

WORLD PEACE COOKIES

I ONCE said I thought these cookies, the brainchild of the Parisian pastry chef Pierre Hermé, were as important a culinary breakthrough as Toll House cookies, and I've never thought better of the statement. These butter-rich, sandy-textured slice-and-bake cookies are members of the sablé family (see page 000 and page 000 for pointers). But, unlike classic sablés, they are midnight dark—there's cocoa in the dough—and packed with big chunks of hand-chopped bittersweet chocolate. Perhaps most memorably, they're salty. Not just a little salty, but remarkably and sensationally salty. It's the salt—Pierre uses fleur de sel, a moist, off-white sea salt—that surprises, delights and makes the chocolate flavors in the cookies seem preternaturally profound.

When I included these in *Paris Sweets*, they were called Korova Cookies and they instantly won fans, among them my neighbor Richard Gold who gave them their new name. Richard is convinced that a daily dose of Pierre's cookies is all that is needed to ensure planetary peace and happiness.

1¼ cups all-purpose flour	¼ cup sugar
⅓ cup unsweetened cocoa powder	½ teaspoon fleur de sel or ¼ teaspoon
½ teaspoon baking soda	fine sea salt
1 stick plus 3 tablespoons (11	1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
tablespoons) unsalted butter,	5 ounces bittersweet chocolate, chopped
at room temperature	into chips, or a generous ¾ cup store-
⅔ cup (packed) light brown sugar	bought mini chocolate chips

Sift the flour, cocoa and baking soda together.

Working with a stand mixer, preferably fitted with a paddle attachment, or with a hand mixer in a large bowl, beat the butter on medium speed until soft and creamy. Add both sugars, the salt and vanilla extract and beat for 2 minutes more.

Turn off the mixer. Pour in the flour, drape a kitchen towel over the stand mixer to protect yourself and your kitchen from flying flour and pulse the mixer at low speed about 5 times, a second or two each time. Take a peek—if there is still a lot of flour on the surface of the dough, pulse a couple of times more; if not, remove the towel. Continuing at low speed, mix for about 30 seconds more, just until the flour disappears into the dough—for the best texture, work the dough as little as possible once the flour is added, and don't be concerned if the dough looks a little crumbly. Toss in the chocolate pieces and mix only to incorporate.

Turn the dough out onto a work surface, gather it together and divide it in half. Working with one half at a time, shape the dough into logs that are 1½ inches in diameter. Wrap the logs in plastic wrap and refrigerate them for at least 3 hours. (The dough can be refrigerated for up to 3 days or frozen for up to 2 months. If you've frozen the dough, you needn't defrost it before baking—just slice the logs into cookies and bake the cookies 1 minute longer.)

MAKES ABOUT 36 COOKIES

SERVING: The cookies can be eaten when they are warm or at room temperature—I prefer them at room temperature, when the textural difference between the crumbly cookie and the chocolate bits is greatest—and are best suited to cold milk or hot coffee.

STORING: Packed airtight, cookies will keep at room temperature for up to 3 days; they can be frozen for up to 2 months.

GETTING READY TO BAKE: Center a rack in the oven and preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Line two baking sheets with parchment or silicone mats.

Working with a sharp thin knife, slice the logs into rounds that are $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick. (The rounds are likely to crack as you're cutting them—don't be concerned, just squeeze the bits back onto each cookie.) Arrange the rounds on the baking sheets, leaving about 1 inch between them.

Bake the cookies one sheet at a time for 12 minutes—they won't look done, nor will they be firm, but that's just the way they should be. Transfer the baking sheet to a cooling rack and let the cookies rest until they are only just warm, at which point you can serve them or let them reach room temperature.

A Cookie Comes Full Circle

NOT LONG AGO, I was invited to speak to a group of French-American women at a luncheon being hosted by one of the members in her Manhattan apartment. The lunch, prepared by the family's private chef, was light, colorful, delicious and so French that for a few hours, I forgot I was in New York. I spoke after the main course, before dessert, and when I was just minutes into my little talk, the hostess emerged from the kitchen with a plate of cookies, walked up to me and said, "You must try one of these immediately—they're our favorite cookies, and they're so fabulous because the chef puts salt in them!" One look and I was pretty sure they were World Peace Cookies; one taste and I knew. But what was I supposed to say? Was I supposed to admit that I knew the cookies and that the recipe was probably mine? I didn't think so, so I said, "These are great," then turned to the audience and told them they were in for a treat.

When I finished my talk, the hostess asked if I'd like to go into the kitchen to meet the chef. Of course I would. I walked into the kitchen, stretched out my hand and said, "What a terrific lunch. Thank you." Then I introduced myself.

The chef, who had no idea I was going to be there, was flustered and repeatedly apologized for having served me my own recipe. "Stop apologizing," I almost shouted. "You have no idea how exciting this is!" And it was exciting. It was a joy to know that something I liked so much had made other people happy. That the feeling had come full circle made it even more joyful.