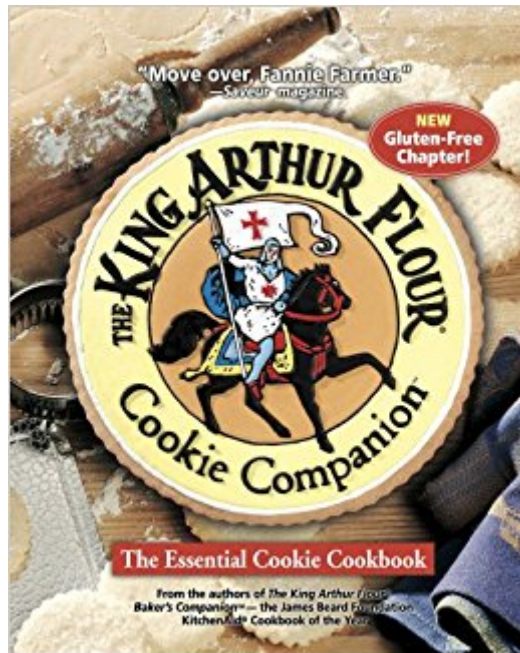


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The King Arthur Flour Cookie Companion: The Essential Cookie Cookbook



Synopsis

Drawing on the same commitment to the home-baking community that has earned them hundreds of thousands of dedicated followers, the bakers at King Arthur Flour guide you through hundreds of recipes, revealing the secrets to making your own mouthwatering cookies for any occasion. The perfect chocolate chip cookie, the versatile sugar cookie, the best chewy brownie—they're all here, plus many more old favorites and many others you may not know. And all created and thoroughly tested by the never-fail team of bakers at King Arthur Flour. You'll find a thorough overview of the essential ingredients of cookie baking, along with step-by-step instructions and how-to drawings of techniques that will have you creating great-looking, incredible-tasting cookies in no time. You'll also learn tips on substitutions and variations; measuring and weighing ingredients; instructions for making icings, fillings, and dips; and even advice on high-altitude baking. Recipes are enhanced with sidebars full of hints, shortcuts, troubleshooting advice, and recipe lore. Also, each recipe is accompanied by a complete nutritional analysis, and such baking terms as "creaming," "docking," and "folding" are fully explained. Finally, a comprehensive, illustrated chapter describes the key baking tools you'll want to have on hand. B&W illustrations throughout; color photograph insert

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Customer Reviews

I received my copy of the Cookie Companion at 10:30 and I had already baked two of the recipes by 5:00. One of the advantages of this great book--no trips to the store for exotic ingredients. Anyone who is a frequent baker already has everything needed on a shelf in the pantry. If you live at altitude, page 22 alone is worth the price of the book. Photocopy it and tape it at your baking prep area. The

chapter division in the Companion is very baker friendly. How many times do you say, "I think I want to bake a drop/bar/cutout cookie" and how many times do you just think, "I would like an oatmeal cookie." Go to the chapter for the flavor or main ingredient of what you are in the mood to bake (or have the ingredients for). You will be sure to find a cookie that interests you. I really liked the wide range of choices offered by the multiple recipes for the old standards. Do you want an oatmeal cookie that is soft, chewy, crisp, etc. You can select a recipe that meets your needs and wants for the moment. The recipe headers are fun to read. The descriptions are sometimes amusing and it seems that the author is being very friendly and honest...almost like a friend handing you a recipe with his or her opinion of the results to be achieved. I enjoyed the wonderful illustrations. It is obvious that the artist is quite familiar with baking techniques. The art really enhanced my appreciation of the recipes and the book. Step by step and easy to follow--trademarks of baking with King Arthur recipes. These could be used by a beginning baker as well as by more experienced cooks. The sidebars contain interesting tips on ingredients or techniques.

I am a professionally trained home baker and own over 250 baking books. I also have a set of 16 binders I made for various products and projects while in baking school in the early 2000s along with a ring set of master formulas and a laminated 'cheat sheet' so I can bake any product, anywhere. In fact, I am in the process of writing my own book for like-minded home bakers incorporating many of the tricks and techniques I learned in the fabulous States-side Cordon Bleu-based program I attended (a two year curriculum - now that's thorough!). So, I didn't need this book, but I was looking for a cookie book to give as a gift for my daughter -- who is a scientist and bakes on the fly -- that would present the standard variety (and hopefully more) in an accurate and easy to follow manner. None of the books I had on my own shelves fit all my criteria, so I did a little exploring on and found this one. I liked what I read enough to buy a copy for myself, first and have now given it as a gift to many people. I am very happy with it. Once you know the ratios for each baking product [after all, the same four basic ingredients make up 95% of all baking: flour (base), water/liquid ('reagent'), eggs (leavening), butter/oil (fat)] what matters are the details and particulates added along with the proportions. In culinary school students memorize these ratios so they know the difference between a pancake and a crepe, a biscuit and a muffin. The trained eye can also recognize incorrect 'recipes' and wrong proportions that mean many bookstore baking books are useless and lead to failed projects (this is not a problem in Europe where formulas are considered sacred and product names reflect a standardized version of any baked product - almost as controlled as wines and cheeses!

'The King Arthur Flour Cookie Companion' by King Arthur staff bakers and recipe testers, with a major assist from Laura Brody and the usual platoon of editors and designers from W. W. Norton and The Countryman Press of Woodstock, Vermont is certainly the very best general purpose cookie book I have reviewed to date. I say this with the important caveat that I have yet to review major cookie books by baking heavyweights Nick Malgieri, Maida Heatter, and Carol Walter. It is important to say that the value of the book is not based on its exhaustive coverage of cookie recipes, although in over 500 pages, the book certainly covers all but a few corners of the far flung land of cookie baking. While it does leave out some important recipes, such as the famous thin Moravian ginger cookies of North Carolina, its real value is in its meticulous description of all those factors that influence great cookie baking. While a lot of cookie baking is a lot more forgiving than, say, pastry or biscuits or cheesecake, it is still baking, which means that a change in ingredients which would mean nothing to a sautee or a braise will mean the difference between a great cookie and a disappointment. The clearest example of this sensitivity is in the selection of shortening, where the major choices are butter, lard, margarine, or vegetable shortenings such as Crisco. Each option has a significant effect on taste and the degree that a drop cookie will rise or spread. And, that's before you even take nutritional aspects into account with tradeoffs between the saturated fats of butter and the transfats of margarine. Add in the effects of different sugars and different flours and you start to wonder how a cookie ever manages to get made.

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