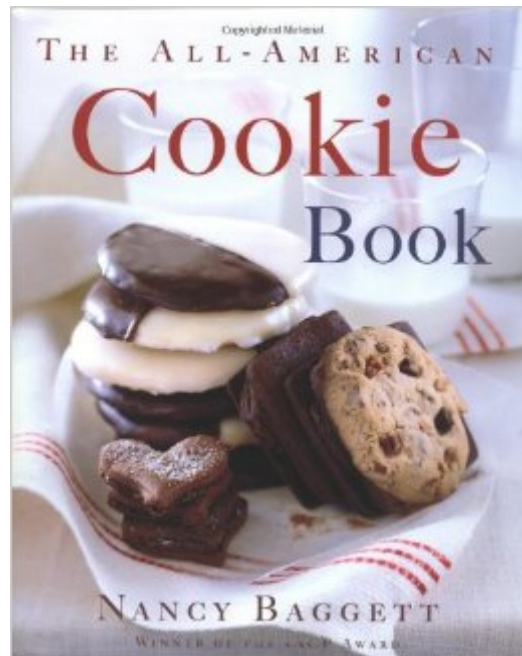


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# The All-American Cookie Book



## Synopsis

For this trailblazing collection of America's favorite cookies, Nancy Baggett crisscrossed the nation, visiting small-town bakeries, chic urban cookie boutiques, rural inns, bed-and-breakfasts, farmers' markets, and the homes of locally renowned cooks. She combed through community cookbooks and searched out long-lost heirloom recipes, sure-handedly reworking every recipe in her own kitchen. THE ALL-AMERICAN COOKIE BOOK celebrates regional gems from every corner of the country: Pennsylvania Dutch Soft Sugar Cookies, New York Black and Whites, New Mexican Biscochitos, Key Lime Frosties from Florida, and Mocha Espresso Wafers from Seattle. A sophisticated hazelnut chocolate sandwich cookie that was the closely guarded secret of an Oregon hostess is here, and so is a delightfully crisp (and easy to roll out) old-fashioned gingerbread cookie recreated from a handwritten 1880 notebook. Homespun classics abound: Chocolate Whoopie Pies, Caramel Apple Crumb Bars, Chocolate Chunk Brownies, and Caramel-Frosted Brown Sugar Drops. The collection also features devastatingly delicious contemporary creations like Chewy Chocolate Chunk Monster Cookies and Cranberry-Cherry Icebox Ribbons. For children and adults alike, one of the most exciting chapters will be the lavishly illustrated "Cookie Decorating and Crafts," which includes everything from simple projects like Christmas cookies and Chocolate Gingerbread Bears to an elaborate gingerbread house. As Nancy Baggett tells the story of America's heritage, she slips in fascinating bits of history, showing the evolution of our homegrown baking traditions.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

If you only own one cookie book in your life, make it this one. I know Maida Heatter and Nick Malgieri and others have great books out there, but this book presents so many delicious cookies made with accessible ingredients (mostly) and each cookie has been just delicious. My favorite is the Chocolate Malt Cookie with Chocolate Malt Cream Cheese filling. Boy! It's worth searching out malt powder (the only ingredient that may be hard to find.) The Cranberry Ribbon Cookies are really tasty (though I changed the cherry preserves to orange marmalade). The directions are well-written and I appreciated the advice on how to freeze the cookies and how long the cookies will stay fresh. When you're cooking for a party or a holiday, it's good to have that information. I also liked to see all the photos. You know what the end product is supposed to look like. That kind of help is also appreciated. I think you will get a lot of enjoyment out of making and eating the cookies in Ms. Baggett's book. Buying this book is not a risk. It's the surest bet out there.

I loved Nancy Baggett's book; I am a professional chef and cooking teacher myself and I've made probably fifteen recipes from this book, several of which I've used in classes during the holiday season. Particularly delicious were the Black-Bottom Mini Brownie Cups, Iced Cranberry-White Chocolate Drop Cookies, Ginger-Spice Crinkles, and the Coconut-Banana Chews (to which I added 2 tablespoons of cocoa with the dry ingredients-yum). I've given many copies of the book as gifts this year and will continue to do so. I found the book to be well-researched and user-friendly. The pictures (by photographer Alan Richardson) are gorgeous.

The cookies in this book (at least the ones I have tried) are incredible. As a warning, some of them are a little on the difficult side, but some are easy as...well, not pie since pie is difficult, but easy! A couple of warnings: 1. READ THE BEGINNING OF THE BOOK. Even if you're an expert, you need to read the introductory information. Nancy Baggett is very specific in the beginning about certain things like the way she wants you to measure flour, etc. This also goes for the directions within the recipes about things like the temperatures of various ingredients. If you take your eggs out of the fridge and use them in the chocolate meringues, you'll be very disappointed in the cookies! If you're careful, however, you'll find them very delicious. 2. Know your oven. My oven, for example, takes a little longer than the ovens in \*any\* cookbook, even though I have had it tested for temperature. If you don't bake frequently, you'll want to test your cookies so you don't either undercook or overcook them. Basically, this is an excellent book with detailed information, fascinating tidbits of cookie history great pictures and delicious cookie recipes for both the beginner and the expert.

This book lives up to its name by being a collection of recipes originating in many different American regions, as reported in old, regional cookbooks. I've baked many cookies from this book and they have all exactly met expectations. But, the book does not just provide a source of very good cookie recipes, it also paints a little portrait of how a cuisine changes due to changing access to ingredients and cooking equipment. Many of the recipes date from the middle to the late 19th century because lots of important cookie ingredients such as both chocolate and vanilla did not become commonly available to the American baker until that time. Similarly, temperature controlled ovens did not become available until the late 19th century which is important since cookies are much more sensitive to temperature control than larger, more important goods such as bread. The book contains chapters on nine (9) different types of cookies: Sugar Cookies and Shortbreads, 18 recipes, including my very favorite Snickerdoodle recipe; Chocolate and White Chocolate Chip Cookies, 18 recipes, including 6 variations on chocolate chip; Chocolate and Mocha Cookies, 10 recipes, including 'pies', bars, and sandwiches; Brownies, Blondes, and Other Bar Cookies, 25 recipes, including brownies and fudge cookies; Fruit, Pumpkin, and Carrot Cookies, 21 recipes, including tassies, ambrosia cookies, and fig cookies; Nut and Peanut Cookies, 16 recipes, including my favorite bourbon balls and peanut butter cookies; Oat, Coconut, and Sesame Seed Cookies, 13 recipes, including 7 variation on oatmeal cookies; Ginger, Spice, and Molasses Cookies, 13 recipes, including lots of Pennsylvania favorites; Cookie Decorating and Crafts, 18 recipes for cutout cookies and icings. I have not examined every cookie book currently available, and there is no question that this book does not include classically European cookies like Madeleines, but if what you want is good old fashioned cookies for holidays or otherwise, you will not go wrong with this book. If you need additional sources of American cookies, this book includes a very respectable bibliography. I also strongly urge the new cookie baker to read and follow Ms. Baggett's suggestions on how to succeed at cookie baking. I also urge new cookie bakers to follow individual recipes very carefully. They are adapted from old recipes, which may not have been very precise about measurements; however, Ms. Baggett's version of the recipes corrects that with great success in every case that I have tried. I am especially fond of her taking the trouble to leave selected recipes to using baking soda and cream of tartar, as in the snickerdoodles rather than replacing this pair with baking powder. One irony is that she has converted weights into volume measurements which are typically less precise, but it certainly works, due to the greater uniformity of ingredients today. It is also certainly easier for the home baker. Photographs are welcome eye candy and are well done, but contribute little to your success with the recipes. Well done all around, Nancy.

This book is a winner. It has a lot of recipes, many new ones and some of your old favorites. Every recipe is detailed and the book is beautiful. Color photographs galore. I just baked the whoopie pies and they are just delicious. I can't wait to bake the Chocolate chip hazelnut cookies or the big coconut macaroons.

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