



Basic Baking Recipes

Classic Vanilla Cake

Ingredients:

- 2 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 1/2 cups granulated sugar
- 3 1/2 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp salt
- 1/2 cup unsalted butter, softened
- 1 cup milk
- 2 large eggs
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (175°C). Grease and flour a 9-inch round cake pan.
2. In a large bowl, cream together the butter and sugar until light and fluffy.
3. Beat in the eggs one at a time, then stir in the vanilla.
4. In a separate bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder, and salt.
5. Gradually add the dry ingredients to the wet ingredients, alternating with the milk, beginning and ending with the dry ingredients. Beat until just combined.
6. Pour batter into the prepared pan and bake for 30-35 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean.
7. Let cool in the pan for 10 minutes before inverting onto a wire rack to cool completely.

Chocolate Chip Cookies

Ingredients:

- 2 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, softened
- 3/4 cup granulated sugar
- 3/4 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 2 large eggs
- 2 cups chocolate chips

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C).
2. In a small bowl, whisk together flour, baking soda, and salt.
3. In a large bowl, cream together the butter, granulated sugar, and brown sugar until smooth.
4. Beat in the vanilla extract and then the eggs one at a time.
5. Gradually blend in the dry ingredients until just combined.
6. Stir in the chocolate chips.
7. Drop by rounded tablespoons onto ungreased baking sheets.
8. Bake for 9-11 minutes, or until edges are nicely browned.

Quick Banana Bread

Ingredients:

- 3 ripe bananas, mashed
- 1/3 cup melted butter
- 3/4 cup granulated sugar
- 1 large egg, beaten
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1/2 tsp salt

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (175°C). Grease and flour a 9x5 inch loaf pan.
2. In a large bowl, mash the bananas.
3. Stir in the melted butter, sugar, egg, and vanilla extract.
4. In a separate bowl, whisk together the flour, baking soda, and salt.
5. Add the dry ingredients to the wet ingredients and mix until just combined.
6. Pour batter into the prepared pan and bake for 55-65 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean.

Ingredient Substitutions

Flour

All-Purpose Flour	Can be substituted with whole wheat flour (use about 7/8 cup for every 1 cup of all-purpose), or gluten-free blends. Consider adding a binder like xanthan gum for gluten-free baking.
Cake Flour	For each cup of cake flour, you can use 1 cup of all-purpose flour minus 2 tablespoons, then add 2 tablespoons of cornstarch.

Sweeteners

Granulated Sugar	Can be replaced with brown sugar (may alter flavor and moisture), honey (use slightly less liquid in the recipe), or maple syrup (use slightly less liquid).
Brown Sugar	Substitute with granulated sugar and a tablespoon of molasses per cup.
Corn Syrup	Can be substituted with honey or maple syrup.

Dairy & Eggs

Butter	Can be substituted with margarine, shortening, or coconut oil (may alter flavor and texture). Use the same amount as butter.
Milk	Substitute with almond milk, soy milk, oat milk, or other non-dairy alternatives. Can also use water if necessary.
Eggs	For each egg, use 1 tablespoon of ground flaxseed mixed with 3 tablespoons of water (let sit for 5 minutes), or 1/4 cup of applesauce.

Baking Techniques & Tips

Creaming

Creaming butter and sugar together incorporates air, leading to a light and fluffy texture in baked goods. Use softened butter (not melted) and beat until pale and fluffy.

If the mixture looks curdled, add a tablespoon of flour to help it come together.

Folding

Folding gently combines light and airy ingredients (like whipped egg whites or whipped cream) into heavier mixtures without deflating them. Use a rubber spatula and cut down through the center, scrape along the bottom of the bowl, and gently fold the ingredients over.

Avoid overmixing, as this will deflate the mixture and result in a dense final product.

Proofing

Proofing refers to allowing yeast dough to rise before baking. This process develops flavor and creates a light, airy texture. Place the dough in a warm, draft-free place and let it rise until doubled in size.

A slightly warm oven (turned off) or a warm corner of the kitchen are ideal spots for proofing.

Baking Temperatures & Doneness

Most cakes and cookies are baked between 350°F (175°C) and 375°F (190°C). Adjust baking time accordingly.
Use a toothpick to check for doneness. It should come out clean or with a few moist crumbs attached.
For cookies, look for golden brown edges and a set center.

Troubleshooting Common Baking Issues

Flat Cookies

Possible causes: Too much butter, over-creaming, oven temperature too low.
Solutions: Use the correct amount of butter, avoid over-creaming, and ensure your oven is preheated to the correct temperature. Chill the dough before baking.

Dry Cake

Possible causes: Overbaking, too much flour, not enough liquid.
Solutions: Bake for the correct amount of time, measure flour accurately (spoon and level), and ensure you're using the correct amount of liquid. Add a tablespoon or two of oil to the batter to increase moisture.

Sinking Cake

Possible causes: Overmixing, oven door opened during baking, too much leavening agent (baking powder/soda).
Solutions: Mix until just combined, avoid opening the oven door, and use the correct amount of leavening agent.

Tough Pie Crust

Possible causes: Overmixing, too much water, warm ingredients.
Solutions: Mix the dough until just combined, use ice water, and keep ingredients cold. Let the dough rest before rolling.