



One of the secrets to these extra crispy and golden cookies: more butter!

Bakeable

# A Cookie with Character

Her “house cookie” is famous for its unique technique and irresistible rippled edges, but its biggest fans are still her Minneapolis family.

STORY BY EMILY TYRA PHOTOGRAPHY BY ELIESA JOHNSON



Sprinkle a little salt on the cookies at the end of baking to make the chocolate flavor pop!

**B**LOGGER AND COOKBOOK AUTHOR Sarah Kieffer never expected that a little baking trick she first tried in ninth grade—tapping the sheet pan in the oven during baking—would have a hand in her most well-loved recipe: Pan-Banging Chocolate Chip Cookies.

But why are those gentle raps possibly the most delicious thing one can do to transform an already iconic cookie? Sarah explains, “The pan-banging technique I use in my recipe calls for the sheet pan to be tapped in the oven every few minutes, causing the cookies to ‘fall’ and creating ripples on the edges of the cookie.” This yields a two-textured treat: crunchy outer crinkles that shatter in your mouth and a soft center bursting with chocolate.

The self-taught baker dabbled in the technique while working at various coffeehouse-bakeries in Minnesota in the 2000s—a time that defined baking for her: “I got thrown into it due to lack of help in the kitchen and, after a few failed cookie attempts, fell in love with the whole process.”

Sarah found it calming, for starters, but she was particularly drawn to the communion, “the act of sharing and the act of receiving,” of it all. She says, “I liked the actual acts of mixing, stirring and scooping, but I also loved watching people come

**“My mom loves them. She hides them in the freezer from my dad.”**

in and find comfort in their time eating and drinking in the coffeehouse.”

After her two children were born, she made the decision to be a home baker. “I must admit, I have enjoyed this period of cooking and baking the most,” she says. So much

so that she debuted her Vanilla Bean Blog to chronicle “a food history of sorts for my family.” Her baking experiments have started to become heirlooms in the making.

Case in point: When the Pan-Banging Chocolate Chip Cookies first appeared in her *Vanilla Bean Baking Book*, they were a runaway hit and inspired an entire chapter of pan-banging cookies in her next collection, *100 Cookies*. (Who knew that everything from ginger molasses to sugar cookies can benefit from a few raps of the pan?)

The world may love these wrinkled, buttery-bottomed treats (“I am honestly still flabbergasted at how many people love and make this cookie on a regular basis,” confesses Sarah), but she still thinks of them as her family’s “house cookie.” And it’s still her mom who is their most adoring fan. “My mom loves them. She hides them in the freezer from my dad,” Sarah laughs.

She’s apt to make a few batches soon, as she jokingly refers to February as “Chocolate Season.” At the heart of this time of year, when she’s not pan-banging to her heart’s content, she’ll also whip up a “chocolate cake with chocolate buttercream—always a favorite.”

With her fourth cookbook—a collection of 100 cozy and indulgent morning bake recipes and a few savory breakfast treats—in progress now, she admits there have been lot of bakes at the Kieffer house lately. “The recipes that I am working on and testing become what they get to eat. They don’t seem to mind!”

**Pan-Banging Chocolate Chip Cookies**

This recipe started it all. These chocolate chip cookies are crunchy on the edges and chewy in the middle. —Sarah Kieffer, Minneapolis, MN

Prep: 20 min. • Bake: 20 min. Makes: 12 cookies

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- ¾ tsp. salt
- ½ tsp. baking soda
- 1 cup unsalted butter, room temperature
- 1½ cups sugar
- ¼ cup packed brown sugar
- 1 large egg, room temperature
- 2 Tbsp. water
- 1 Tbsp. vanilla extract
- 6 oz. semisweet or bittersweet chocolate, chopped into ½-in. pieces
- Fleur de sel (sea salt), optional

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Adjust oven rack to middle position. Line 3 baking sheets with aluminum foil, dull side up, or parchment.
  2. In a small bowl, whisk flour, salt and baking soda; set aside.
  3. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, beat butter until creamy, about 1 minute. Add sugars and beat until light and fluffy, 2-3 minutes. Add egg, water and extract; mix on low until combined. Add flour mixture; mix until combined. Stir in chocolate until incorporated.
  4. Form dough into ¼-cup (3-oz.) balls. Place 4 balls on a prepared pan. Freeze 15 minutes. Bake until the dough balls have spread flat but are puffed slightly in the center, about 9 minutes. Lift sheet pan up 4 inches and let it drop down against the oven rack, so the edges of the cookies set and the centers fall back. Bake until the cookies puff up again in 2 minutes; repeat dropping the pan. Repeat a few more times to create ridges around the edge of the cookie. Bake until the cookie edges are golden brown but the centers are much lighter and not fully cooked, 16-18 minutes total. Repeat with remaining dough. If desired, sprinkle cookies with salt while warm.
- 1 COOKIE 385 cal., 19g fat (12g sat. fat), 52mg chol., 194mg sod., 45g carb. (30g sugars, 1g fiber), 4g pro. ●



Lining the baking sheets with aluminum foil, dull side up, creates a golden bottom.



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Get the recipes and all the details on how to participate at [tasteofhome.com/bakeableFM22](https://tasteofhome.com/bakeableFM22).