

Salt and Serenity

The Perfect Chocolate Chunk and Caramel Cookie

This recipe first appeared on food blogger Ashley's site, www.notwithoutsalt.com, and then Dana of www.danatreat.com, elaborated upon it. Both Dana and Ashley swear it will be the last chocolate chip cookie recipe you will ever need. I thought they were excellent, but given my curious nature and love of baking, I doubt that I am done trying chocolate chip cookie recipes.

This recipe makes about 32 cookies, using an ice cream scoop measuring 2 inches across. If you do not have an ice cream scoop, make the cookies about 2 ½ tablespoons in size.

2 sticks (8 oz.) unsalted butter, softened

¼ cup granulated sugar

¼ cup Turbinado sugar

1¾ cup light brown sugar, packed

2 eggs

2 tsp. vanilla

3½ cups all-purpose flour

1½ tsp. baking soda

¾ tsp. salt

12 oz. chocolate (use the best quality chocolate you can afford. With a serrated knife, cut chocolate into roughly ½-inch chunks.)

24 Vanilla caramel candies, unwrapped and cut into quarters

Sea salt (optional)

1. Preheat the oven to 360°F. Set rack in the middle of the oven.
2. Cream the butter and the sugars on medium-high speed until light, 4-5 minutes. Scrape down the sides of the bowl a couple of times during this process. Continue mixing while adding the eggs one at a time. Make sure each egg is incorporated before adding the next. Add the vanilla. Scrape down the bowl with a spatula.
3. Combine the flour, soda and salt in another bowl. Mix with a whisk. With the machine on low, slowly add almost all the flour. Reserve just a bit of the mixture. Remove the bowl from the mixer and add the last bit of flour along with the chocolate and caramel pieces. Stir with a spatula until just combined.
4. Chill dough for at least 2 hours, or up to 2 days.
5. Using a large ice cream scoop, scoop out mounds of dough making sure there is about 2 inches between each cookie. Do not crowd them and there is no need to press the dough down. Sprinkle each mound with a bit of sea salt.
6. Bake sheets, one at time, until the cookies are lightly golden on the edges and a bit gooey in the center, about 11 minutes. Do not over bake! Remove sheet

from oven and allow to sit undisturbed for two minutes. Then carefully transfer cookies to a cooling rack. Repeat with the remaining sheets