

Foods #TCDProjectChallenge Instructions:

- Read through the Lesson Plan.
- Complete the challenge.
- Fill out the Lesson Worksheet (include circling your age level, Before and After Self-Evaluation, Life Skills Learned, Leadership (if applicable), Evaluation, Citizenship, Signature and Date).
- Take a picture during some part of your Challenge.
- Email your challenge picture and a picture of the front and back of your completed Lesson Worksheet to pmaddy@ksu.edu or text it to 785-877-7262.
- Challenge pictures will be posted (not the worksheet pictures) on our respective county 4-H Facebook pages and our Twin Creeks District Facebook page.
- Your name will be entered into a drawing for a project prize that will be given at our 2020 Achievement Banquet next fall.
- Each time you complete a challenge, your name will be entered into a drawing for that project area.
- You can complete any and all challenges, even if you are not enrolled in 4-H or in that specific project area.
- Challenges are divided into three age groups -- 7 to 9, 10 to 13, and 14 and up.
- Pictures of your challenge and lesson worksheets are due by the last day of the month, December 31, 2019.**
- Printed copies of the challenge can be picked up at your local Extension Office.
- Do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions (pmaddy@ksu.edu or 785-877-5755 or 785-877-7262). I am excited to see your pictures and what you learn through these challenges.



#TCDDProjectChallenge

Foods: *Cookies for Santa*

Circle Your Age Level:

Age 7 to 9:

Chocolate Crinkles Cookies

Age 10 to 13:

Classic Peanut Butter Blossom

Age 14 & up:

Decorated Gingerbread
Cookies



Time: varies

Goal:

*To learn how to make a
better cookie.*

Instructions:

Please read the materials that are included before starting
your recipe.

Follow directions on your recipe carefully.

Enjoy your finished product with others.

Self-Evaluation BEFORE: Using
the rating scale below, answer
the following statements:

1 = not at all

2 = a little

3 = a lot.

I know how to...

Measure flour correctly.....1 - 2 - 3

Mix the ingredients in order
correctly.....1 - 2 - 3

Resources:

*4-H Cooking 101-401
University of Illinois*

Tips & Tricks:

Read the enclosed resources before starting.

*Check your recipe to make sure you have all the ingredients on
hand before starting.*

*Remember to wash your hands before you start and use good
kitchen safety practices.*

#TCDProjectChallenge

Foods: *Cookies for Santa*

Life Skills Learned:

(Check all that apply.)

- Positive Self-Concept
- Inquiring Mind
- Concern for Community
- Sound Decision-Making
- Healthy Interpersonal Relationships

Leadership (teaching someone what you have learned — Int./Sr. levels.).

Taught lesson to other 4-Hers

Taught lesson to classmates/friends

Other _____

Evaluation:

What did you learn about baking cookies? _____

Why is it important to have each cookie the same size when baking? _____

What was the hardest part of the activity? _____

Share:

- Shared cookies with elderly neighbor or single mother
- Shared cookies with 4-H supporters/project or club leaders as a Thank You
- Shared cookies with local Christmas basket organization for needy
- Other _____

Self-Evaluation BEFORE: Using the rating scale below, answer the following statements:

- 1 = not at all
- 2 = a little
- 3 = a lot.

I know how to...

Measure flour correctly.....1 - 2 - 3

Mix the ingredients in order correctly.....1 - 2 - 3

Member's Signature

Date

Resources:

*4-H Cooking 101-401
University of Illinois*

Patsy L. Maddy, 4-H Youth Development Agent
Jenilee Godsey, Youth Ag - Alyssa Rippe-May, Livestock/Horticulture
Keith VanSlike, Ag & Natural Resources - Karen Shepard, FCS
Stacy Brown, Director & FCS



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Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service
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Beginners Guide to Baking Cookies

Of all of the desserts you can bake, cookies can be the easiest and the most fun. They're often one of the first desserts we're taught to make as children, and they're always the first to disappear at a potluck or bake sale!

Despite how easy they are, there are still some basic tips and tricks you can learn for preparing, storing and baking cookies. If you're looking for some handy cookie guidelines, you've come to the right place!

Cookie Dough Basics

Most cookies are made from the same basic ingredients. The dry ingredients consist of all-purpose flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt. The sweetness comes from granulated and/or brown sugar. The fat is either softened butter, margarine, shortening, or occasionally oil. Eggs and vanilla extract are also used. For different flavored cookies, you can add any or all of these: chocolate, co-coa, nuts, raisins, oatmeal, spices or extracts.

Making the dough is pretty consistent with all cookies. Mix your dry ingredients in a medium-sized bowl. In a large bowl, cream your butter and sugars, then add your slightly beaten eggs and vanilla. To this mixture, slowly add the dry ingredients until well mixed. At this point, the extra flavorings are added to the dough. Then, the dough is prepared the way dictated by the cookie type.

Cookie Baking Hints

- Use only the freshest ingredients whenever possible.
- Large eggs are the standard eggs used.
- Try not to use substitute fats. If the recipe calls for butter, use butter.
- Make sure you measure your ingredients properly.
- Keep the dough chilled in between baking batches of cookies.
- Use parchment paper to prevent your cookie sheets from becoming greasy in between batches.
- Last but not least, don't eat the cookie dough.

Storing Cookies

- Soft cookies, such as bar cookies, are stored in a container with a tight lid. If they tend to dry out, add a slice of apple to the container.
- Crisp cookies should be stored in a container with a loose lid, like a cookie jar. If there is a lot of humidity in your area, add a piece of bread to the container. The bread helps to absorb the moisture.

Different Cookie Types

- **Bar Cookies** are prepared by putting the dough in a rectangular pan. They are baked and then cut into squares. Most drop cookie recipes can be converted to this type of cookie. These are the easiest cookies to make because several batches are baked at once.
- **Drop Cookies** are the easiest individual cookies to make. Balls of dough are dropped from a spoon onto a cookie sheet. It doesn't get any simpler than that!
- **Molded Cookies** feature dough that is formed by the hands into shapes such as wreaths, crescents, canes, or balls. Balls are sometimes flattened with the bottom of a glass.
- **Pressed Cookies** are made by pressing the dough through a cookie press or pastry tube to form different shapes. These are also known as "spritz cookies."
- **Refrigerator or Icebox Cookies** are prepared by shaping the dough into long rolls and then refrigerating them. Once cold, the dough can be sliced and baked. This is a great pre-prepare-ahead-of-time dough because it can also be frozen.
- **Rolled Cookies** take a little more preparation. With a rolling pin, the chilled dough is rolled out. The dough is cut into shapes by using a knife, pastry wheel or cookie cutter.

8 Secrets to Making Perfect Cookies

For Sweet Success Every Time

No one expects to make perfect cookies as a beginning baker. But if you've got the basics down, don't have any of these bad baking habits, and are ready to take your cookie game from good to great, we've got eight tips that will help you get there. But first, a few pieces of universal wisdom:

1. Follow the recipe.
2. Preheat the oven.
3. Don't open the oven while the cookies are baking. If you can't see through the little window, you might need to clean it!

Now, let's get to our first tip.

1. **Don't Grease the Pan**

Now that you know the universal pieces of wisdom, let's discuss some steps that many might not know, like don't grease your pans. Greasing them can cause your cookies to spread too much, possibly merging into one giant cookie. If you're really having trouble with your cookies sticking to your pan, there might be something wrong with it. Is it clean and shiny? Or is it encrusted with the blackened residue of years of baking and roasting? If it's the latter, that's why your cookies are sticking. You can use a baking mat or a sheet of parchment paper, but you might be better off replacing the blackened pan with a new one. Also, for future reference, greasing your pans is the primary cause of this baked-on gunk. If you break from this habit, your new pan will last much longer.

2. **Use Light-Colored Pans**

Speaking of pans, your baking pans should be light colored rather than dark. Cookies baked on dark pans will tend to burn on the bottom. The reason for this is that dark sheets absorb more heat than light ones, enough that it will actually make a material difference in the outcome of the cookies. So keep that in mind when it's time to spring for a new baking pan.

3. **Measure the Flour Correctly**

It's been discussed elsewhere, but the issue with measuring flour by volume—that is, using units like cups—is wildly imprecise. The problem is further compounded by the fact that scooping the measuring cup into the bag of flour can add up to 30 percent more flour than what is called for. The solution: measure your flour in grams instead of cups. When a recipe calls for a cup of flour, measure out 130 grams of flour instead. Or you can also sift your flour to get an accurate amount.

4. **Let Your Butter Sit at Room Temperature for 15 Minutes**

Fifteen minutes! Not more and not less. If the butter is too cold, it won't cream properly and the resulting cookies will be too dense. On the other hand, if your butter is too soft, it won't hold enough air during the creaming process and thus produce a heavy, greasy dough rather than a fluffy one. Fifteen minutes on the counter is the exact right length of time.

5. **Use High-Quality Butter**

The issue with cheap butter is that it can contain up to 19 percent water, which not only makes it harder for the eggs and butter to emulsify, but it will also contribute to excess spreading. European butter tends to have a lower water content (and thus a higher fat content, which is what you want), as does butter from some small domestic dairies. Not surprisingly, butter with a higher fat content also tastes better. But whatever you do, don't use that spreadable whipped butter that comes in a tub. This product is high in water and, as the name indicates, also has air whipped into it, which will throw off everything from creaming to baking.

6. **Handle the Dough Gently**

This is mostly an issue with rolled cookies, which is difficult since you need to use a rolling pin and that's not exactly gentle. And the more you roll, the tougher your cookies will be (due to the working of the glens). But there are a couple of things you can do to minimize this. Firstly, dust your surface with powdered sugar instead of flour. Excess flour will contribute to cookies that are too hard. (With chocolate cookies, dust with cocoa powder instead.) And secondly, roll your initial dough into as uniform a shape as you can, and when you use your cutters, get as close to the edge of that dough, and as close to each other, as possible. This minimizes the amount of scraps you will have to re-roll, as those re-rolled cookies are usually misshapen and tough.

7. **Don't Rotate Your Pans**

You read somewhere about hotspots in your oven and how rotating your pans during baking will help mitigate them. It makes sense, until you realize that opening the door releases the heat. And thus, the relatively minor benefit of rotating your pans is completely nullified by the fact you've just let all the heat out of the oven. Instead of eliminating hotspots, you've eliminated all the heat, period. Considering cookies only bake for 10 to 12 minutes, opening the oven midway through baking leaves no time for that heat to build back up again. The results are cookies that don't brown enough on top and might not rise properly. No, you're better off just baking the cookies, hotspots or not.

8. **Use a Cooling Rack**

Letting your cookies cool directly on the hot pans will continue to cook them, which can lead to over-browning on the bottoms. In addition, because the steam can't escape as well when the cookies are sitting on the pan, they can get a bit soggy. The solution: as soon as they're cool enough to move (no more than 2 to 3 minutes), transfer them with a spatula to a cooling rack with at least 1/2-inch of clearance underneath to ensure proper airflow. The best racks for cookies are formed from a tight wire grid (rather than the wide bars of a roasting rack).