

Salt and Serenity

Crunchy Chocolate Chunk Cookies

Chocolate pearls are the secret ingredients that make these cookies crunchy. Basically a chocolate pearl is a tiny nugget of crunchy cereal, enrobed in chocolate. Both Valrhona and Callebaut make them. I bought mine online. If you can't find them, use chopped Maltesers or Whoppers.

This recipe makes between 30-34 cookies, depending on how much raw cookie dough you eat while scooping! I use 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, removed from fridge 10 minutes before making dough

½ cup granulated sugar

1¾ cup light brown sugar, packed

2 eggs

2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract or vanilla bean paste

3½ cups all-purpose flour

1½ teaspoons baking soda

½ teaspoon Kosher salt

1 cup good quality bittersweet chocolate chips or chunks

½ cup milk chocolate pearls or chopped Maltesers

Fleur de Sel or other coarse sea salt for sprinkling

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Set rack in the middle of the oven.
2. Cream the butter for about 1-2 minutes. Add the white and brown sugar and mix on medium-high speed until light, about 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. With the machine on low, slowly add the flour. Turn off mixer. Add the chocolate chunks and chocolate pearls and mix in by hand, with a spatula. Chill dough for at least an hour and up to 36 hours.
4. Using a 2-inch ice cream scoop, scoop out mounds of dough making sure there is about 2 inches between each cookie. Using your palm, slightly flatten each cookie. Sprinkle cookies with a bit of sea salt.

5. 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