

BISCOTTI

Here's our recipe, with grateful acknowledgement to Mark and Bruce's recipe from *The Ultimate Cookbook*, David Lebovitz' Chocolate Biscotti recipe, Paul's recipe at the Mellow Bakers, and a recipe I read online which was attributed to Carol Field's *The Italian Baker*.



The biscotti can be made using an electric mixer, or by hand. I've outlined both methodologies below, but I usually make them by hand - I really enjoy getting my fingers into the dough. One point to note - I prefer to bake the cookies until they're very dry and hard, and then I store them in an airtight container for a couple of days before eating. They soften up a little over time to a perfect dunking consistency.

All the biscotti freeze brilliantly, even the ones coated in tempered chocolate, which makes this a great do-ahead gift for the festive season.

- 2½ cups (375g) plain (AP) flour (see note #1 below)
- ½ teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon bicarbonate of soda (baking soda)
- ¼ teaspoon fine salt (preferably sea salt)
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup (220g) white sugar
- 3 large (59g) eggs
- 1 cup (140g) coarsely chopped nuts (I used slivered almonds)
- 1 cup (180g) inclusions (see note #2 below)
- 1 egg, beaten, for eggwash
- demerara or crystallised sugar

Note #1: for chocolate biscotti, substitute 2 cups (300g) plain flour and 75g (¾ cup) *sifted* cocoa, preferably dutched.

Note #2: I usually include ½ cup (100g) dark chocolate chips and ½ cup (80g) dried fruit - in this case, a mix of cranberries and chopped Turkish figs.

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Hand Mixed Method

1. Line a large baking tray with parchment paper, and preheat oven to 175C/350F or 160C/320F with fan.
2. Whisk together the flour, *sifted* baking powder, *sifted* bicarb (baking) soda and salt.
3. In a large mixing bowl, use a whisk to beat the 3 eggs and sugar together until combined. Whisk in the vanilla extract.

4. Gradually add the flour mixture, whisking to incorporate. When the mix becomes too thick for the whisk, switch to a wooden spoon or rubber spatula.
5. Stir in the nuts and other inclusions. Knead the inclusions into the dough by hand, mixing well to ensure that everything is evenly combined.
6. Divide the dough into two, and turn each half onto a well floured bench. Roll the dough into a long thin log. Place each log on the lined baking tray.
7. Gently flatten the top of each log, then eggwash the tops and sides of each and sprinkle generously with demerara sugar. Bake the logs for 25 - 30 minutes, rotating once during the baking time. The logs will be firm to touch when baked. Allow to cool on trays for at least 15 minutes.
8. With a sharp serrated knife, slice each log into 1½ cm / ½" slices.
9. Lay the slices onto the parchment lined tray - they won't spread any more - and bake for 20 - 30 minutes at 175C / 350F or 160C/320F with fan. Rotate the trays halfway through the baking time to ensure the biscotti bake evenly.

Electric Mixer Method

1. Line a large baking tray with parchment paper, and preheat oven to 175C/350F or 160C/320F with fan.
2. Whisk together the flour, *sifted* baking powder, *sifted* bicarb (baking) soda and salt.
3. In a large mixing bowl with an electric mixer, beat the 3 eggs and sugar together until well combined, then gradually add the flour mixture, beating until all the flour has been incorporated. Turn the mixer to low and gradually mix in the nuts and inclusions.
4. Continue from step 6 in the hand mixed method above.

If desired, the finished biscotti can be given a coating of tempered chocolate.

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