



Fresh Ground Flour BAKING GUIDE & Favorite Recipes

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Home Milled Baking Guide & Recipes

By Melissa K. Norris

Congrats on stepping into the world of home milling, and using fresh ground flour in your cooking and baking. You, my friend, are stepping into a fun and exciting new world, with flour options like you've never had before.

My goal with this guide is: to help you turn out scrumptious, nutritious food ... without the mistakes and pitfalls I encountered, when I first started using fresh ground flour.

Baking with fresh milled flour you've ground at home, is quite different than store bought flour.

The first few weeks of baking with my fresh ground flour, left me frustrated with dense breads and spread out pancake cookies. I've now been grinding my own flour, and using fresh flour in all of our baking for almost five years, and I've learned some tips to save you some time.

The first thing we need to go over is the wheat berry. It doesn't look like a fruit berry, but more of a hard kernel (this totally perplexed me at first, I was picturing a golden squishy berry). The first part of the wheat berry is the bran, which is the hard outside, where a lot of the fiber and nutrients are.

The second part is the germ. This is where the oil resides, filled with vitamins, proteins, and minerals. It's where the goods are, y'all.

The third part is the endosperm, a large part of the berry, and where most of the starch is. This is what regular flour from the store is made from.

The other two parts of the wheat berry are not in store bought flour, because the oil turns rancid quickly, meaning it wouldn't stay shelf stable. Whenever you see "enriched" on flour labels, it's because they have to put back in the vitamins and minerals they've taken out.

Grinding your own flour at home means you get all the good parts of the wheat berry. No need to add anything back in, because it's all there in the first place. This is one of the reasons we started grinding our own flour. The second is the storage life of wheat berries. The berries will store for many, many years, whereas flour is only good for up to a year or so. I'm always looking for ways to increase our self-sufficiency and food storage. Can I get a high five?

There are two general types of wheat berries, hard and soft. Hard wheat has higher protein and more gluten, which is good for certain types of baking. Gluten is what gives bread its elasticity and soft texture.

I prefer hard white wheat to hard red wheat in my baking. I use hard red wheat for tortillas and crackers, but I like hard white wheat for breads and rolls.

Hard white wheat is sweeter and lighter, and what I use in my Whole Wheat Honey Buttermilk Sandwich Bread.

Soft wheat is preferred for pastry type items as it's lower in protein, and I used it until I discovered ... spelt!

I prefer to use spelt as my pastry flour. Spelt is a primitive ancient grain dating all the way back to Biblical times. I was reading in my Bible a few weeks back, and spelt was mentioned by name. I got a little giddy. As in 'looked for my husband to show him', giddy.

Spelt has a higher protein count and *does contain gluten*, though not the levels or even the same kind of gluten found in regular hybridized wheat. I use spelt in biscuits, cookies, muffins, cakes, and quick breads. Some people who are sensitive to gluten (not celiacs) have been able to eat spelt in small amounts.

Tips for baking with fresh ground flour.

- 1. Fresh milled flour right out of the grinder is warm.** This is great for yeast breads. This is not great for pastry items that require the cutting in of cold butter or lard. To get a flaky pastry, you need the butter to melt when it's baking in the oven, not when it's being mixed together. When I need my flour to be cool for pastry needs, I'll grind it and pop it in the fridge for a while or in the freezer if I'm in a hurry. Let's face it, I'm in a hurry a lot ... want a fabulous flaky pie crust recipe?
- 2. You have to alter the amount of fresh ground flour for your recipes** using all-purpose flour. When working with flours **other than spelt**, you need to use less flour. Fresh flour absorbs liquid more than store bought flour. The first month of using fresh flour, I couldn't make bread. It was sooo hard by the time I was supposed to punch it down, I couldn't make an indent in the dough with my first. Yeah, that dense.

And I'd been baking bread my whole life! Hello, something was wrong. That something was me, because I wasn't altering my recipes. Generally, I use 3 Tablespoons **less** per cup of flour in a recipe. For **spelt flour**, you need to use **2 to 4 tablespoons more** flour per cup—or on the flip side, cut back on the liquid amount by a quarter. (Not the fat, just the liquid). For example, if it calls for 1 cup milk, only use $\frac{3}{4}$ milk with spelt and add more only if needed after about 10 to 15 minutes resting time.

3. **You have to go by the feel and look of your dough, not the called for amounts.** Start with a lesser amount of flour. You can add more in but you can't take it back out. Because the flour will absorb liquid, wait before adding more flour. Mix until it sticks together, but is still tacky or sticky to the touch of your finger.

4. Don't over knead your fresh milled flour dough! Here's my rule for kneading with fresh flour. Knead dough for 4 minutes, let it rest for 10 to 15 minutes (or 20 if you get busy, don't set a timer, and totally forget...) Then come back and knead for 4 more minutes. You'll notice the dough has absorbed the liquid, and isn't as sticky as it was before the rest period.

5. **Don't add more flour when kneading.** This was where I really went wrong. I kept adding flour, wanting my dough to feel soft like it did with store bought flour. How do you knead without extra flour? Use a small amount of olive oil, coconut oil, or avocado oil on your counter and hands, to knead without it sticking. If you're using a stand mixer to knead, then don't worry about the oil. My Kitchen Aid Pro does a bang-up job and I heart it.

6. **Having rising problems or flat bread?** Spelt likes to rise out instead of up. Just the way it rolls- er...rises. For free form baked goods like cookies, I do have a small bag of organic all-purpose flour, and I'll use some of that for cookies, like 1 cup of all-purpose to 2 cups of spelt flour (the only thing I add it to, everything else is all home milled flour).

For flat or deflated bread issues, try cutting back your rise time by 15 to 20 minutes. It sounds like the yeast is spent by the time it hits the oven. This is my big bread tip. Preheat the oven to 425 degrees, bake bread at this high temperature for 4 minutes, then turn the oven down to 375 degrees for the remainder of the time. This extra high heat will kick that bread up, and make it rise baby, rise. I read this tip on a recipe review site somewhere and can't remember where, so if it was you, thanks a bunch!

How much flour does one cup of wheat berries make?

I generally get about 1 and 1/4 cup flour from 1 cup wheat berries.

Let's get to the recipes!

We shall start with bread. This is the story behind how this recipe came to be. One of the ladies from our church who works in my son's lunch room pulled me aside one Sunday.

"Your son has been throwing his sandwich away every day. I thought you should know." I kindly thanked her. When we got home from church I asked my son if he'd been eating his sandwiches at school. "Um, well, not really."

“Why not?” I asked him.

He shuffled back and forth on his feet. “I don’t really like the bread, mom.”

I told him to tell me when he doesn’t like something. Bless his heart for not wanting to hurt my feelings, but I felt bad he’d been going without a full lunch all those weeks. I was determined to come up with the perfect healthy bread that he would truthfully enjoy.

And here it is. This honey whole wheat bread is melt in your mouth good and chocked full of wholesome goodness. I ate a piece with my homemade strawberry jam (with no pectin and low sugar, saying that makes me smile). And then I had another piece, because, you know, it’s my duty to make sure it tastes just as yummy all by itself.

We had some with dinner, and then maybe a little bit more... When my husband went to bed that night, he gave me a kiss and said, “Thanks for making that bread.” First time he’s thanked me for bread, for cake and cookies, yes, but bread?

And my picky eater son, “That’s the best bread ever, mom.”

You know how you can eat an entire cake in one day by taking little slivers at a time? Yeah, I did that with this bread.

The texture of this bread is wonderful! And no crumbs. Honestly, I sliced the whole loaf and had one crumb, one! I think I’m a little bit in love with this bread...

Many of you know I started grinding my own flour last spring. Baking with freshly ground flour is quite a bit different than store bought. For one, you use less flour in your bread recipes. Two, it absorbs more moisture than store flour and can be over worked. When you first mix in the flour, it will seem too wet. This is why we let it sit. It will absorb the extra liquid.

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Honey Whole Wheat Sandwich Bread Recipe

Ingredients

- 4½ teaspoons of yeast

- 1⅓ cup warm water
- ¼ cup honey
- 6 Tablespoons melted butter
- 2 cups buttermilk
- 1 egg (optional)
- 8 cups freshly ground hard white wheat (or use 9 and ½ cups all purpose flour or 10 cups spelt)
- A scant ¼ cup vital wheat gluten (omit if using all purpose or bread flour)
- 1 Tablespoon sea salt

Instructions

1. Add yeast, ¾ cup warm water, and honey to a mixing bowl and mix. Let proof for about 5 minutes. (proofing means water turns frothy and yeast is active) Add in the rest of the ingredients until dough starts to pull away from the side of the bowl. Knead with kneading attachment for 4 minutes.
2. Let rest for 10 to 15 minutes.
3. Knead for another 5 minutes. Grease a large glass bowl. Put dough inside and cover with tea towel. Place in warm area and allow to double in size, about 1 hour.
4. Punch down and divide dough into two equals parts. Place in greased loaf pans. Allow to double.
5. Bake at 420 degrees for 4 minutes. Lower oven temp to 375 degrees and bake for 25 minutes. Pull out, immediately take a stick of butter and rub over top of bread. Allow to cool on racks. Try not to eat both loaves in one sitting.



GREAT-GRANDMA'S RECIPE FROM 1950 *Quicker'N Scat Dinner Rolls*

Vintage 1950's 'Quicker n' Scat' Rolls (by Andrea Sabean)

This dinner roll recipe was destined to be shared. When I found this recipe among my great-grandmother's collection, I knew I had to give it a try just by the name alone!

This quick dinner roll recipe was originally published in a cookbook entitled "Great Neighbour Recipes" (sold for \$3.95!) and reprinted in my great-grandmother's local newspaper in 1953. There's something to be said for recipes that get passed on.

I'm not sure if they are "quicker'n scat," but they do come together quickly and create fluffy dinner rolls.

The original recipe calls for white bread flour, shortening, and sugar, but for a healthier option, they are delicious made with spelt flour, butter, and honey as well.

Quicker 'n' Scat Dinner Rolls Recipe

- 1 1/2 cups Buttermilk
- 2 tsp salt
- 1/4 cup butter
- 1/4 cup + 1 tsp honey
- 2 1/4 tsp yeast

- 1/4 cup lukewarm water
- 4 1/2 – 5 1/2 cups spelt flour

Heat buttermilk over medium-low heat until bubbles just start to form around the edges (about 180 degrees.)

While buttermilk heats, measure salt and butter into large mixing bowl.

Once buttermilk has come to temperature, pour over butter and salt and stir until the butter has melted. Stir in 1/4 cup honey. Let cool to lukewarm (105 – 110 degrees).

While buttermilk mixture cools, proof the yeast by mixing with 1/4 cup lukewarm water and 1 tsp honey. In about 10 minutes it should be bubbly and foamy.

Pour yeast mixture into buttermilk mixture and stir to combine.

Add flour 1 cup at a time until a kneadable dough forms. Knead the dough until smooth, adding more flour if necessary to keep the dough workable.

Form dough into 12 balls and place on greased baking sheet. For soft-sided rolls, place the balls closer together.

Cover and let rise until doubled in size.

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees. Bake the rolls for 20 minutes. Brush the tops with butter while they are still warm.

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Easy from scratch
**Zucchini Double
Chocolate Muffins**

Best Ever Double Chocolate Zucchini Bread & Muffins

These double chocolate zucchini muffins are a favorite here, easy to make and 2 cups of veggies!

The pioneers knew how to use anything they had on hand, and since I've got a garden full of zucchini, I'll share my favorite recipe with you.

My house is full of chocolate lovers. My husband actually likes it more than I do. My son, a.k.a. the picky eater, gobbled this up. A huge score for mom, sneaking vegetables into dessert.

Ingredients

2 1/2 cups fresh ground Spelt or 2 1/4 cups fresh ground soft white wheat

3/4 cup cocoa powder

1 teaspoon salt (I've started using all organic GMO free herbs and spices from my affiliate partner [Mountain Rose Herbs](#), the taste difference is incredible)

1 teaspoon baking soda

1 teaspoon baking powder

3 eggs-farm fresh is best

1 cup melted coconut oil or butter

1/4 cup brewed coffee

1 cup (may add additional 1/4 cup if desired) Organic Sugar(affiliate link)
3 teaspoons vanilla extract

2 cups grated zucchini

1 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips

Instructions:

Beat eggs with a fork til foamy. Add oil, coffee, sugar, and vanilla, stir well. Mix dry ingredients in a separate bowl then add to liquids. Stir in zucchini and chocolate chips.

Grease 2 large bread pans. Pour batter in prepared pans and bake in preheated 350-degree oven for approximately 40 minutes. Test center with toothpick until it comes out clean. Cool in pan for about 20 minutes before removing. (I think I might also try a cup of my frozen raspberries to the next batch.)



Best Ever Flaky Pie Crust

Do you ever eat a pie and fork out the filling, leaving the crust behind? In less than 15 minutes you can have 4 flaky pie crusts ready to bake or freeze, and this crust is so good, you'll be leaving the filling just to eat the crust! In fact, my seven-year-old did that tonight.

When I was little, we made the hour trip to go visit my great-grandmother. We didn't get to go very often, but I remember her house and beautiful rose bushes even though I was quite young. My mother is an excellent baker and cook, but I never liked pie crust. Until I tasted this one. I had never eaten pie crust before and when I ate the entire piece of pie, crust included, my mom switched her recipe as fast as my great-grandmother could write it out.

Flaky Pastry Pie Crust Recipe

4 cups flour (freshly ground spelt)

1 and 3/4 cup lard (learn how to render your own lard), butter, or coconut oil (You can use any mixture you have)

1 Tablespoon sugar (I use organic evaporated cane juice)

2 tsp. sea salt

1 Tblsp. Apple Cider Vinegar

1 egg

1/4 to 1/2 cup cold water

Mix flour, sugar, and salt. Cut in lard, butter, or coconut oil. **Note:** In order to achieve flaky crust, your lard, butter, or coconut oil needs to be cold. It's the pieces of solid fat distributed throughout the flour, which melt upon baking, that create the flakiness. You can freeze your butter or lard before cutting it in. The large side of a cheese grater works great with frozen butter.

Start with 1/4 cup cold water, or until the dough holds together, but is not sticky. Chill for 15 minutes. After 15 minutes if the dough feels too dry sprinkle another tablespoon of cold water on it, then divide into four equal balls.

Wrap and freeze for later use, or roll out and bake your favorite quiche or pie. I love this paired with a jar of my home canned apple pie filling, for a quick, homemade dessert.

If you're not baking today, take the unbaked pie dough ball and wrap in plastic wrap. Toss in freezer. When ready to use, thaw flaky pastry crust dough in fridge overnight or on the counter for a few hours. Lightly flour surface, flatten dough ball with hand, and then roll to desired thinness.

When freezing, be sure to mark your dough. I also freeze sugar cookie dough and one Christmas morning, mistakenly used sugar cookie dough for my pastry crust in a sausage quiche. My brother said, "Does this have maple flavored sausage? It's sweet."



Pioneering Today Raspberry Lemon Cream Cheese Muffins

1 cup coconut oil (you can use butter or 1/2 butter and 1/2 coconut oil)

1 cup sugar (I only use raw organic cane sugar to avoid GMO's)

4 eggs

2 teaspoons vanilla

2 teaspoons grated lemon zest

1 and 1/2 cups plain yogurt or sour cream

1/2 cup milk

2 and 1/2 cups flour (soft white wheat or spelt)

1/2 teaspoon baking soda

1 teaspoon baking powder

2 cups fresh or frozen raspberries

Filling

4 tablespoons softened cream cheese

2 tablespoons sugar

1/2 squeezed lemon

1 teaspoon grated lemon zest

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Grease tins. Beat eggs, coconut oil, sugar, and vanilla together. Cream in lemon zest, yogurt, and milk. Mix dry ingredients together and blend with liquids. Add berries at the end.

Cream together cream cheese, lemon, and sugar. Fill greased muffins tins half way with batter. Spoon a large teaspoon into center of batter. Top with remaining batter, completely covering cream cheese. Sprinkle with raw sugar. Bake for 16 to 20 minutes or until toothpick comes out clean.



Old-Fashioned Homemade Chocolate Caramel Cinnamon Rolls

There is little else I like better than cinnamon rolls. They're ooey-gooey, melt in your mouth, and make lingering over breakfast a must. The only thing that could make them better is chocolate... and not having to make frosting!!

Now don't get me wrong, I love frosting, and I've been known to eat it with a spoon a time or two. Just a time or two.

There's a beauty in simply dumping a pan upside down, and watching lovely golden sticky caramel sauce drip out. And there's a beauty in diving in face first and eating it too, but more so when no one else is there to witness your stickiness.

I've come to the determination that everything just looks better in a cast iron pan. Like 'makes me want to take a picture every time better', and no, not just because I happen to blog about scrumptious recipes.

This recipe can be made in a 9×13 pan, but in true pioneer fashion (you did know this blog is based upon *Pioneering Today*, right?) you haven't really cooked unless you bake your chocolate caramel cinnamon rolls in a cast iron skillet.

Cast iron skillet baking directions:

You'll need two skillets. I used one large and one smaller one for this recipe. Measure out 1/2 cup of coconut oil, and divide it between the two pans, putting a little bit more oil in the larger pan. Place the skillets in the oven and hit pre-heat. As soon as the coconut melts completely, after about 3 to 5 minutes, turn off the oven.

Using an oven mitt, because we don't want to burn our fingers, pull out the skillet. Swirl the melted coconut oil around, until it covers the whole surface of the pan. Plus, it makes me feel like a real chef. Sprinkle the rest of the caramel sauce ingredients over the melted coconut oil.

Put your rolls, cut side down, into the skillet. The heat from the cast iron will help these rolls to rise nicely, especially on chilly fall and winter days, and because of the smaller pan, the rolls will puff up instead of out. Anyone else's favorite part the center of the roll, especially when it's almost not quite all the way done? Yeah ... I may be kinda weird that way.

My husband doesn't like raisins and I don't like nuts, so I substituted chocolate chips for raisins. It was so good, I decided to add in some cocoa powder and my Chocolate Cinnamon Rolls were born.

Spelt Cinnamon Rolls

3/4 cup warm water and milk (I eye ball this to be equal amounts milk and water)

1 package yeast or 2 1/4 teaspoons

1 egg

1/2 cup soft butter

1/4 cup sugar

1/2 teaspoon salt

3 and 3/4 cup sifted flour

Caramel Sauce in Pan

3/4 cup melted butter or coconut oil (I really liked the coconut oil)

1/2 to 3/4 cup brown sugar

Filling

1/2 cup softened butter

1/2 to 3/4 brown sugar

Cinnamon to taste

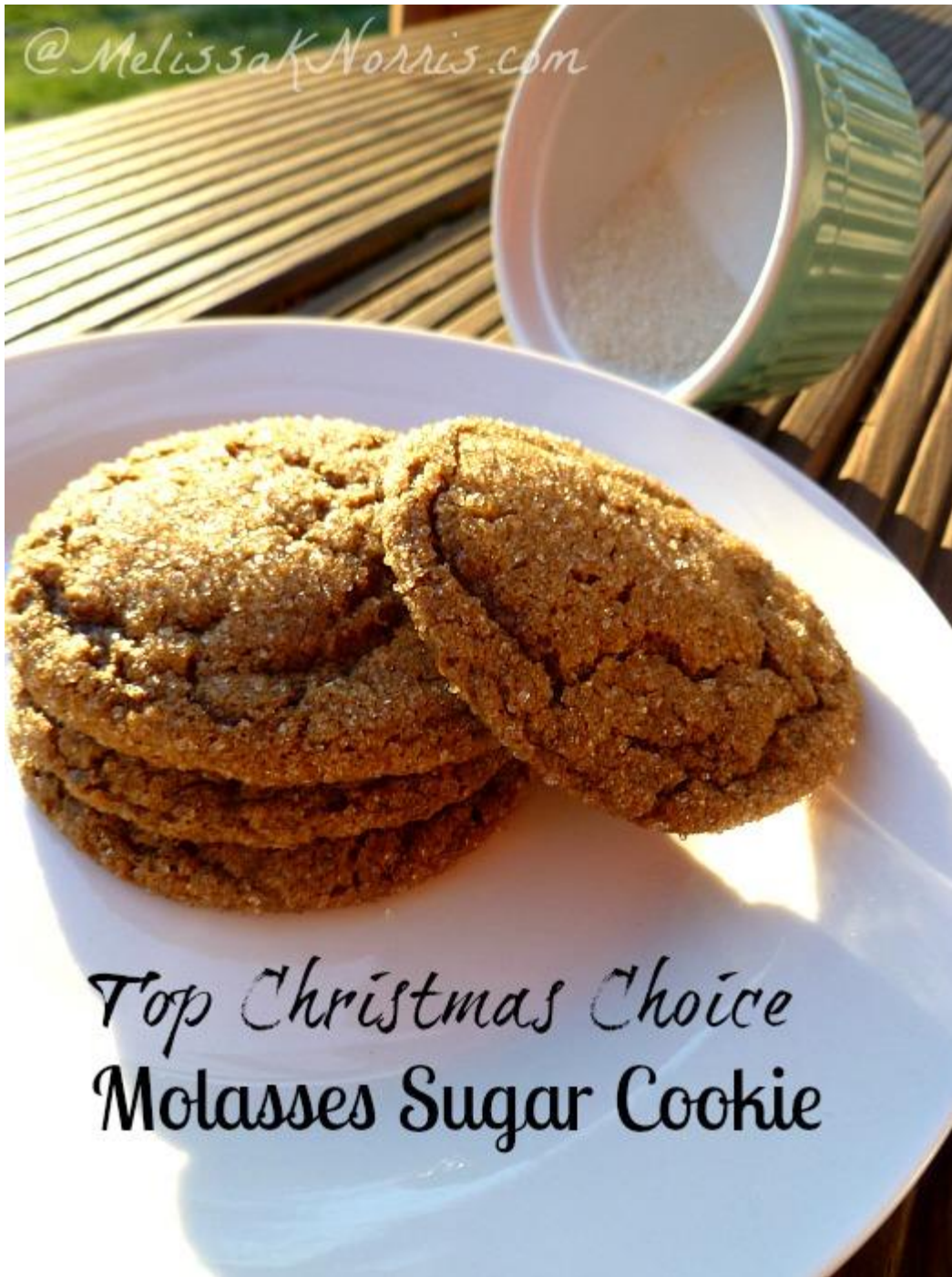
1/2 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips or to taste

Instructions

1. Pour warm water and milk over yeast in a large mixing bowl. Let sit for 8 to 10 minutes until foamy. Add egg, butter, and sugar. Stir in salt and sifted flour. Knead for 2 minutes, then let rest for 15 minutes. Dough will be wet but after the rest period, should no longer stick to your fingers. If it's too sticky to handle after the rest period, knead in another 1/4 cup flour. Knead for 1 more minute. (Only 3 minutes total kneading time)
2. Cover dough with a tea towel (traps warmth and helps dough to rise) and allow to rise for an hour in a draft free spot. I always put mine on the top of the fridge or your oven with just the oven light on works.
3. You'll need an 8 inch or 9 inch cast iron skillet. Place butter (or coconut oil) in the skillet and place in oven and hit pre-heat. As soon as the butter (or coconut oil) melts completely, after about 3 to 5 minutes, turn off the oven.
4. Using an oven mitt, because we don't want to burn our fingers, pull out the skillet. Swirl the melted butter (or coconut oil) around until it covers the whole surface of the pan. Sprinkle the brown sugar over the melted butter (or coconut oil).
5. Once dough has doubled in size (usually takes 45 to 60 minutes) roll out on a lightly oiled surface into a rectangle approximately 18×14 inches. Spread softened butter over surface of dough. Sprinkle brown sugar, cinnamon and chocolate chips over the surface.

6. Roll up, keeping it tight as you go. (Like rolling up a sleeping bag) Cut into approximately 1-inch thick rolls with a sharp knife. I've heard some people use a string, but a knife has always worked fine for me. Put your rolls, cut side down, into the skillet. The heat from the cast iron will help these rolls to rise nicely.

7. Bake at 375 degrees for 16 to 20 minutes, depending on how thick you cut them. I prefer mine on the doughier side, so I pull them out as soon as they're golden on top. Invert over a platter or plate. Scrape remaining caramel sauce from pan onto cinnamon rolls. Enjoy!



Top Christmas Choice
Molasses Sugar Cookie

Molasses Sugar Cookie Recipe

I consider these cookies my signature Christmas cookie. I bake them at least twice throughout Christmas, and well into the year afterwards as well. I'm a fan of any cookie recipe that uses molasses. It reminds me of the pioneer days, when many kitchens used molasses, because regular sugar wasn't as easily come by and generally cost more.

Molasses Sugar Cookie

3/4 cup softened butter

1/2 cup sugar (I use organic raw evaporated cane juice, certified GMO free)

1/2 cup brown sugar

Note: You can also use 1 cup regular sugar, but I like the addition of the brown sugar as it keeps cookies super-duper moist

1/4 cup molasses (I get mine from a big ol' vat at our local co-op)

1 egg (thank you to my little faithful flock, farm fresh is best)

2 cups flour (I used 1/2 spelt and 1/2 soft white wheat freshly ground)

2 teaspoons baking soda

1/2 teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon cinnamon

1/2 teaspoon ginger

1/2 teaspoon nutmeg

In a large bowl beat together the butter and sugar until creamy. Add molasses and egg, beating until well blended.

In medium bowl, blend flour, soda, salt, cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger; add to molasses mixture, mix well. Cover and chill at least 20 minutes.

Form dough into 1-inch balls, roll each in sugar, place 2 inches apart on cookie sheet.

Tip: To make uniform balls that bake evenly, use an ice cream scoop. Bake at 375 degrees for 6-8 minutes. Let stand 1 minute before removing. Makes around 5 dozen. (I tend to get 3 dozen, but they're so good I like a bigger cookie)

To make Gingerbread, just cut 1/4 cup butter and increase the molasses. These are a soft, melt in your mouth, one is never enough kind of cookie. Enjoy!