

DAVID LEBOVITZ

Brown Sugar Shortbread

About 48 cookies

Adapted from [Ripe for Dessert: My Best Recipes](#)

In my original recipe, I called for light brown sugar, but here I used one-third dark brown sugar and two-thirds light brown sugar. (You don't need to get it exactly right. You can eyeball it.) You can also swap out unsalted butter with salted butter, and omit the flaky sea salt, although I prefer the little *éclats* (sparkles) of salt in the cookies.

The cookies may crumble a bit at the edges, where the nuts are, when you slice the dough. If that happens, use your fingers to nudge any crumbly bits back into place before baking.

Feel free to swap out the pecans with another nut, such as walnuts, cashews, hazelnuts, or almonds, although almonds are firmer and may cause the cookie dough to crumble a little more when slicing it.

I like to bake these cookies in rectangles, but you can roll the dough into round logs to slice and bake, or roll the cookies on a lightly floured surface and use a cookie cutter to cut them into whatever shape suits your fancy. You be you.

2 cups (280g) flour

1/4 teaspoon flaky sea salt or kosher salt

8 ounces (225g) unsalted butter, at room temperature

2/3 cup packed (140g) light brown sugar, or replace about a third of the light brown sugar with dark brown sugar

1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

1 cup (100g) lightly toasted pecans, coarsely chopped

1. Whisk together the flour and salt in a small bowl.

2. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, or in a bowl with a spoon or sturdy spatula, mix the butter with the sugar on low speed, until the mixture is completely smooth and there are no streaks of butter.
3. Mix in the vanilla, then the flour mixture, until the flour is completely incorporated. Stir in the pecans. At this point, I finish mixing the dough by hand, kneading it slightly, to get the pecans incorporated and so the dough is smooth.
4. Use your hands to form the dough into a rectangle 4 1/2 x 6 inches (11x13cm). Wrap the dough in plastic wrap or your favorite eco-friendly alternative, and chill the dough until firm, which will take at least 1 hour. (The dough can also be frozen at this point, for future use.)
5. To bake the cookies, preheat the oven to 350°F (175°C). Line a baking sheet or two with parchment paper. (You can use a silicone baking mat, but parchment paper ensures the cookies will be crisper.) Trim the rounded edges of the rectangle of dough with a chef's knife, so the dough is a neater rectangle. Cut the rectangle of dough lengthwise into two pieces, then slice the dough into rectangles about 1/4-inch (about .75cm) thick, and place them evenly spaced apart on the baking sheet(s).
6. Bake the cookies until they are nicely golden brown all across the top, turning and rotating the baking sheet(s) midway during baking. They'll likely take about 15 minutes, but start checking them at the 10- to 12-minute mark since everyone's oven is different.
7. Let the cookies cool on a baking sheet, then store in an air-tight container until ready to eat. The cookies are best enjoyed the day they are baked.

The dough can be kept in the refrigerator up to 4 days or frozen for several months.

Note: In step #5, you can bake the trimmed edges of the dough and enjoy them as a baker's treat.