

The Ultimate Chocolate Chip Cookie

While I am by no means a chocoholic, forsaking all things chocolate flavored for their vanilla cousins, I do have a huge weakness for those little chips. Of course, the chocolate chip itself is merely a piece of candy without a proper medium. For myself, the perfect chocolate chip cookie is thick, soft, and chewy.

I have been fairly pleased with my go-to dairy-free recipe that I brought up to par many years ago. Yet, some recent curiosities have led me to venture into some vegan baking experiments. My solo escapade did not go very well to say the least. Replacing eggs in cookies can be a much bigger feat than I had anticipated. So I enlisted the help of a professional, Jo Stepaniak.

Forums have referenced Jo as "the mother of vegan cooking," and rightfully so I think. Her focus on comfort food is a welcome site. I eagerly dove into her recently revised title, *Vegan Vittles: Second Helpings*. I went straight to her Ultimate Chocolate Chip Cookie recipe.

I think ultimate may be a strong word in this case, but it was a pretty tasty cookie that should appeal to both vegans and non-vegans alike. Interestingly, the cookie seemed a bit dry at first, but Jo recommends refrigerating them. This is truly the key. They take on a unique taste and texture that is really quite pleasing. This cookbook will definitely take a place in my most used collection, which is currently limited to only three cookbooks (I am quite picky). Hopefully, I will have some time to make the carrot cake soon!

(Click read more for the full recipe)

Now, these are for the hearty cookie fan, with chunks of nuts, oats, and the option of whole-wheat pastry flour. I used white flour, as I didn't have the pastry flour on hand, and regular whole wheat would be too heavy for a cookie.

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Recipe from: *Vegan Vittles: Second Helpings* by Jo Stepaniak

1 ½ cups quick-cooking rolled oats (not instant)
1 cup whole wheat pastry flour
1 cup coarsely chopped walnuts, lightly toasted (see note)
1 cup vegan semisweet chocolate chips
½ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon baking soda
½ cup vegetable oil
½ cup maple syrup
2 tablespoons water
2 teaspoons vanilla extract

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper (for the easiest cleanup), or mist them with nonstick cooking spray.

Place the oats, flour, walnuts, chocolate chips, salt, and baking soda in a large bowl. Stir with a dry whisk until well combined.

Place the oil, maple syrup, water, and vanilla extract in a small bowl, and beat vigorously with a whisk until well combined. Stir into the flour mixture, mixing just until everything is evenly moistened. Let rest for 5 minutes so the oats can absorb some of the moisture.

Drop slightly rounded tablespoons of dough onto the prepared baking sheets, about 1 inch apart. The dough will be crumbly. Flatten with your hand to one-third inch thick. Smooth the edges to make each cookie uniformly round, gently pressing the dough so the cookies hold together.

Bake one sheet at a time on the center rack of the oven for 18 minutes, or until the cookies are lightly browned. Transfer the cookies to a cooling rack, and let cool completely. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator. (The cookies will taste best after they have been chilled.)

Note:

To toast the walnuts, preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Spread the nuts in a single layer on a baking sheet. Bake on the center rack of the oven for 8-10 minutes, or until fragrant and lightly browned.