sweet sensations
the best of the holiday cookie bunch
(and they're vegan)

Ask home bakers where their favorite cookie recipes come from, and their responses will probably be family members, friends, coworkers—even fellow party guests. That's no surprise: Sharing recipes is as much a part of the holidays as wrapping gifts, lighting candles and spending time with loved ones.

This year, we decided to join the recipe-swapping bonanza. We asked readers (and one of our talented contributors) to pass along their best vegan treats. After all, it's easy to make yummy cookies with a pound of butter and a half-dozen eggs, but spelt flour chocolate chip delights that taste better than Toll House? Spicy egg- and dairy-free morsels that give gingerbread men a run for their money? Now those are recipes worth writing down. But don't just take it from us—taste for yourself. And don't forget to make copies: Everyone who tries your creations will be clamoring for them.

One of this VT contributor's favorite things about vegan baking is that her kids can lick the bowl worry-free. These recipes were such a hit with her little testers (before and after baking) that her husband was lucky to find any cookies left when he got home!

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JACQUELINE HOPKINS
FOOD STYLING BY FRANK P. MELODIA
PROP STYLING BY KAREN QUATSOE
Grov/ing up in Lancaster County, PA, gave Dana, VP of a health care consulting firm, a taste for hearty, homey Pennsylvania Dutch cooking. After he and his partner went vegetarian five years ago, Dana rose to the challenge and began creating veg versions of the foods he was raised on. These dense and delicious brownies would make the grade at any open house or bake sale back home.

Dana Bensinger
Growing up in Lancaster County, PA, gave Dana, VP of a health care consulting firm, a taste for hearty, homey Pennsylvania Dutch cooking. After he and his partner went vegetarian five years ago, Dana rose to the challenge and began creating veg versions of the foods he was raised on. These dense and delicious brownies would make the grade at any open house or bake sale back home.

Jody Druding
According to Jody, vegans either starve, hit the lottery or learn to cook—so she chose option number three. A self-professed '60s throwback, Jody snuck healthy whole-wheat flour and nuts into these tender, spicy cookies that taste just like the holidays.

Marc Loring
When his cookie spree at a Washington bakery got expensive, Marc created this version of the sweet that was taking a bite out of his spending money. Marc's wife calls these their "little sin," but with a dough of spelt flour, maple syrup and peanut butter, it can honestly be said that good triumphs over evil here!

Bexx Caswell
All we can say is, this Boston-based librarian did her research well while looking for a way to use dairy-free white chocolate chips. When she's not experimenting in the kitchen, Bexx is working on veganboston.com, a website dedicated to vegan eats in Beantown.
CRANBERRY-ALMOND BISCOTTI
Makes 45 cookies • Vegan
Drizzle these Italian favorites with melted chocolate for a special treat.

2 1/4 cups flour
2 tsp. baking powder
1/2 tsp. salt
5 Tbs. orange juice plus 1/2 cup
4 Tbs. cornstarch
1 cup sugar plus 2 Tbs.
2 Tbs. canola oil
1 tsp. almond extract
1 tsp. vanilla extract
1 cup dried cranberries
1 cup sliced almonds

2. Whisk together 5 Tbs. orange juice and cornstarch in bowl; set aside. Beat 1 cup sugar, remaining 1/2 cup orange juice, oil and extracts until fluffy. Beat in cornstarch mixture, then flour mixture. Fold in cranberries and almonds.
3. Shape into 2 logs on prepared baking sheet. Sprinkle with remaining sugar. Bake 35 minutes, or until light brown. Cool 15 minutes on baking sheet. Slice into 1/2-inch thick slices. Return slices to baking sheet, and bake 20 minutes more, or until browned and crisp.

PER COOKIE: 82 CAL; 1G PROT; 2G TOTAL FAT (OG SAT. FAT); 13G CARB; OMG CHOL; 38MG SOD; <1G FIBER; 14G SUGARS

DOUBLE CHOCOLATE COOKIES
Makes 35 cookies • Vegan

The dough for these cookies is so good, you'll find yourself eating it raw—and because it contains no eggs, it's safe to munch away. For a nutty cookie, substitute 1 cup chopped walnuts for the white chocolate chips.

1 cup sugar
3/4 cup vegan margarine, such as Earth Balance, softened
1 tsp. egg replacer
1 tsp. vanilla extract
1 1/4 cups whole-wheat pastry flour
3/4 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
1/2 tsp. baking soda
1/2 tsp. baking powder
1/2 tsp. salt
1 cup vegan white chocolate chips, such as Lieber's

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line baking sheets with parchment paper, or coat with cooking spray.
2. Beat sugar and margarine in medium bowl with electric mixer until creamy. Beat in egg replacer and vanilla.
3. Combine flour, cocoa powder, baking soda, baking powder and salt in large bowl. Stir wet mixture into dry mixture; dough will be thick. Fold in chocolate chips.
4. Shape dough into 1-inch balls (about 1 Tbs.). Place 1 1/2 to 2 inches apart on prepared baking sheets, and flatten slightly. Bake 10 to 12 minutes, or until dry and crisp-looking. Cool completely before removing to wire rack.

PER COOKIE: 111 CAL; 1G PROT; 6G TOTAL FAT (3G SAT. FAT); 13G CARB; 0MG CHOL; 94MG SOD; <1G FIBER; 14G SUGARS

VEGAN SUGAR COOKIES
Makes 52 cookies • Vegan

A hint of peppermint in the frosting gives these classic treats a surprising twist—and makes them absolutely addictive.

Cookies
2 1/4 cups flour
2 tsp. baking powder
1 1/4 tsp. egg replacer
1 1/2 cups plus 1 Tbs. sugar
1 cup vegan margarine, softened
1 1/2 tsp. vanilla extract

Icing
3 cups confectioners' sugar
3 Tbs. plus 2 tsp. vanilla soymilk
1/4 tsp. peppermint extract
white sparkling sugar or white sprinkles for topping

1. To make Cookies: Preheat oven to 325°F. Coat baking sheets with cooking spray, or line with parchment paper. Combine flour and baking powder in small bowl. Whisk egg replacer with 2 Tbs. water. Set aside.
2. Cream sugar and margarine in bowl with electric mixer until fluffy. Beat in vanilla. Add egg replacer, and beat until smooth. Add flour mixture, and beat until soft dough forms.
3. Divide dough into 2 balls. Roll one ball to 1/4-inch thickness on lightly floured work surface. Cut into desired shapes, and transfer to prepared baking sheets. Repeat with remaining dough ball and scraps.
4. Bake cookies 15 to 17 minutes, or until light brown around edges. Cool 10 minutes on baking sheets, then transfer to wire rack to cool completely.
5. To make Icing: Beat sugar, soymilk and peppermint extract in bowl with electric mixer until smooth. Add an additional tsp. soymilk if frosting is too thick. Spread cooled cookies with icing, and top with sprinkles. Repeat with remaining cookies. Let icing harden before serving or storing.

PER COOKIE: 104 CAL; 1G PROT; 3G TOTAL FAT (1G SAT. FAT); 1G CARB; 0MG CHOL; 60MG SOD; <1G FIBER; 14G SUGARS
vegan sugar cookies
GINGER GEMS
Makes 35 cookies • Vegan

You don’t even need an electric mixer to make these drop cookies. For a spicier cookie, add 1 tsp. ground cinnamon and 1 tsp. ground ginger to the dough.

1/3 cup sugar
1/4 cup vegan margarine, softened
1/4 cup vegetable oil
1/4 cup crystallized ginger, chopped
1 Tbs. blackstrap molasses
1 Tbs. vanilla extract
2 cups whole-wheat flour
1 tsp. baking soda
1/2 tsp. salt
1 cup finely chopped walnuts
4 1/2 Tbs. lime juice
3 cups confectioners’ sugar

1. Preheat oven to 375°F. Coat baking sheets with cooking spray, or line with parchment paper. Spoon peanut butter into microwave-safe bowl, and heat on high power 30 to 45 seconds, or until melted, stirring once or twice.
2. Combine flour, baking soda and salt in large bowl. Stir in peanut butter, maple syrup and vanilla until blended. Fold in chocolate chips.
3. Drop 2 Tbs. dough for each cookie onto prepared baking sheet, and flatten slightly. Bake 15 to 17 minutes, or until golden brown. Cool 5 minutes, then transfer to wire rack to cool completely.

PER COOKIE: 237 CAL; 6G PROT; 11G TOTAL FAT (3.5G SAT. FAT); 31G CARB; 0MG CHOL; 238MG SOD; 2G FIBER; 19G SUGARS

FUDGE BROWNIES
Makes 24 brownies • Vegan

The ingredient list for this recipe looked so simple, no one at VT was prepared for how delicious these cookies turned out. Peanut butter and maple syrup hold the cookies together and help keep them dense and moist.

1 1/2 cups crunchy peanut butter
2 1/2 cups spelt flour
1 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. salt
1/2 cups maple syrup
2 tsp. vanilla extract
1/2 cups vegan chocolate chips, such as Sunspire

1. Preheat oven to 375°F. Line 9x9-inch baking pan with foil or parchment paper, and coat with cooking spray.
2. Melt chocolate and margarine in double boiler, or in heatproof bowl in microwave on medium power. Whisk in sugar and prune puree.
3. Combine flour, baking powder and confectioners’ sugar, for dusting
4. Cool in pan. Unmold, and cut into 1x1-inch squares. Sift cocoa powder over half of brownies. Sprinkle confectioners’ sugar over remaining brownies. Store in airtight container.

PER BROWNIE: 170 CAL; 2G PROT; 5G TOTAL FAT (2.5G SAT. FAT); 33G CARB; 0MG CHOL; 120MG SOD; 2G FIBER; 22G SUGARS
fudge brownies
Copyright of Vegetarian Times is the property of Active Interest Media, Inc. and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.