

Becky Stewart's Pecan Chocolate Chip Cookies

(Wheat and Gluten Free)

Basic Ingredients:

- 1 Stick unsalted butter, softened (one quarter pound)
- 1 Large egg
- ½ Teaspoon baking soda
- ½ Teaspoon real salt
- 1½ Tablespoons of real vanilla extract
- ¾ Cup sugar*
- 2 Tablespoons flax seeds, finely ground (you can use a coffee grinder)
- 1½ Cups of flour, total (one half oat flour/one half buckwheat flour)
- 2 Cups pecans
- 1 Cup chocolate chips

Directions:

- Preheat oven to 370 degrees F.
- In large bowl, place butter and egg. Sprinkle salt, baking soda and ground flax over these.
- Add sugar and vanilla and then blend everything.
- Add flour and blend.
- Stir in pecans first, then chips. This gets the pecans thoroughly coated with batter.
- Spread cookie sheet with a thin layer of coconut oil or butter. Drop rounded, tablespoon-size clumps onto the sheet. You can push them down a little. :)
- Bake one sheet at a time, in the center of your oven, for about 10 minutes.
- Set the sheet briefly on a wire rack. Remove the cookies promptly from the sheet, to cool on wire racks.

Secrets to Success:

These cookies are an infrequent treat, and they make a thoughtful gift! Therefore, I like to use the finest ingredients and fuss a little. You might consider using organic butter from pastured cows (no bovine growth hormone), organic eggs from free-roaming hens (no pesticides, antibiotics, or fed GMO corn or soy), real sea salt with minerals (not processed table salt), and vanilla made from vanilla beans (not from petroleum). *Also use raw organic cane sugar or preferably real, organic, dehydrated cane juice, which is more nutritious than processed sugar. (Don't use beet sugar, as most beets are genetically modified). You can also use combinations of light and dark brown sugars (brown sugar has some molasses added back into it, so it is more nutritious). These natural ingredients all contribute to a nutritious, better-tasting cookie.

Don't scrimp on the quality of chocolate chips (I personally like Ghirardelli's 60% Cacao), and fresh pecan halves, broken in half width-wise, are worth the extra effort. The big secret to success for this recipe is the greater proportion of pecans to chips. I thank my father, Dr. Robert Stewart, for his guidance here!

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Sugar:

The major concentrated source of sucrose is in sugar cane and sugar beets. Everything except sucrose is removed in the processing when purified white sugar is made, so the nutrients are all gone (that's why it's called "empty calories"). The remaining residue, molasses, contains significant amounts of minerals, iron, calcium and trace elements, zinc, copper, manganese and chromium. Pure cane syrup retains most of the original nutrients, but it is hard to find due to its short shelf life.

Genuine raw sugar is made from evaporating the water from cane juice and allowing it to crystallize. This form of sugar, called *gur* in India, is highly nutritious as it contains all of the nutrients that are found in the original cane except for the water and fiber.

The FDA in the U.S. requires that table sugar be processed to completely remove all nutrients, so that it is chemically pure, 99%+ sucrose. Brown sugar, however, is prepared by pouring a small amount of molasses back over the white sugar to return some of the minerals lost in processing.

It is interesting that even though dietary sugar consumption leads to tooth decay, plantation workers who chew sugar cane don't suffer from excess cavities. And among Zulu and Pando sugar cane cutters in Natal, who chew a lot of cane, diabetes is almost nonexistent. The same is true for workers in the Dominican Republic who consumed sugar cane since childhood. There is something in cane juice that has a protective effect that is lost when white sugar is "purified." In light of this, it would seem that using the unprocessed raw sugar or cane juice, with most of its original nutrients, would be the healthy choice for baking and sweetening foods. Just remember that processed sugar does not belong in a healthy diet, and natural or raw sugars should be consumed in moderation.

Bon Appétit,
Rebecca Stewart, C.H.C.