

Pecan Cranberry Oatmeal Cookies

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Dried and sweetened cranberries combined with various nuts can be found in lots of products now. Offerings include granola bars, salads, cereal, muffins and baked goods of all kinds. Last December I offered to make treats for our holiday event and decided to make various kinds of oatmeal cookies. Starting with a basic oatmeal cookie recipe I adjusted it several ways until I was satisfied I had a solid base with a good chew that would support various additions in the form of chocolate chips, nuts and dried fruits.

Judging from what disappeared first the favorite was cranberry pecan. They were quite good and had a couple of unexpected ingredients that added flavor without being overpowering. After that party I continued to refine the recipe until last August when I entered a plate of cookies in the Geauga County Fair. I won a blue ribbon with this recipe and I am happy to share the recipe with you.

One word of caution though: people will blame YOU for their weight gain. These three inch cookies are extraordinarily satisfying and for good reason. They pack about 325 calories in each one. You may find yourself having to ration to your goodies.

Get the Gear You Need

If you have used any of my other recipes you know how fond I am of baking with a scale. Success in any cooking or baking endeavor is easier with the right tools. If you bake a lot



you need a scale much like a carpenter needs a tape measure. For the cookie recipe, I'm including measures as always, but using the scale will get more consistent good results and save a lot of time.

While at the kitchen store get yourself at least one good cookie dough scooper. These are the same ice cream scoops used for portion control at the cafeteria when you were in high school. They are essential for consistent cookie size. The bowl of the scoop varies in size and somewhere on the scoop is a number. For the three inch cookie you need a size 20 scoop, for two inch a



size 24 and to make a 1 1/2 inch version you need the smallest one available. This one sold as a cookie scoop and holds 1 tablespoon when filled level. If it has a number it will be 64.

The number gets larger as the bowl gets smaller so what gives? The number is the number of level scoops you can expect to get from a quart. Mystery solved!

Don't try to double this recipe in any mixer you might typically have at home, it makes nearly 1800 grams of dough - about four pounds.

Prestage Ingredients

Avoid getting into a recipe and discovering you have to go to the grocery store by laying out the ingredients before mixing.

First assemble the cream step ingredients: two sticks (228 grams) of unsalted butter warmed to room temperature; a 1 pound bag (454 grams) of dark brown sugar which measures 2 1/3 cups; and two large eggs.

In a small dish mix together: 3 tablespoons (40 grams) dark corn syrup; 4 tablespoons (40 grams) triple sec; and 1 teaspoon vanilla (6 grams).

Cranberry Pecan Oatmeal Cookies

Cream Together

- 1/2 lb butter (unsalted)
- 1 lb dark brown sugar (454 grams)

Add and continue to cream in:

- 2 large egg (120 grams)
- 1 teaspoon vanilla (6 grams)
- 3 Tablespoons dark corn Syrup (40 grams)
- 4 Tablespoons Triple Sec (40 grams)
- Zest from two clementines or one orange

In a bowl mix together:

- 2 1/3 cups all purpose flour (300 grams)
- 1/2 cup bread flour (66 grams)
- 1 1/4 teaspoon table salt * (8 grams)
- 1 1/4 teaspoon baking soda (5 grams)
- 1 teaspoon double acting baking powder (5 grams)
- 2 1/2 cups old fashion (NOT QUICK) oatmeal (230 grams)
- 1 1/3 cups dried sweetened cranberries (165 grams)
- 2 cups pecans coarsely chopped (165 grams)

* if using salted butter reduce the salt to 3/4 teaspoon (5 grams)

**If you plan to
eat
RAW
COOKIE
DOUGH
use
PASTURIZED
EGGS
for
FOOD
SAFETY**



The dry ingredients include: 2 1/3 leveled cups (300 grams) all purpose flour; 1/2 leveled cup (66 grams) bread flour; 1 1/4 teaspoon salt (9 grams); 1 1/4 teaspoon soda (5 grams);

1 teaspoon (5 grams) baking powder; and 2 1/2 leveled cups (230 grams) of old fashion oats.

After measuring or weighing, place them in a medium bowl and stir them together.

To the dry mixture add 2 cups (165 grams) of pecan halves chopped coarsely and 1 1/3 cups (165 grams) dried cranberries. Set this aside.

Cream Step

Place two sticks of unsalted butter (1/2 pound) into the mixer bowl. Using the whisk attachment cream the butter until it is a lemony color, about two minutes on high. Next add one pound dark brown sugar and turn the mixer to low for a while. When the brown sugar and butter have begun to mix, turn the mixer in two steps to high.

Add eggs one at a time on low speed, letting each incorporate. Once the eggs are incorporated turn the mixer to high and slowly drizzle in the corn syrup mixture. In about a minute the mixture will be light and fluffy. Stop the mixer and remove the whisk and replace it with the flat beater.

Add the Dry Mixture

With the mixer on low add the dry mixture (including dried sweetened cranberries and chopped pecans) in three batches about 1/3 at a time. Each third should only mix about 15-20 seconds. Add the next third as soon as the previous one mixed in a bit.

After all the dry ingredients are added stop the mixer and

Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit. Scoop cookies onto a parchment paper lined cookie sheet. Smash them slightly. A #20 disher will yield about two dozen three inch cookies. Arrange racks with one at the bottom third line and one at the top third line. Start cookies baking on bottom rack. After four minutes rotate the pan front to back. After four more minutes rotate again and move to the top shelf, placing the next pan in on the bottom shelf. The cookies on the top shelf will begin to brown in a few minutes. After another four minutes rotate the newest pan. This is the time to start watching the cookies on the top shelf, as they may be ready to remove to a cooling rack, but may also need another rotation and additional time. Because cookies require careful monitoring at the end of the baking time, it is not a good idea to try to manage too many pans. Using this first in first out rotation method you will get the best baking result.

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scrape down the beater and bowl sides. Turn the mixer back on for about fifteen seconds or so.

The dough will have evenly distributed chunks of nuts and fruit. If you like raw cookie dough, this is your time! For safety reasons, if you are going to eat raw cookie dough use pasturized eggs. This is especially true if stored in the refrigerator for a day or two. To use for baking, this dough stores well for a week covered in your refrigerator. The longer you store the raw dough the dryer the finished cookies will be. This is because oatmeal absorbs more moisture as each day passes. Freeze the dough for up to three months tightly covered.

Parchment Paper Helps

Scoop the cookie dough on to parchment lined cookie sheets or jelly roll pans. The chart below describes the size and calories of the cookies made by three different dishers. Keep the dough balls about two inches apart and smash each one slightly with a moistened or floured open hand using your fingers.



Cookie Scoop	# 24 Scoop	#20 Scoop
1 1/2 inch cookie	2 1/2 inch cookie	3 inch cookie
25 grams	50 grams	75 grams
110 calories	220 calories	330 calories
taste teaser	good start	guilty pleasure

If you have a scale, verify your scooping is yielding the amount of dough in the chart. It doesn't have to be exact and the dough plugs can vary a little from cookie to cookie.

Don't Over Bake!

Move the parchment to the baking pan and bake two

pans (maximum) at a time in a preheated 350 degree oven. Rotate the cookies 180 degrees (front to back) at about 10 minutes moving the middle rack pan to the top and the top to the middle. Check them often. Overall baking time will be 12 to 16 minutes. The finished cookies should come out of the oven when evenly tan.

Let them set in the hot baking pan for about a minute to firm up before transferring the cookies, still on the parchment paper to a cooling rack.

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