

# Almost Shaner's Cookies

My first time preparing a multi-course meal for a large number of people was in the summer of 1996 at a hiker's lodge in the White Mountains of New Hampshire. I was playing it safe: dessert would be home-made cookies served with ice cream, the latter delivered by in five-gallon containers with the food order. I remember laboring through the recipe. Cream, butter, and sugar. I had cream, the butter, and the sugar out and ready but the first sentence of the recipe seemed to make no sense. How much cream? What was I to do with them? I asked my friend Chris Shaner, whose recipe I (almost) convey here, to clarify the matter. I can remember her answer to this day: "It's a verb, Justin," she told me, "*Cream* the butter and the sugar."

## Ingredients:

2 ½ C White Flour  
1 t Baking soda  
½ t Salt  
½ C butter  
1 C Dark Brown Sugar (packed)  
½ C White Sugar  
1 t Vanilla  
2 Eggs  
2 C Chocolate chips or other yummys

## Directions:

Cream the butter and the sugar. Mixing butter into sugar (or into flour if you're making pie crusts or pastries) can be one of the most painstaking part of the process. The hurried or lazy are tempted to microwave the butter (which destroys the structure of the bake) and the patient pare away at the butter in pursuit of the perfect "pea-sized" pieces described in most recipes. Fear not: I have a hack, perhaps my best contribution to baking: use a box grater to grate cold butter into the perfect size pieces. Combine shredded butter with sugar, add eggs and vanilla. Combine dries in a separate bowl and mix to combine. Fold wets into dry with hands or a spatula and add the chips. Handle dough as little as possible. Form into balls around a tablespoon in size and place on a buttered baking sheet. Bake at 375 for 12 minutes or until golden, remove and cool for two minutes before transferring to a cooling rack. Extra Credit: you know you've got your baking game dialed in when you can prep your cookies in the time it takes for your oven to pre-heat.