ½ cup plus 2 tablespoons (90 g) all-purpose flour

Oatmeal Chocolate Chip Cookies

Lacy texture with a toasted-grain flavor. Tastes great with milk and makes delicious ice cream sandwiches.

- Replace the sorghum and all-purpose flours with:
- ½ cup (105 g) old-fashioned rolled oats
 - ½ cup (70 g) oat flour
 - ½ cup (70 g) all-purpose flour

Rice Chocolate Chip Cookies

Slightly sweeter than other versions with a nice, almost snappy crunch. Texture-rich with a pleasant grit from the finely ground rice.

- Replace the sorghum and all-purpose flours with:
- ½ cup plus 2 tablespoons (90 g) brown rice flour
 - ½ cup plus 2 tablespoons (90 g) all-purpose flour

Rye Chocolate Chip Cookies

Elegant, more adult version of this cookie with a slightly sour-bitter flavor from the rye. This is the version we offer at Friends & Family.

- Replace the sorghum and all-purpose flours with:
- 1¼ cups (160 g) dark rye flour

Sonora Wheat Chocolate Chip Cookies

Pretty and tasty cookie with crispy edges and chewy center. Very close to the classic version of this American staple with a hint of toasted wheat bran flavor.

Replace the sorghum and all-purpose flours with:

-1 ¼ cups (160 g) Sonora wheat flour

Spelt Chocolate Chip Cookies

A great cookie for grain novices to make and eat. Uniform in flavor and texture with a delicious crunch.

Replace the sorghum and all-purpose flours with:

-1 ¼ cups (165 g) spelt flour

Bittersweet Chocolate

Use your preferred brand of bittersweet chocolate chips in this recipe; just make sure the label indicates it contains 60 to 70 percent of cacao solids. A great grocery store brand is Guittard. Specialty stores offer a vast variety of high-quality chocolate brands too, top among them Valrhona, El Rey, and Callebaut, but they don't always offer chips. If that's the case, you can chop larger bars into smaller pieces with a chef's knife. To further highlight the chocolate flavor, garnish the cookies with a few flakes of crunchy salt such as Maldon salt or fleur de sel (see page 32).