

SURPRISING SWEETS
These seven clever cookies
are more than they appear.

THE RECIPES

PEANUT BROWN-BUTTER COOKIES

RECIPE BY SUE LI
TOTAL TIME 45 MINUTES, PLUS COOLING
YIELD 32 COOKIES

FOR THE COOKIES:

- ½ cup/113 grams unsalted butter
- 1 packed cup/220 grams dark brown sugar
- ¾ cup/187 grams creamy peanut butter
- 1 large egg
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1½ cups/192 grams all-purpose flour
- 1½ teaspoons kosher salt (such as Diamond Crystal)
- 1 teaspoon baking soda

FOR THE COATING:

- 1 large egg
- 2½ cups/350 grams salted roasted peanuts, coarsely chopped
- Flaky sea salt

1. Prepare the cookies: In a small saucepan over medium heat, melt the butter. When it starts to bubble, lower the heat to medium-low and cook, stirring constantly with a spatula, until the butter browns, 4 to 5 minutes. Transfer, scraping up the butter solids, into a small bowl and set aside to cool to room temperature.
2. Once the butter is cooled, scrape it into the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment. (Or move it to a large bowl and use a hand

mixer.) Add the dark brown sugar and peanut butter, and beat on medium speed until the mixture is pale, 2 to 3 minutes. Scrape down the sides of the bowl, and add the egg and vanilla extract. Beat again until the mixture is smooth and creamy, 1 minute. Add the flour, salt and baking soda, and mix on low until combined, scraping the bottom as you go.

3. Arrange the racks in the top and bottom thirds of the oven. Heat oven to 350 degrees. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper.

4. Roll the dough into roughly 1½-tablespoon-size balls and place them on a plate.

5. Prepare the coating: Beat the remaining egg with 1 tablespoon water in a small bowl. Spread the chopped peanuts on a large plate.

6. Dip each dough ball into the egg mixture and roll and press the peanuts into each ball. (Use some pressure to make sure the peanuts really stick. The dough may crack slightly when pressed, and that is fine. Just add peanuts into the cracks.) Space the dough balls about 1 inch apart on the prepared baking sheets, and, using your hand, press them gently until they're ½-inch thick. Sprinkle each with flaky sea salt.

7. Bake the cookies until they are golden brown on the edges, 13 to 14 minutes. Remove from the oven and cool on a rack before serving.

MINT CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES

RECIPE BY ERIC KIM
TOTAL TIME 1¼ HOURS, PLUS COOLING
YIELD ABOUT 18 PIECES

FOR THE COOKIE BASE:

- ½ cup/113 grams unsalted butter, at room temperature, plus more for the pan
- 1½ cups/180 grams powdered sugar
- 1 large egg white, at room temperature
- 1 teaspoon peppermint extract
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ¾ teaspoon kosher salt (such as Diamond Crystal)
- 1 cup/130 grams all-purpose flour

FOR THE TOPPING:

- 1 ounce bittersweet dark chocolate
- 4 ounces/113 grams white chocolate (see Tip)
- ½ teaspoon extra-virgin olive oil
- ½ teaspoon peppermint extract
- 2 drops blue food coloring (not gel)
- 1 drop yellow food coloring (not gel)

1. Prepare the cookie base: Heat oven to 325 degrees. Grease a 9-inch square baking pan (using a butter wrapper is especially easy here). Line the pan with parchment paper so there's overhang on two sides.
2. In a medium bowl, using a flexible spatula or wooden spoon, cream together the powdered sugar and the butter until smooth. Whisk in the egg white, peppermint and vanilla extracts, and salt until smooth. Switch back to the spatula or spoon, and stir in the flour until just combined.

3. Spread the dough as evenly as you can across the prepared pan. Bake, rotating halfway through, until lightly golden on top with golden-brown edges, 25 to 30 minutes. Let the cookie cool completely in the pan, about 1 hour. (It will harden as it cools.)

4. Prepare the topping: Using a sharp knife, finely chop the dark chocolate into thin chips, like wood shavings. Heat the white chocolate in 15-second intervals in the microwave, stirring between each, until melted and smooth. Stir in the olive oil, peppermint extract and food colorings. You should have a minty blue-green color. Using a small offset spatula, spread this evenly across the top of the cooled cookie, leaving a ½-inch border. (You'll slice them off later.)

5. Top the cookie with the dark chocolate chips while the white chocolate is still wet. (Alternatively, you can grate the chocolate over using the largest holes of a box grater.) Refrigerate or freeze the pan until the white chocolate is fully set.

6. Remove the cookie from the pan and transfer to a cutting board. Slice off the four naked edges to discard or to snack on later. Cut the remainder into long, irregular shapes, starting at the corners. These cookies keep fresh in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

Tip: Both white chocolate chips and a quality white chocolate bar work well, but if at any point in the melting process, your chocolate seizes or wants to firm up, drizzle in a little more olive oil to smooth it out.

POPCORN BUCKET COOKIES

RECIPE BY VAUGHN VREELAND
TOTAL TIME ABOUT 1 HOUR, PLUS CHILLING AND COOLING
YIELD 30 COOKIES

FOR THE DOUGH:

- 2 ½ cups/320 grams all-purpose flour
- 1 ½ teaspoons kosher salt (such as Diamond Crystal)
- ½ teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- 1 cup/226 grams unsalted butter, at room temperature
- ¾ cup/160 grams packed dark brown sugar
- ½ cup/100 grams granulated sugar
- 1 egg plus 1 yolk, at room temperature
- 2 ½ cups movie theater candy, such as Raisinets, M&Ms, Kit Kats, Reese's Pieces, cut into smaller pieces if in bars (See Tips)
- ¾ cup/120 grams toffee bits, such as Heath

FOR FORMING:

- ¼ cup/56 grams unsalted butter, melted
- 4 cups popped popcorn (See Tips)
- More candy, if desired (See Tips)
- Flaky sea salt

1. In a large bowl, whisk together the flour, salt, baking powder and baking soda. In a large mixing bowl with a hand mixer or in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, beat together the butter and both sugars on medium speed for about a minute until evenly combined and noticeably lighter in color.

2. Add the egg and yolk, and mix on medium-high speed for another minute until the mixture is fluffy and the sugars have mostly dissolved. Add the dry ingredients and mix on low until most of the flour has been incorporated, with a few dry pockets remaining. Add the candy and the toffee bits, and mix in with a spatula or wooden spoon by hand until evenly distributed and all the flour has been absorbed into the dough.

3. Using a 2-tablespoon/1-ounce scoop, scoop a heaping (about 50-gram) amount of dough and place on a rimmed baking sheet or other flat surface. Once all of the dough has been scooped, cover and refrigerate for 1 hour.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY RACHEL VANNI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES. FOOD STYLIST: SAMANTHA SENEVIRATNE. PROP STYLIST: MEGAN HEDGPETH.

4. Heat oven to 350 degrees. Line 2 rimmed baking sheets with parchment paper and brush them with the melted butter. Place popcorn in a large mixing bowl and, using your hands, coarsely crush it so the pieces are about the size of peas (some variance is fine).

- Working one scoop of dough at a time, brush the top of the mound with melted butter, press the buttered side into the crushed popcorn to coat the top and place on the prepared baking sheet. Repeat with the remaining dough, placing each ball on the pan about 2 inches apart. (There should be 8 per half-sheet pan, but any remaining prepared dough can be covered and put back in the refrigerator until ready to bake.) Bake for 12 to 16 minutes, rotating the pans halfway through, until the cookies have spread slightly and start to take on golden-brown edges.

5. If desired, carefully press any leftover candy sparsely into the tops of the freshly baked cookies, while they're still hot, for a more aesthetic look. Sprinkle with flaky salt and let cool for 5 minutes before transferring to a wire rack to cool completely. Store leftovers in an airtight container for up to 4 days.

Tips: Chocolate-coated and hard-shell candies (such as M&Ms or Reese's Pieces) work best as mix-ins for the dough. Gummy candies, such as gummy bears and Sour Patch Kids, should not be mixed into the dough. Instead, it should be pressed into the tops of the freshly baked cookies (per Step 5), since it will melt and cause the cookies to spread unevenly.

While any popped popcorn will work, freshly popped works best. Movie-theater-style microwavable popcorn is preferred for its salty, buttery taste, as well as its freshness, but stovetop or store-bought popcorn works great, too.

VIETNAMESE COFFEE SWIRL BROWNIES

RECIPE BY MELISSA CLARK
TOTAL TIME ABOUT 1 ½ HOURS
YIELD 16 BROWNIES

- 1 cup/225 grams unsalted butter, plus more for pan
- 8 ounces/225 grams unsweetened chocolate, coarsely chopped
- 1 teaspoon instant espresso powder
- ¾ teaspoon fine sea salt
- 2 cups/400 grams sugar
- 2 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder, preferably Dutch-process
- 4 large eggs, room temperature
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup/125 grams all-purpose flour
- ½ cup/85 grams bittersweet chocolate chips (optional)

FOR THE TOPPING:

- ¾ cup/170 grams cream cheese, softened
- 3 tablespoons sweetened condensed milk
- 1½ teaspoons ground espresso or dark roast coffee beans
- Flaky sea salt

1. Heat oven to 350 degrees. Butter a 9-inch baking pan and line with parchment paper, leaving 2 inches of overhang on two sides to use as handles later.

2. In a large heavy saucepan set over medium-low heat, combine the butter, chopped chocolate, instant espresso powder and salt. Let butter and chocolate melt, stirring occasionally. (Alternatively, using the microwave, melt the ingredients together in a microwave-safe bowl, in 30-second increments, until smooth, stirring between increments.)

3. Whisk in sugar and cocoa powder until smooth, then whisk in eggs and vanilla. Finally, whisk in flour until no streaks remain. Using a spatula, fold in the chocolate chips, if using.

4. Scrape the mixture into the prepared pan and spread evenly.

5. To prepare the topping, using a whisk, beat together cream cheese and condensed milk in a small bowl until very smooth. Use a spatula to mix in ground espresso beans until just combined. (Don't overmix: You want to see speckles.) Dollop on top of brownie batter in the pan and swirl with a knife or spatula, pulling up some of the brownie batter from beneath the topping for a marble effect. (For best results, both topping and brownie batter should be about the same temperature.) Sprinkle lightly with flaky sea salt.

6. Bake until the top is set, the center is soft and the edges start pulling away from the pan, 30 to 40 minutes. (Ceramic and glass pans will take about 5 minutes longer.) The top should look dry and firm when done, but a toothpick inserted into the center should come out slightly gooey.

7. Transfer the pan to a wire rack to cool completely. To get the nearest pieces, chill the brownies for 1 hour, then invert the whole slab of brownie onto a cutting board, slice them, still upside down, into bars.

DARK 'N' STORMY COOKIES

RECIPE BY DAN PELOSI
TOTAL TIME ABOUT 2 HOURS
YIELD 24 COOKIES

FOR THE COOKIES:

- 1 packed cup/160 grams finely chopped crystallized ginger
- ¼ cup/60 grams dark rum
- 3 cups/384 grams all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- 2 teaspoons ground ginger
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon ground cloves
- ½ teaspoon ground cayenne
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt (such as Diamond Crystal)
- 1 cup/220 grams lightly packed dark brown sugar
- ½ cup/100 grams granulated sugar, plus about ½ cup/100 grams more for rolling
- ½ cup/113 grams unsalted butter, softened and cut into 8 tablespoons
- ½ cup/80 grams unsulphured molasses
- 2 large eggs

FOR THE GLAZE:

- 2 cups/244 grams powdered sugar
- 2 tablespoons dark rum
- 2 tablespoons lime juice
- Kosher salt (such as Diamond Crystal)
- 2 limes

1. Heat oven to 350 degrees and line 3 baking sheets with parchment paper.

2. Prepare the cookies: In a small bowl, combine the chopped crystallized ginger and rum, and cover with plastic wrap. Microwave for 90 seconds or until the rum starts to boil. Stir, cover again and set aside.

3. To a large bowl, add the flour, baking soda, ground ginger, cinnamon, ground cloves, cayenne and salt, and stir to combine. Set aside.

4. To a second large bowl, add the brown sugar, granulated sugar, butter and molasses. Use a wooden spoon to beat until the mixture becomes light in color, 4 to 5 minutes.

5. Add the eggs to the large bowl one at a time, mixing to incorporate each time. Add the dry ingredients in 3 batches, stirring after each to combine.

6. Strain any liquid from the bowl of crystallized ginger and discard, then add the ginger to the cookie dough and stir to evenly distribute.
7. Place about ½ cup granulated sugar on a plate. Roll 2 tablespoons of cookie dough in the sugar to coat it completely. Transfer to the baking sheet and gently press to slightly flatten. Repeat with the remaining dough, leaving 1 inch of space between cookies, with 8 cookies total on each baking sheet. Bake for exactly 12 minutes, and let cool on the tray for 5 minutes before transferring to a rack to cool completely.

8. Make the glaze: To a medium bowl, add the powdered sugar, dark rum, lime juice and a big pinch of kosher salt. Whisk until smooth. Place the cooling rack on top of the parchment-lined baking sheet and line up all cookies so they touch. Dip the cookies face down into the glaze, then zest limes over to finish. Allow the glaze to dry fully before serving.

MORTADELLA COOKIES

RECIPE BY CLAIRE SAFFITZ
TOTAL TIME ABOUT 1 HOUR, PLUS AT LEAST 2½ HOURS FREEZING AND COOLING
YIELD ABOUT 24 COOKIES

- ½ cup/2½ ounces raw macadamia nuts, chopped into ¼-inch pieces
- 3 tablespoons raw pistachios, chopped into ½-inch pieces
- 1¼ cups/163 grams all-purpose flour
- 1½ ounces freeze-dried strawberries (about 2 cups)
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt (such as Diamond Crystal) or ¼ teaspoon coarse kosher salt (such as Morton)
- ½ teaspoon baking powder
- ½ cup/113 grams unsalted butter, chilled, cut into tablespoon-size pieces
- 4 ounces almond paste, cut into tablespoon-size pieces
- ¾ cup/83 grams powdered sugar
- 1 teaspoon almond extract
- 1 large egg white, divided
- ½ cup/60 grams sanding sugar

1. Toss the macadamia nuts and pistachios on a cutting board or work surface to combine, then lift the pieces into a small bowl, leaving behind any very fine bits (reserve bits for stirring into yogurt or oatmeal, or adding to any batter). Set the nut pieces aside.



then form the dough into a 10-inch-long log oriented lengthwise on the parchment paper. Roll the log over the parchment into a smooth cylinder, then press any larger nut pieces on the surface of the cylinder into the center, pinching the dough around it to seal. (This will make the cookies easier to slice.)

5. Fold the end of the parchment paper farthest from you down and over the log, and place a bench scraper over the parchment, angled slightly downward but nearly parallel to the work surface. Push the scraper along the length of the log to force it into a cylinder shape, packing the cylinder tightly, until you have a log that's about 12 inches long and a little less than 2 inches in diameter.

6. Roll up the log into the parchment paper, then tightly wrap it in two layers of plastic wrap, leaving some overhang. Grasping the excess parchment paper and plastic wrap on both ends of the log, twist until the dough is tightly compacted into a firm cylinder. Refrigerate until the dough is cold and firm, at least 2 hours. (See Tips.)

7. Sprinkle the sanding sugar across a clean work surface or cutting board. Remove the log of dough from the refrigerator and unwrap. Brush the surface of the log all over with the reserved egg white, then roll the log in the sanding sugar, pressing firmly so the sugar adheres, until it's completely coated. Place the log on a small cutting board and freeze until very firm but not frozen solid, 15 to 20 minutes.

8. Heat oven to 300 degrees and line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

9. Remove the dough from the freezer and use a sharp knife to slice off one end, then slice the log into ¼-inch-thick rounds, placing them on the prepared baking sheet about ½ inch apart (the cookies will spread slightly). As you slice, rotate the log to maintain a round shape. Refrigerate any slices of dough you weren't able to fit on the baking sheet.

10. Transfer the baking sheet to the oven (center rack) and bake until the cookies are just barely golden brown at the edges, 16 to 19 minutes. Let cool for several minutes before transferring to a wire rack, then bake any remaining cookies as you did the first batch.

Tips: If you want a deeper pink color in your end result, add a few drops of red gel food coloring in Step 3.

Dough log can be refrigerated for up to 3 days or frozen for up to 2 months (coat in sanding sugar just before slicing). Thaw frozen dough in the refrigerator for 24 hours before slicing. Baked cookies will keep in an airtight container for several days (they will soften slightly over time).

COCONUT CAKE SNOWBALLS



RECIPE BY SAMANTHA SENEVIRATNE
TOTAL TIME 1 HOUR, PLUS ABOUT 1½ HOURS FREEZING AND COOLING
YIELD ABOUT 40 COOKIES

FOR THE COOKIES:

- 2 cups/256 grams all-purpose flour
- ¾ cup/64 grams toasted sweetened, shredded coconut
- ¾ cup/72 grams almond flour
- ¾ cup/87 grams powdered sugar
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt (such as Diamond Crystal)
- ¾ cup/170 grams salted butter, preferably European, cut into pieces and at room temperature
- ¼ cup/57 grams unrefined coconut oil, softened
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract

FOR THE TOPPING:

- 3 cups/255 grams sweetened, shredded coconut (untoasted)
- 2 to 3 drops gel food coloring
- 4 ounces/113 grams full-fat cream cheese, at room temperature
- 3 cups/369 grams powdered sugar
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt (such as Diamond Crystal)
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- 6 tablespoons/90 grams whole milk

1. Prepare the cookies: In the bowl of a food processor, combine the flour, coconut, almond flour, powdered sugar and salt, and process until it's well mixed and the coconut is finely ground, about 1 minute.

2. Add the butter, coconut oil and vanilla, and process until a dough forms, about 1 minute.

3. Portion the dough into 1-tablespoon/15-gram scoops and roll into balls. Transfer to a parchment-lined baking sheet or plate and wrap well with plastic. Freeze the balls until firm, at least 1 hour.

4. Heat oven to 350 degrees. Line two rimmed baking sheets with parchment paper. Set the frozen balls onto the prepared sheets about 1 inch apart. Bake the cookies, rotating the pans on the oven racks halfway through, until they are golden brown and set, 15 to 17 minutes. Transfer the sheets to wire racks to cool completely. Repeat with the remaining frozen dough, if necessary.
5. While cookies cool, prepare the topping: In the bowl of a food processor, combine the coconut and the food coloring. (You can also do this in batches, dyeing the coconut in multiple colors.) Pulse until the coconut is finely ground and the color is evenly dispersed. Transfer the coconut to a small bowl.

6. Prepare the glaze: In a medium bowl, using an electric mixer on medium speed, beat the cream cheese, powdered sugar and salt until smooth, scraping after each addition. Add the vanilla and beat until smooth. Beat in the whole milk.
7. To finish the cookies, dip each into the glaze, dome side down, and shake off the excess glaze. Immediately dip the glazed side into the colored coconut. Set the cookies on a large plate, flat side down, and wait for glaze to set before serving, about 1 hour. Store cookies in an airtight container for up to 1 week in the fridge. (Baked, unglazed cookies can be frozen for up to 1 month.)

Tip: For a nice, even coating on your cookies, dry out the coconut on a sheet pan for at least 6 hours, then proceed with Step 5.

What's better than a Dark 'n' Stormy cocktail, buzzing with ginger and lime and rum? Maybe nothing — or maybe a ginger cookie, one that distills all that drink's flavors into big, chewy bites.

Cookie Week, New York Times Cooking's annual holiday baking tradition, is back. This year we're baking our favorite sweet and savory cravings into seven festive treats, with recipes and videos to accompany them.

Delight in brownies that taste like Vietnamese iced coffee, savor the flavors of a coconut cake in a bright, bite-size package, or treat yourself to some mint chocolate chip — shortbreads, not ice cream. But don't forget to have fun — the holidays are all about having your cookie and eating it, too.

VAUGHN VREELAND



A STUDD
AFFAIR

Vaughn Vreeland's cookies, full of buttery popcorn and concession-stand favorites, are as fun as a night at the movies — but without leaving the house.



BETTER THAN
BOLOGNA

Claire Saffitz's cookies, which only look like mortadella, are rosy pink from freeze-dried strawberries and tender from almond paste. And, like many versions of the original, they're dotted with chopped pistachios for some much welcome bite.



MOCKTAIL,
WITH A
TWIST

Dan Pelosi's take on the Dark 'n' Stormy turns the festive, fiery cocktail into a chewy cookie replete with rum-plumped candied ginger. A shower of lime zest on the glazed finish mellows its heat.



THE
ULTIMATE
SCOOP

A bite of bracingly chilly mint chocolate chip ice cream can transport you to the height of summer. But this Eric Kim recipe turns it into a year-round delight, as two kinds of chocolate top a large peppermint-infused cookie.



COCONUT CAKE,
RECONSIDERED

Samantha Seneviratne's recipe takes the essentials of a towering coconut cake and shrinks them down into glazed cookies. As a final flourish, they're rolled in shredded coconut dyed whatever color — or colors — you like, so they're dressed up and ready to party.



BITTERSWEET
SYMPHONY

Swirls of cream cheese and sweetened condensed milk, speckled with ground espresso, top an ultra-fudgy brownie base in this riff on Vietnamese coffee from Melissa Clark.



IS IT PAYDAY?

Sue Li loved Payday bars growing up, so she channeled their essence into this cookie, rich with warm browned butter and rolled in salty roasted nuts.

**LEAVE NO CRUMBS**

For even more cookie recipes and videos,
head to [NYTCooking.com](https://www.nytcoking.com).