

Cleo Coyle's Peanut Butter Cookies

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The Coffeehouse Mysteries as
Cleo Coyle with her husband,
Marc Cerasini



*In Italy the hazelnut is king.
In America, it is the humble
but much beloved peanut;
and while Chef Thomas Keller isn't going to be hiring me for his French Laundry
brigade based on a peanut butter cookie recipe, this one has done right by me for
years. You may notice that I do not make these using the old fashioned method
(rolling the dough into little balls and smushing each down with a crisscrossing of
fork prongs). No worries if you want to stick to this traditional method. This
recipe can be made that way, too. But...if you're up for a walk on the wild side, I
find this "refrigerator log" method offers several advantages.*

- (1) By letting the dough rest in the refrigerator, you are allowing the flavors to develop, which will give you a better tasting cookie.
- (2) The log gives you the convenience of only slicing off and baking as many cookies as you need at the time. So you can serve up a warm pan of them, freshly baked, every afternoon or evening until the dough is gone, instead of being forced to bake all the dough at once.
- (3) Yes, you can buy pre-made PB dough logs in your grocery store aisle, but the dough you make *fresh* will not only taste far better, it will be filled with stuff you can pronounce. No preservatives or ingredients that look like they came out of a Princeton lab filled with mice in cages.

Certainly, you don't need to use fork prongs to make a crisscross design on each slice, as I do. Like hot cross buns, however, I find the traditional "look" of a peanut butter cookie just isn't complete without those cute little X's. (You can even dip the fork in a bit of water then granulated sugar before dragging them lightly across each slice.)

Cleo Coyle's Peanut Butter Refrigerator Cookies

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Makes about 4 dozen cookies

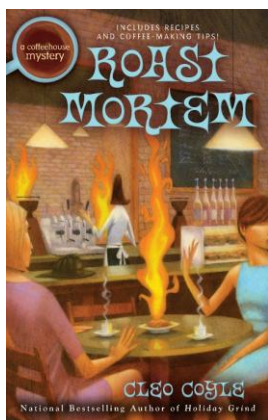
1 cup butter, softened
1 cup peanut butter
1 cup granulated white sugar
1 cup light brown sugar, firmly packed
2 eggs, lightly beaten with fork
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
2 -1/2 cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
1/4 teaspoon salt

Directions: Using an electric mixer, cream butter, peanut butter, and sugars in a bowl until light and fluffy. Mix in remaining ingredients until soft dough forms. Using hands, shape dough into 2 or 3 logs of about 2-inches in diameter. Wrap tightly in plastic or wax paper and refrigerate 4 to 6 hours or overnight. The flavors will develop and the log will firm up. You can now slice as many or as few cookies as you like before re-wrapping the log and returning to the fridge for storage. Bake at 350 degrees F. 12 - 17 minutes. Time depends on your oven and the thickness of your cookie slices. Do not over bake. Peanut butter cookies with scorched bottoms are pretty much inedible, so be careful. The cookies should be *lightly golden brown* and *not* dark brown. Remove from pan promptly; cool on a rack, and...



*Eat with joy
~ Cleo Coyle*

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Coffeehouse Mystery series, visit my web site:
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