

Hazelnut chocolate cookies

Hazelnut butter is more expensive than peanut butter, but the recipe does make 25 filled cookies. (Make sure you are using a nut spread and not one that has chocolate in it – save that for the filling.) The dough can be successfully frozen, so you don't need to make them all at once. As they come from the oven, the cookies are fragile and are best moved to a rack once they have cooled a little.

Makes 25 cookies. Ready in 2 hours

skinned hazelnuts 75g
butter 225g
caster sugar 100g
soft brown sugar 100g
egg 1
plain flour 150g
baking powder 1 tsp
hazelnut butter 170g

For the filling:

butter 80g
icing sugar 160g
chocolate hazelnut spread 100g
vanilla paste or extract ½ tsp

Toast the hazelnuts in a dry, shallow pan over a moderate heat, shaking the pan from time to time to ensure even toasting. When the nuts are biscuit-coloured, tip them out on to a chopping board and roughly chop.

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Set the oven at 170°C/gas mark 3-4. Place a sheet of baking parchment on a baking sheet.

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Cut the butter into small pieces and put in the bowl of a food mixer with the sugars. Using the flat, paddle attachment, beat the butter and sugars until soft and fluffy.

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In a small bowl, lightly beat the egg with a fork, just enough to mix the yolk and white, then add little by little to the butter and sugar. If the mixture shows any sign of curdling, stir in a spoonful of the flour.

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Sieve together the flour and baking powder, then add to the mixture and continue mixing until the flour has been incorporated. Stir in the hazelnut butter.



Place lightly mounded teaspoons of the mixture on to the baking sheet, leaving plenty of room around each to allow the biscuits to spread. With the back of a floured dessert spoon, press lightly on each one to flatten the top. Press some of the chopped hazelnuts on to each.

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Bake for about 15 minutes until the biscuits have spread and turned pale gold, and are still soft to the touch. While they bake, prepare a second tray and repeat until all the mixture is used (I do about 4 batches).

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When the cookies have been out of the oven for a few minutes, you can neaten the edges if you wish with a 5.5cm cookie cutter. Keep the scraps for treats.

Let the cookies firm up a little before transferring carefully to a cooling rack using a palette knife.

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For the filling, cut the butter into small pieces and place in a mixing bowl. Beat until soft and creamy, then gradually add the icing sugar and continue mixing until you have a soft and fluffy frosting. Mix in the chocolate-hazelnut spread and the vanilla, then set aside.

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Once the cookies are cool, place a good teaspoonful of filling on to half of them, then gently press the others on top.

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The filled cookies will keep in a tin or airtight container for a couple of days.