

# Anne's Shortbread

¾ cup butter, softened

¼ cup sugar

2 ½ cups oat flour (2 cups wheat flour, if you prefer)

Heat oven to 350°. Cream together butter and sugar. Add oat flour and mix until smooth.

Spread dough out on ungreased or parchment paper lined cookie sheet to ⅓" to ½" thick. Bake about 20-25 minutes until the edges begin to brown. Remove from the oven. Cut while hot (preferably with an up and down motion) and allow to cool before removing from the cookie sheet.

If using wheat flour, cook until set, not browned.

- Oat flour can be purchased in stores, but it's difficult to find, especially if you need the gluten free variety. I make mine by putting the oats in a blender until it looks like flour. I'm sure a food processor would work too.
  - All the oats I've used have tasted pretty good, but quick oats give a smoother, slightly sweeter flavor. Old fashioned oats have a bit of a nutty flavor. Steel cut oats (Irish oats) didn't make a good flour for me.
  - I began making shortbread with oat flour because of my friend's gluten issues, and I loved it. The flavor is delicious, the dough is much easier to work with, and I get a lovely, crumbly texture. After I began cooking it that way I learned that some of my Scottish friends made it with oat flour.
  - Shortbread made with oat flour is easier to work with, but does tend to spread more. Shortbread made with wheat flour tends to keep its shape better, but should be pricked with a fork to make sure it cooks more evenly.
- I have made it using honey, and it tastes good, but it bakes much quicker. Make sure to keep an eye on it!
- The butter you use does make a difference. The Kerrygold is thicker and "stickier." I don't have preference for salted or unsalted, you may.
- There are lots of traditions and variations! This is a basic recipe and it can be done many ways.
  - Some people make it in a round shape and cut it into wedges. I usually make it in one large rectangle and cut it into bite size pieces because I'm making it for a group.
  - I've read that Mary Queen of Scots liked hers with caraway seeds, a popular flavor at the time. She liked the "Petticoat Tails," wedges cut from a circle of dough.
  - There are shortbread pans that can bake pretty designs into the shortbread.
  - Shortbread can be rolled out and cut with cookie cutters into cute shapes.
  - Cookie stamps work well with wheat flour shortbread cookies.

- From experience, do not use an air bake or insulated cookie sheet! The center doesn't cook well.
- Doing a little research, there are lots of theories about how shortbread began and what the ingredients were. Because it was expensive for most families, it was a special holiday treat until quite recently. Find a recipe you like, and make it!