



# Ichnofossil Cookies

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup walnuts
- 2 cups all purpose flour
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup butter
- ¾ cups + 2 tablespoons powdered sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 325° F (160° C)
2. Lightly toast walnuts until slightly browned (8-10 mins)
3. Pulse toasted walnuts in food processor (or crush nuts with a rolling pin or carefully chop) until finely ground
4. Whisk together ground walnuts, flour, and salt (if using) in a small bowl
5. In a medium bowl, beat butter, powdered sugar, and vanilla at high speed until pale yellow and fluffy, scraping the sides of the bowl with a rubber spatula
6. Reduce speed to low and slowly add walnut mixture until just combined
7. Using rubber spatula, ensure mixture is fully combined. Press dough together with spatula to make it more firm
8. Scoop ~3 tablespoons of mixture at a time and roll into 4 cm balls with clean hands. Press dough ball into a rock shape on a baking sheet prepared with parchment paper. Repeat for all of dough
9. Carefully press flour- or powder sugar-dusted foodsafe plastic insects, dinosaurs, plants, or other figures into the dough ball to form imprints. Repeat for all cookies.
10. Place baking sheet in freezer for 20-30 minutes until dough is firm
11. Bake cookies for 25-28 minutes until lightly golden and centres are firm





# Little Learners



Celebrate Dinosaur Day with your Little Learner by making fossil cookies! And not just any kind of fossil cookies, but ichnofossil cookies. Ichnofossils, or “trace” fossils, are formed from the activities of ancient life rather from their bodies or parts like bones, scales, or teeth. Ichnofossils include things like poop, footprints, body or skin impressions, and scratches from claws or tails being dragged in mud.

Most fossils are found in sedimentary rock, a type of rock made up of the little bits and pieces of other rocks that have been broken down, heated up, and squished together to form layers. But today, we’re going to find fossils in our cookies! Use your own favourite cookie recipe or the one outlined below.

Our recipe is a simplified walnut shortbread cookie. For the nuts, we used a 1 cup / 125 g combination of walnuts and pecans, excavated from our cupboards. To toast them, prepare a baking tray with a quick spritz of cooking spray and a sheet of parchment paper. Spread your nuts of choice out in an even layer, and pop the tray in the oven while it preheats to 325° F (160° C). Keep an eye on them, but you want them lightly toasting and smelling of nature walks in the fall (8-10 minutes should do it).



Once toasted, carefully pour the nuts into a food processor to pulse until they’re finely ground (or carefully chop them, or fold over your parchment paper and grind them with a rolling pin). Transfer the nuts to a small bowl. Keep that parchment paper and baking sheet ready for when you bake the cookies.





# Little Learners



Add 2 ¼ cups / 275 g flour and ½ teaspoon salt (omit if using salted butter) to the nuts and whisk together.



In another bowl, beat 1 cup / 227 g butter, ¾ cup plus 2 tablespoons / 80 g powdered sugar, and 1 teaspoon vanilla at high speed until pale yellow and fluffy (3-5 mins). You may need to periodically scrape the sides of your bowl with a rubber spatula. Drop your mixer speed to low and slowly add in your walnut and flour mixture until just combined. Turn off your mixer and, using a rubber spatula, ensure your dough is fully mixed. Do your best to press it together until it's firm enough to handle.



Using a small ice cream scoop or 2-3 tablespoonfuls, carefully roll the crumbly dough with clean hands into 4 cm balls and press them onto your parchment covered baking sheet into pebble-like shapes. Repeat for all dough while entertaining yourself with some of your favourite dinosaur jokes.





# Little LearNERS



Create imprints in your cookies using carefully washed and sanitized, food-safe plastic dinosaurs, insects, plants, or other figures. To make the imprints more defined and to make life easier during clean up, spray your figures with cooking spray or dust them with flour or powdered sugar. If you don't have a figurine to press into the cookie, try carving a footprint or other fossil with a fork or spoon.



Place your cookie sheet of soon-to-be-baked fossils in the freezer for 20-30 minutes. Once the dough is firm, bake the cookies in your preheated oven for 25-28 minutes, until the fossils are golden brown and, like real fossils, firm in the centre. But not rock hard, Ok? Allow your ichnofossils to cool down completely, and enjoy!

