

## **LOVE STARTS IN THE KITCHEN!™**

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→ RITA ON THE WEB! : [www.Abouteating.com](http://www.Abouteating.com)

### **“Like a Meal in a Cookie” - Rita's Chocolate Chunk Oatmeal Cookies**

This is the time of year when I like to keep frozen cookie dough on hand to pop in the oven when the little ones are here or just for a quick and “in the hand” dessert. I call these a meal in a cookie!

- 3 sticks unsalted butter, room temperature
- 1 cup sugar
- 1-1/2 cups light brown sugar, packed
- 3 large eggs, room temperature
- 1 tablespoon vanilla
- 3 cups all purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon
- 3 cups quick oats (not old fashioned)
- 2 cups chopped walnuts, pecans or nuts of your choice
- 3 cups chocolate chunks (or semi-sweet chocolate chips)
- 2 cups coarsely chopped dried cherries

Preheat oven to 350. Cream butter and both sugars. Sugar won't dissolve completely, but mixture will get lighter and lighter and very fluffy. This will take 4-5 minutes. Beat in eggs, one at a time, then mix in vanilla.

Stir together flour, baking powder, salt, cinnamon and oats. Add to mixture and slowly beat until blended. Stir in nuts, chocolate and cherries. Drop by tablespoonfuls (or use a small ice cream scoop) onto parchment covered or sprayed cookie sheet an inch apart. Bake 11-15 minutes. Don't overbake. Makes about 5-8 dozen depending if you use a scoop or spoon.

\*\*Note: This dough freezes well. I like to scoop the cookies out on a cookie sheet and freeze uncovered until hard. Then I pour them into a freezer proof baggy. No need to thaw before baking. Just increase the baking time a bit.

#### **To your health - why this recipe is good for you:**

- Cinnamon helps keep blood sugar stable and lowers cholesterol.
- Eggs contain B vitamins and Omega 3's (the walnuts also contain Omega 3's)
- Unsalted butter is fresher than salted
- Oats contain a good amount of fiber and lower cholesterol, too.
- Cherries are great anti-inflammatories.

#### **RITA'S SPICE OF THE WEEK: CINNAMON!**

Well, cinnamon is certainly a loved and universal spice. It's used in everything - from savory dishes, like my Lebanese chicken and rice, to all sorts of sweet treats, including flans, cookies, cakes, coffees, you name it, cinnamon's a popular spice. Cinnamon helps lower cholesterol and stable blood sugar. There are many kinds of cinnamon, some not true cinnamons at all. Your best bet to see which one fits your palate, and your budget, is to buy a small container and do the sniff test – first, it should smell warm and sweet, just like cinnamon. If it doesn't have a “jump out at you” aroma, it's old, so take it back to the store. On your pantry shelf, ground cinnamon lasts about a year, whole stick cinnamon at least two years. Keep cinnamon, like all spices, away from heat and light.

#### **MORE RITA!**

Be sure and see me at Macy's stores this weekend for some great summertime cooking!

Check out my books *Gifts without Ribbons*, *Culinary Herbs that Heal Body and Soul*, *The Official Snack Guide for Beleaguered Sports parents and Sports Nutrition for Dummies* (I developed the recipes) and also my yummy bread blends.

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