

Oatmeal Raisin Cookies

Makes about 24 cookies

Professional pastry chefs often overlook simple recipes. We are all out to prove that we can create magic out of butter, sugar, flour, and eggs! But sometimes we are so determined to develop intricate methods and combine esoteric ingredients to prove our prowess that we go overboard. When it comes to oatmeal raisin cookies, I've found that the best recipe is the one that allows the pure and delicious flavor of nutty oats and plump raisins to shine through. This recipe is as basic as it gets. It has a slight hint of spice from freshly grated nutmeg (this is crucial! buy a whole nutmeg, use a grater, and let the smell transport you to sipping eggnog by a roaring fire) and a little bit of ground cinnamon. But mostly it is an addictive mix of chewy cookie and sweet raisins.

1 cup (2 sticks/228 grams) unsalted butter, at room temperature
3/4 cup (150 grams) granulated sugar
1 cup (220 grams) packed light brown sugar
2 eggs
1 3/4 cups (245 grams) unbleached all-purpose flour
1 3/4 cups (175 grams) old-fashioned rolled oats (not instant or quick cooking)
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon kosher salt
1/4 teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 1/2 cups (240 grams) raisins

If you are baking the cookies on the same day you are preparing the dough, position a rack in the center of the oven, and heat the oven to 350 degrees.

Using a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment (or a handheld mixer or wooden spoon), cream together the butter, granulated sugar, and brown sugar on medium speed for about 5 minutes, or until the mixture is light and fluffy. (This step will take 10 minutes if using a handheld mixer or a spoon.) Stop the mixer a few times and use a rubber spatula to scrape the sides and bottom of the bowl and the paddle to release any clinging butter or sugar. Beat in the eggs on medium speed for 2 to 3 minutes, or until thoroughly combined. Scrape the bowl and the paddle again to make sure the eggs are thoroughly incorporated.

In a medium bowl, stir together the flour, oats, baking soda, salt, nutmeg, and cinnamon. Add the raisins and toss to combine. On low speed (or with the wooden spoon), slowly add the flour mixture to the butter-sugar mixture and then mix just until the flour mixture is totally incorporated and the dough is evenly mixed.

For the best results, scrape the dough into an airtight container and let it rest in the refrigerator overnight (or for at least 3 to 4 hours) before baking. When ready to bake, position a rack in the center of the oven, and heat the oven to 350 degrees F.

Drop the dough in 1/4-cup balls onto a baking sheet, spacing them about 2 inches apart. Flatten each ball slightly with the palm of your hand.

Bake for 20 to 22 minutes, or until the cookies are golden brown on the edges and slightly soft in the center. Be careful not to overbake. Soft, chewy centers make these cookies irresistible. Let cool on the baking sheet on a wire rack for 5 to 10 minutes, then transfer the cookies to the rack to cool completely.

The cookies can be stored in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 3 days. The unbaked dough can be stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 1 week.

From "Flour: Spectacular Recipes from Boston's Flour Bakery + Café" by Joanne Chang with Christie Matheson, Chronicle Books (2010)