# **Introduction to cookies**

Cookies are small, sweet, flat, dry cakes, single-serving finger food. They are generally flour based, but they can be flourless made from egg whites and almonds like macaroons, or made from gluten-free flour, like rice flour. Cookies can be soft, chewy, or crisp. They can be big or small, plain or fancy.

Cookies were first introduced in the United States in the early 1800s. They were originally known as "tea cakes" and were made with a variety of ingredients including butter, sugar, flour, and spices. It wasn't until the late 1800s that cookies began to be made with chocolate chips.

The cookie’s name is derived from the Dutch word koekje, which means “little cake.” The earliest cookie dates as far back as the 7th century A.D. in Persia, where sugar was first cultivated. In England, cookies are also called biscuits. The most popular cookie flavour in America is chocolate chip.

The Chocolate Chip Cookie was invented by mistake by Ruth Graves Wakefield in 1937.

In 1939, Betty Crocker mentioned choco chip cookies on her radio series “Famous Foods From Famous Eating Places” and soon people everywhere were asking for the chocolate chip cookie. Ruth eventually made an agreement with the Nestle company that allowed them to print the recipe on the back wrapper of their Semi-Sweet Chocolate Bar and the rest is history.

There are three main stages to cookie dough production:

First is Creaming whereThe fat or shortening is creamed with sugar to entrap air and create a fluffy texture.

Second is Incorporation of liquids. The addition of liquids at this stage helps disperse and homogenise the dough, and aeration continues.

Third stage is Incorporation of dry ingredients: The last stage of flour addition, gently introduces the flour into the dough without destroying the air cells. Adding flour at the last stage also prevents gluten formation, thereby producing a short bite for the cookie.

Cookies are produced according to varied formula compositions, in many different shapes and sizes, and by various manufacturing procedures. The main components are flour, water, fat, sugar, and leavening agents.

Cookies are a great choice as a tea partner because they are easy to serve and help to manage the portion size as well, and they go well with a variety of tea flavours.

That's all for now. I am your baking instructor, Sonia Gupta, signing off now.Happy Baking!