

Volleyball Cookbooks

Recipes, Analysis, and Commentary
from
David Small

For each of the first 7 weeks of this volleyball season, I created a new cookie recipe. I invited people to take a cookie, in exchange for rating the cookie's taste, texture, look, smell, and overall quality. What follows on the next few pages are the recipes I used, as well as some mathematically questionable analysis of people's assessments.

First of all, let's assume/pretend that people's overall rating is a linear relationship with component ratings as follows:

$$\text{Overall} = X_1(\text{Taste}) + X_2(\text{Texture}) + X_3(\text{Look}) + X_4(\text{Smell}) + C$$

(Here, C is some constant not accounted for in any of the other four parameters.)

Turns out the best approximation for the variables is:

| | Taste | Texture | Look | Smell | Constant |
|------------------------|-------|---------|------|-------|----------|
| Everybody | 0.63 | 0.14 | 0.12 | 0.77 | 1 |
| Men | 0.63 | 0.17 | 0.1 | 0.77 | 1 |
| Women | 0.64 | 0.06 | 0.29 | 0.77 | 0.03 |
| People Under 40 | 0.68 | 0.13 | 0.08 | 0.77 | 1 |
| People Over 40 | 0.47 | 0.22 | 0.17 | 0.77 | 1 |

What conclusions can we draw from this? Not much, legitimately, but that won't stop me:

- 1) When you get over 40 taste is less important, and texture is more important. Shall I dare to eat a peach, indeed.
- 2) Men are *not* visual creatures. Women are. (And suddenly, my “consumer behavior courses” are called into question.)
- 3) Women are predictable---they don't have any hidden interests, and are “what you see is what you get”. Men, on the other hand, are hiding something. (And suddenly, my years of experience on this planet are called into question.)
- 4) Smell is more important to our overall rating than I would have expected.

Men ranked the cookies as follows:

| | Avg. Rating | Cookie |
|---|-------------|---------------------|
| 1 | 9 | All Heart Cookies |
| 2 | 9 | Sweet Melissas |
| 3 | 8.98 | Spicy House Cookies |
| 4 | 8.75 | C-Biscuits |
| 5 | 8.39 | Henry Chew-y bars |
| 6 | 7.79 | SnickerDuds |
| 7 | 7.67 | I Can Haz Cookie? |

Women ranked the cookies as follows:

| | Avg. Rating | Cookie |
|---|-------------|---------------------|
| 1 | 9.35 | All Heart Cookies |
| 2 | 9.27 | Sweet Melissas |
| 3 | 8.6 | C-Biscuits |
| 4 | 8.29 | Spicy House Cookies |
| 5 | 8.06 | SnickerDuds |
| 6 | 8.06 | I Can Haz Cookie? |
| 7 | 7.83 | Henry Chew-y bars |

If you rated several cookies, drop me a line, and I'll shoot you some analysis of what I think I've learned about you. (I ran the numbers on a lot more than what you see, here.)

And here's my speculation about what would be the ultimate cookie:

A cookie base that has less butter, a lot of brown sugar, some torani in place of white sugar, and is leavened with baking soda. Fruit + chocolate + marshmallows is probably the order of the day for mix-ins.

Week 1 – I CAN HAZ COOKIE?

Hazelnut & chocolate cookies. It was a good idea, but the execution was lacking.

Ingredients

½ cup butter
1 ½ cups flour
1 13 oz. jar Nutella hazelnut & chocolate spread
¾ cup sugar
1 cup brown sugar
2 eggs
1 tsp baking powder
½ tsp baking soda
¾ tsp salt
1 tsp vanilla extract
¼ cup milk
2 cups giant rice krispies

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees
2. Cream the butter, nutella, and sugars until fluffy
3. Add the vanilla, eggs, and milk, and mix thoroughly
4. In a separate bowl, combine the flour, baking soda, baking powder, and salt.
5. Mix the flour mixture into the batter, a little bit at a time.
6. Fold in the rice krispies by hand
7. Place by heaping tablespoons onto parchment paper-lined cookie sheets
8. Bake for 10 minutes, let cool on the baking sheets.

What I would do differently, next time:

I'd chill the dough before putting it on the baking sheets

I'd try it with less milk.

Liked by: Kelli, Katie, Steph

Week 2 – Pop Goes the Snicker (SnickerDuds)

I intended to make a variant of the snickerdoodle, with pop rocks embedded. The batter, apparently, had too much moisture in it, which dissolved the sugar on the pop rocks, releasing the carbon dioxide, and preventing the “pop” I was hoping for.

Ingredients

1 ½ cups flour

½ tsp. Salt

1 tsp. Baking powder

½ cup butter

¾ cup sugar

1 egg

¾ tsp vanilla

2 packs of cotton candy pop rocks

a bunch of white sugar and some ground cinnamon for the coating

Instructions:

1. Mix the flour, salt, and baking powder together
2. Cream the butter and sugar together
3. Add the egg to the butter and sugar and mix
4. Mix in the vanilla and the flour mixture
5. Mix in the pop rocks. Scowl as you hear them popping.
6. Roll it into 1” diameter balls, and refrigerate overnight.
7. Roll the balls into the coating mixture, and then smash 'em down on parchment lined cookie sheets.
8. Bake in a 400 degree oven for 10 minutes

What I would do differently, next time:

Maybe less egg, or butter, so that the pop rocks won't pop.

Cook a little shorter, so they're softer.

Liked by: Steph, Zachary, and Kelli

Week 3 – Hank's for the Chocolate (were supposed to be Henry Chew-y Bars)

Henry likes chocolate, so I tried to make something he'd like. It didn't work out quite right, and they weren't so chewy.

Ingredients

1 can (14 oz.) sweetened, condensed milk
2 tbs. Butter
1 cup chocolate chips
4 caramels
¼ cup milk

1 c (minus the 2 tbs.) butter
1 ½ cup brown sugar
¼ cup sugar
2 eggs
2 cups flour
1 tsp. Salt
1 ½ tsp. Vanilla
3 cups quick cooking oats
½ tsp. baking soda
½ tsp. Baking powder

Instructions:

1. Melt the first set of ingredients on the stove.
2. Cream the butter and sugars together.
3. Mix in the eggs
4. Mix in the flour and salt
5. Mix in the melted ingredients.
6. Mix the remaining ingredients together.
7. Pour it into a greased-and-floured casserole pan
8. Bake at 350 for 31-34 minutes

What I would do differently, next time:

No regular milk.

A little more chocolate and caramels.

No baking powder

Voila...they're cookies!

Liked by: Zachary, Angelo, and Katie

Week 4 – C-biscuits

Made to honor rival team, Seabiscuit, these looked kind of like cow-biscuits, if you catch my drift.

Ingredients

1 can (14 oz.) sweetened, condensed milk
1 ½ c. Flour
1 ¼ c. Crushed Pretzels
1 tsp. Vanilla
1 egg
1 tsp. Baking powder
½ c. butter
1 c. sugar
10 caramels
1 c. chocolate chips

Instructions:

1. Melt 2 tsp of the butter, the caramels, and the condensed milk in a saucepan
2. Cream the sugar into the rest of the butter.
3. Mix the vanilla and the egg and mix into the sugar/butter mixture
4. Add the caramel sauce to the sugar mixture, and mix thoroughly.
5. Mix the flour, pretzels, and baking powder, then add to the dough and mix.
6. Fold in the chocolate chips, or, rather, attempt to before realizing it's still too hot, and the chips will melt
7. Parchment-lined sheets, 350 degrees, 10-11 minutes.

What I would do differently, next time:

Wait for the dough to cool before folding in the chocolate chips

Liked by: Zachary, Toni, and Katie

Week 5 – Spicy House Cookies

Dark chocolate chip cookies with cinnamon and cayenne. It's a fine combination.

Ingredients

2 ¼ c. flour
1 tsp. Baking soda
1 tsp. Salt
1 c. butter
1 c. sugar
½ c. brown sugar
1 tsp vanilla
2 large eggs
1 tsp cinnamon
½ tsp. Cayenne
2 c. dark chocolate chips
15 drops red food coloring

Instructions:

1. Mix the flour, baking soda, salt, cinnamon, and cayenne
2. In a separate bowl, cream the butter, sugars, vanilla
3. Mix the eggs with the red food coloring, then mix that in the butter/sugar mixture
4. Mix the flours in
5. Fold in th chololate chips
6. refrigerate the dough overnight
7. Spoon onto parchment paper, and bake at 375 degrees for 11 minutes

What I would do differently, next time:

More food coloring. More cinnamon. More cayenne.

Liked by: Zachary, Jill, Melissa, and Henry

Week 6 – All Heart Cookies

In honor of Valentine's Day, I made heart-shaped cookies. No, not candy-heart shaped. Biological heart-shaped.

Ingredients

½ c. butter
½ c. sugar
½ c. brown sugar
2 eggs
¼ c. Torani English Toffee syrup
1 tsp. Vanilla
1 tsp. Salt
1 tsp. Baking soda
2 ½ c. flour
Kirkland Strawberry Preserves

Instructions:

1. Cream the butter, sugars, vanilla, and Torani
2. Mix in the eggs
3. In a separate bowl, combine the flour, salt, baking soda
4. Mix it all up
5. Roll it into a big rectangle.
6. Spread the preserves on it
7. Roll it up like very small jelly roll, in wax paper
8. Refrigerate overnight
9. Slice off 1/4" slices, place on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper
10. Bake at 350 degrees for 15 minutes

What I would do differently, next time:

More flour, more torani, rolled out thinner before spreading the preserves.

Liked by: Zachary, Angelo, and Katie

Week 7 – Sweet Melissas

Tried to make cookies that would resemble the tastes I thought Melissa had. All kinds of good stuff added, not crisp, not too soft, and not too thin.

Ingredients

1 ½ stick (¾ cup) butter

1 cup brown sugar

½ cup “Chocolate Milano” Torani syrup

½ tsp. Salt

1 tsp. Baking soda

2 ½ cups flour

2 eggs

½ cup each: white chocolate chips, crushed english toffee, mini marshmallows, coconut

Instructions:

1. Cream the brown sugar into the butter
2. Blend in the Torani and the salt and the baking soda
3. Mix in the eggs.
4. Mix in the flour
5. Fold in the other goodies
6. Heaping tablespoons on a parchment-lined baking sheet, 350 degrees, 12-14 minutes

What I would do differently, next time:

A full cup of Torani, and replace the white chocolate chips with mint-chocolate chips. Also, might add a little more butter and flour.

Liked by: Ben, Zachary, and Nicole