

Chocolate Peppermint Cookies

This recipe is from the December 2008 issue of Martha Stewart Living. Martha recommends rolling out the dough and then cutting the cookies with a cookie cutter. I found it way faster to roll the dough into a cylinder and chill and slice, like a slice and bake cookie.

I have also included instructions (on the second page) for tempering the white chocolate for dipping. If you want your cookies to have a nice shine and look professional, as well as not have them melt in your hand while you are eating them, I recommend tempering the chocolate first, before dipping. If you don't really care, then go ahead and dip without tempering first.

1 cup all-purpose flour, plus more for surface
1/2 cup unsweetened Dutch-process cocoa powder
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
2 1/2 ounces (5 tablespoons) unsalted butter, softened
3/4 cup sugar
1 large egg
1 large egg yolk
3/4 teaspoon pure peppermint extract
8 large candy canes or 30 peppermint candies, crushed
2 pounds white chocolate, coarsely chopped

1. Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Sift flour, cocoa powder, baking soda, baking powder, and salt into a bowl. Beat butter and sugar with a mixer on medium-high speed for 1 minute. Reduce speed to medium-low, and add egg, then yolk, beating well after each addition. Beat in peppermint extract. Slowly add flour mixture, and beat until just incorporated.
2. Divide dough in half and shape each half into a cylinder about 2 inches in diameter. Wrap each cylinder well in waxed paper and twist ends to make it nice and tight. Freeze until firm, at least 1 hour (or up to 2 days).
3. Unwrap one cylinders and slice into rounds about 1/4-inch thick and place 1 inch apart on parchment-lined baking sheets. Repeat with remaining disk.
4. Bake until cookies are dry to the touch, about 12 minutes. Transfer parchment, with cookies, to wire racks, and let cool. (Undecorated cookies will keep, covered, for up to 3 days.)
5. Sift crushed candy, and separate larger pieces from dust, reserving both.
6. If you want to temper chocolate before dipping, see instructions on next page. If not, proceed to step 7.
7. Dunk cookies into melted chocolate. Using a fork, turn to coat, let excess drip off, and gently scrape bottom against edge of bowl. Place on parchment-lined baking sheets, and sprinkle 1/4 teaspoon of either candy pieces or dust on top. Repeat, sprinkling half the cookies with pieces and the rest with dust. Refrigerate until set, up to 3 hours. Decorated cookies will keep in the fridge for about a week or can be frozen for up to a month.

Instructions for tempering chocolate for dipping.

1. Melt 1 ½ pounds of chocolate in a heatproof bowl set over a pot of gently simmering water until it reaches **110° F**. (for milk and white chocolate) or 115° F for dark chocolate. Remove from heat.
2. Next you want to cool the chocolate. Add the remaining ½ pound of chocolate to the bowl and stir constantly. Once the chocolate cools to **82° F – 84° F**, remove any large chunks of unmelted chocolate from the bowl.
3. Next you want to reheat the chocolate **briefly**. Place the chocolate bowl over the warm water in the double boiler for 5-10 seconds, remove it and stir, and repeat, until the temperature reaches **85° F-87° F** (for white or milk chocolate) or 89° F-91° F for dark chocolate.
4. The best way to maintain this temperature is to place the bowl on a foil covered heating pad set on low. Remember to stir occasionally.
5. **Congratulations!** You have tempered chocolate. If you want to make sure it has been done properly, do a test: spread a spoonful thinly over an area of waxed paper and allow it to cool. If the chocolate is shiny and smooth, it is properly tempered. If it is dull or streaky, it has not been tempered correctly.