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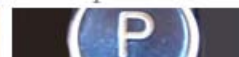
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07 DECEMBER 2010

gluten-free pistachio-cranberry cookies

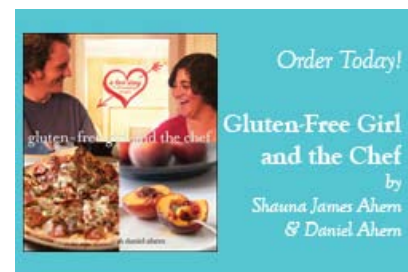


As you have probably guessed, I have been baking cookies and more cookies for weeks. Nuts and flours spill on the counter. Lu is frequently reaching for a piece of dried fruit or a chocolate chip. We are making memories, she sitting on the kitchen counter, wanting to crack eggs with me, still amazed when the Kitchen Aid mixer turns on and makes that whirling cacophony.

However, I have been baking so much that I wouldn't mind a break.

One night last week, Danny told me, "Can I bake tonight? I love baking too." It was his day off. I had a big deadline to meet. The idea of being handed a warm cookie without putting it together? Oh yeah.

UDI'S GLUTEN-FREE



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mailglutenfreegirl@gmail.com

Gluten-Free Girl

Later that evening, Danny handed me a cookie. It was wonderfully crackly with pistachios and sweet with cranberries. The cookie itself was sandy, like a sable. Lovely. Except...

"Danny, these are a little dry. I thought they'd hold together better than this."

"I don't know," he said. "They taste great to me."

"They taste great to me too. I love this cookie. But they're dry. Did you use 11 1/2 ounces of our flour?"

He stopped, the cookie halfway to his mouth. And then he looked bashful. "I forgot. I just used cups."

I looked at him. He looked at me. We worked together all week on [that piece about baking by weight](#). He knows where the scale is.

"Seriously? You just used cups?"

"Sorry," he said, and we both started laughing. I guess there's a reason we joke that he's the chef and I'm the pastry chef in our kitchen. We laughed for a long time, then split another cookie. It tasted especially delicious with the giggles.

At least he proved us right again. Measuring gluten-free flours by cups just doesn't work that well.

Certainly, these cookies weren't bad. The recipe from [The Grand Central Baking Book: Breakfast Pastries, Cookies, Pies, and Satisfying Savories from the Pacific Northwest's Celebrated Bakery](#) is so good that even a slightly off version will make you sigh into your pistachios. Still, use the 11.5 ounces that we specify here and these cookies will be even more buttery delicious.

And if your cookies come out dry, as these did, you can just crumble them up and make them into a crust for cheesecake. That's what Danny made at his restaurant last week: [sweet potato cheesecake with a cranberry-pistachio crust](#). It disappeared in two hours.

I want some. I might make these cookies again just for a bite of that cheesecake.

There are no mistakes in baking, after all. Just lessons. And giggles. And cookies.

We are giving away a copy of [our cookbook](#) to one person here. (And, we're still too shocked to believe it, but our cookbook was named [one of the best cookbooks of 2010 by the New York Times](#).) If you are still learning how to bake gluten-free, by weight, our cookbook will give you plenty of chances to practice.

We're also giving away a copy of [The Grand Central Baking Book: Breakfast Pastries, Cookies, Pies, and Satisfying Savories from the Pacific Northwest's Celebrated Bakery](#), which is one of the loveliest baking books we own. Not only do the recipes work, every time, but the flavor combinations will leave you wanting to make more and more cookies and scones.

Just leave a comment here about a mistake you made in baking that taught you something and made you a better baker.

the Web

BOB'S RED MILL



NAKANO SEASONED RICE WINE VINEGAR



BAKERY ON MAIN



Named one of the 50 best food blogs in the world by [The London Times](#)

One of [Gourmet's](#) 50 favorite food sites

MARY'S GONE CRACKERS



STARFISH SEAFOOD



GLUTEN-FREE PISTACHIO-CRANBERRY COOKIES, adapted from [The Grand Central Baking Book: Breakfast Pastries, Cookies, Pies, and Satisfying Savories from the Pacific Northwest's Celebrated Bakery](#)

The taste of these is enough reason to make them: buttery, sugary, sweet and salty, a little crumbly, wonderful.

However, the way they look makes them even better for the holidays. Red and green, naturally. Start baking.

- 11.5 ounces [gluten-free all-purpose flour mix](#)
- 1 teaspoon xanthan gum
- 1/2 teaspoon guar gum
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 8 ounces (2 US sticks) unsalted butter, softened to room temperature
- 4.75 ounces (2/3 cup) sugar (try organic cane here)



GREEK GODS YOGURT



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BLOG ARCHIVE

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- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 4 ounces (about 1 cup) unsalted, natural pistachios, lightly toasted
- 6.5 ounces (about 1 1/4 cups) dried cranberries

Combining the dry ingredients. Combine the flour, xanthan gum, guar gum, and kosher salt into a medium bowl. Whisk them together, aerating as you go.

Creaming the butter and sugar. Put the softened butter and sugar into the bowl of a stand mixer. Working on low speed, mix the butter and sugar together until they are creamy, but not fluffy, about 3 minutes. Pour in the vanilla extract and mix for 1 more minute.

Finishing the cookie dough. With the mixer running, add half the floury ingredients and mix until the flour disappears. Add the remaining dry ingredients. Turn off the mixer and remove the bowl from the mixer. Fold the pistachios and dried cranberries into the dough with a rubber spatula. Make sure they are evenly distributed throughout the dough.

Shaping the dough into a log. Divide the dough into half. Put each half of the dough onto parchment paper. Cover the dough, then roll it with your hands into a log about 2 inches in diameter. Repeat with the second half of the dough. Refrigerate the logs of dough for at least 2 hours and up to 3 days.

Slice and bake the cookies. Preheat the oven to 325°. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper or a Silpat.

Grab 1 of the logs of cookie dough from the refrigerator. Slice the cookie dough with a sharp knife, in about 1/4 to 1/2-inch-thick slices, depending on how thick you like your final cookies. Give each cookie at least 1 inch of space around it because these might spread a touch.

Slide the baking sheets into the oven and bake until the cookies have just begun to brown around the edges, about 16 to 20 minutes, turning the baking sheet in the oven halfway through the baking time. When in doubt, pull the cookies out a touch early. If you bake them too long, these will become a bit brittle.

Cool the cookies on a rack to room temperature. Eat.

Makes about 48 cookies.

POSTED BY SHAUNA AT 11:48 PM



97 COMMENTS:

Mother Rimmy said...

Fantastic combination- pistachios and cranberries. I'll bet I wouldn't have noticed a bit of dryness because I would have devoured them in a flash!

4:30 PM

Devon said...

- ▶ 2009 (103)
- ▶ 2008 (75)
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- ▶ 2005 (122)



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"...a delightful food memoir of learning to eat superbly while remaining gluten-free."

- **Newsweek magazine**

At least the cookies were still delicious. The first time my sister baked cookies (I think she was maybe 10 or something) she switched the sugar and salt amounts. Gag!

Congrats on the NY Times Best Cookbook of the year list!

4:32 PM

Heather Brandt said...

What kind of scale do you recommend for use with gluten free baking? I don't have one at all & would love a recommendation.

Thanks,

heather
heatherlbrandt (at) frontier (dot) com

4:33 PM

Abbey said...

I have a theory about baking 'mistakes'...they usually make fantastic ice cream toppings.

5:18 PM

dome sweet dome said...

ooh. wow. yummm. I cannot wait to make these. And I do have a scale. :)

5:33 PM

Christa said...

My biggest baking mistake (lately) is to tell someone (my husband) that using applesauce when baking cookies will result in the "exact same texture" as when using oil. My lesson? Bake first, talk later.

6:05 PM

anng27 said...

My favorite recent cooking mistake: I was using a newly found bread recipe. It called for 2T of yeast. I knew that was way too much for bread, but it was my first time with this recipe, so I did what it said. Plus side, the loaf didn't rise to the ceiling and collapse. Downside, I could have fit a golf ball or two in that giant hole in the middle.

6:06 PM

Lynelle said...

I definitely need help learning to bake gluten free. My first attempt at banana bread ended with banana bread all over my oven. I am about 7 months gluten free and 4 months pregnant. So I could use some help making some yummy desserts.

6:07 PM

garden said...

baking power and baking soda are NOT interchangeable :}

6:08 PM

emily said...

I keep thinking of my first backing disaster. I was about 10 and was baking cookies by myself with my brother's "help." I misread the recipes and put in 3 cups of baking soda instead of 3 tablespoons. We kept feeding the dough to my littlest sister until my mom came in and freaked out.

It still makes me giggle.

6:08 PM

"[Shauna] is vibrantly, passionately healthy, a connoisseur of ingredients...a teacher of cooking and writing...[and] life."

- Rebekah Denn, Seattle Post-Intelligencer

"Her blog is a lively mix of recipes and life experiences...[She] is clearly a woman who loves the path she's on, and she writes with intelligence, passion, and humor."

- The Seattle Times

"[Shauna] shares inspired recipes that are simple to create and simply bring out the best of each ingredient."

- Seis Kamimura, former executive sous chef to Wolfgang Puck



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SITE CREDIT



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garden said...

baking powder and baking soda are NOT interchangeable :)

6:09 PM

Lorraine said...

Pumpkin muffins was one of the first GF recipes I made. I made fresh pumpkin puree, measured everything carefully but left the sugar out of the dough. I was a bit surprised with the initial texture, but thought maybe GF would be that way. Yuck! I ended up cubing up the muffins and toasting them to make a stuffing for acorn squash. Lemonade from lemons.....

Congratulations on the cookbook award!

6:09 PM

Jessica said...

Hmmm, I'm still learning to be a baker. So exact! I'd say that my most memorable baking misshap was in highschool. I'd had a sleepover, and we were craving chocolate chip cookies in the middle of the night. We got the measurements off quite a bit. They still tasted decent, but were very thin and flat, and just a tad greasy. Lots of good giggles that night!

6:10 PM

Erin said...

So one of my most recent mistakes was starting a recipe of molasses cookies... but I forgot to check to see if we have molasses. I was all the way to the end of the baking and ... couldn't find the molasses. We live a ways from a store, so I substituted maple syrup (which we make here at home in the spring time). Do I need to tell you how great those cookies turned out??? Plenty of gluten eating folks gobbled them up and asked for more. I learned from that mistake. Lay out all the ingredients first, but if you get caught, then maple syrup always works as a sweetener.

The book sounds amazing, sign me up for your giveaway.

Erin

erinsmall@gmail(dot)com

6:11 PM

Laura said...

I learned this week that my scale is in ounces not grams :(So while baking your cookies I had to go online and convert. Hmm my latest cooking lesson was that you can't use coconut milk with standard pudding mix because it doesn't set up.

6:13 PM

Canadian Twentysomething said...

Those sound so good!

Just the other week I had a dinner date and we wanted to make the oatmeal chocolate chip cookies I'd made for him a few weeks earlier. So I brought all of the stuff and what we didn't have, we substituted. Well....they turned out like scones. Little cakes. It was so strange! We ate them anyway, but I you just can't replace shortening and sugar with bananas and honey....HAHA! At least now I know how to make scones!!! :P

6:15 PM

Mburger718 said...

I think my biggest failure in baking was when I made GF Chocolate chip cookies and left out the sugar! They were edible....but tasted more like biscuits with chocolate chips in them!

6:15 PM

heathersdish.com said...

these are gorgeous...and as for baking mistakes, they're usually the best tasting...but maybe not the

prettiest :)

6:15 PM

SLColman said...

I have learned that adapting recipes to be dairy and gluten free doesn't always go smoothly the first time. I have also learned to not be disappointed and to just try try again!

6:28 PM

Marny said...

Hmm, baking mistakes?

1. Switching salt for sugar.
2. Thinking that if you keep layering candies on top of a poorly baked cake, no one will notice how bad it tastes (I was 11 yrs. old)
3. Switching fat free margarine for real butter in cookies..does NOT come out the same. :)

6:29 PM

nerdytwin. said...

melting chocolate over a double boiler should be removed as soon as it melts otherwise it separates when alcohol (i.e. bailey's) is added. i bought really expensive chocolate at a fancy store with hope that my bailey's infused chocolate balls would be delicious. they were one big lumpy mess. start with inexpensive (yet still decent chocolate) when starting out. once you've perfected the recipe, then maybe buy the expensive stuff...but if it tastes great, leave it alone :)

6:30 PM

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6:31 PM

Kim said...

When I was a child, my dad and I made brownies and substituted Crisco for butter. They were AWFUL, greasy and sticky. I never made the mistake again, and my dad always eats my brownies now. We usually laugh about it!!!

6:35 PM

Noah said...

I started spooning GF pumpkin muffin batter into the tin only to realize I had left out the sugar when I licked my finger :)

6:35 PM

Catherine said...

Ah, baking mistakes.... Let's see, I have forgotten to put in sugar before, eggs another time....and many other mishaps. Most of that was when my children were small and I was distracted and over tired. I never gave up though and continued until I got it right!

6:36 PM

Jen said...

I tried making a sugar free/gluten free pumpkin "pie" for my aunt just after she went gluten-free. Let's just say there was a lack of availability of ingredients, so I tried to substitute Tang for the sweetener. It was a little strong so I kept adding more pumpkin to counteract the orange, and kept adding more pumpkin until we were out (it was in good supply...) Let's just say one great aunt loved

it and was eating it for quite awhile...

It's still known as the "tang pumpkin" experience...

Thankfully, my aunt appreciated the effort and my gf/sf baking has improved greatly :)

6:40 PM

Melissa said...

My best mistake was forgetting to translate Fahrenheit to Celsius when I moved to Australia. We found out that the smoke alarms in our new house DEFINITELY worked. Sigh.

6:43 PM

amanda said...

Baking mistake that has stayed with me since making my first scones as a little girl: you don't want to use ordinary flour when the recipe says "self rising flour" if you don't want to be reminded of that for the next 30 years by your loving family! Love your recipes and your stories.

6:46 PM

Jo Whitton said...

Those cookies look great - got to make some of those! I've made the mistake in the past of not baking my gluten free bread for long enough... I think I just get impatient because it just takes so much longer to cook than regular bread! It rises up so high, and is lovely and golden, and I start checking it every 5 minutes or so hoping it's ready, sticking in the skewer to check it, then I get tired of waiting and take it out of the oven... and after a few minutes it kind of collapses! So I'm learning to leave it in the oven longer and be more patient. :)

I loved your first book - can't wait to read the new one!

6:48 PM

Tracy Chastain said...

So did you slap Danny's arm and say, "get out!?" funny! Using a scale really does work. You have taught us that and couldn't imagine baking without a scale. Kim loves it for the simplicity of pouring in, hitting tare, pouring more in, hitting tare, etc. It's so much faster.

6:53 PM

CatherineBrown said...

Those cookies look fabulous! and Congratulations on your cookbook honors! I have a dear friend and fellow foodie who eats and bakes gluten free for her family and I would love to give her your book for Christmas, so here goes...

I think my first embarrassing baking mistake happened when I was 12. Buoyed by my initial success with making my first loaf of bread by myself (and it smelled and tasted...well, like homemade bread, fabulous!), I thought I was ready to be more adventurous. I was ready to make sourdough bread. The only cookbook I had on hand with a recipe for sourdough bread was not very explanatory, and I had no idea a good sourdough starter can take a week or two to develop. My dough was not rising properly, but I was determined to see it through. After two hours without much of a rise, I popped it into the oven. My mother wanted to give some to the plumber who was just finishing, but I knew the bread wasn't right and didn't want to further embarrass myself. I kept telling her it wasn't done yet, until finally the plumber had to be off. That bread was so tough and dense, no one could eat it!

I've learned a few things since that day, and wish I could invite that plumber back for a much improved loaf of my sourdough bread!

Thanks for your inspirations,
Catherine

6:54 PM

Ellen said...

You have so turned me onto using a scale for baking. I don't always post my recipes at my blog in weight even though more and more I'm measuring by weight, mostly because I just haven't made the commitment to do so. But I definitely see the benefit of measuring by weight. Thank you for pushing me to do that! I would love to win the Grand Central Baking book! I've been eyeing it since reading about it on your blog. Thanks Shauna and congrats on the NY Times honor. Much deserved!

6:59 PM

peanutgallery7 said...

My biggest failure was trying to make Gf Cinnamon Rolls. I could barely get the dough rolled out, and it never seemed to rise. I decided to cook them, hoping for the best. Unfortunately they never recovered, weighed about 5 lbs per slice, and went straight to the garbage.

7:00 PM

MK French said...

I have learned the hard way to read, read and re-read measurements. Putting twice as much flour as called for is NOT a good choice!!

I have learned to second guess my first sight!

7:01 PM

cathydebbie said...

One good baking learning opportunity...in a new home, with a new (old) oven, I thought I'd lost my baking touch because nothing turned out right. When a friend suggested I get an oven thermometer, I was suddenly able to bake again. Like a scale, an oven thermometer is a great step toward consistency.

Thanks for your lovely blog and recipes. I make your artisan break for my GF fiance all the time. :-)

7:03 PM

cathydebbie said...

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Thanks for your lovely blog and recipes. I make your artisan break for my GF fiance all the time. :-)

7:04 PM

Pat said...

Long ago (before gluten free) on Thanksgiving morning I decided to make a pie. I had learned to make pie crusts from my mom, but this time I used too much flour. The filling was delicious but the crust was not eaten. I was much more careful with the flour the next time.

7:12 PM

Sandra R said...

Yum! Can't wait to try these cookies!

First baking mistake was to pay attention to the time!! Don't allow yourself to get distracted.

Second mistake was to never use mace as apparently very allergic!

Third mistake was to work only in the box. Step out be creative! I have made some amazing cheesecakes by vowing never to make the same cheesecake twice. The "Almond Joy" cheesecake was to die for! Chocolate crust with a layer of coconut and almonds. Then top off with the chocolate cheesecake mixture spiked with Amaretto. Yummy!!!

Thanks for sharing your recipes!

Sandra

7:18 PM

Amy said...

My worst baking mistake? Like Devon's sister, I switched the sugar and salt when I was around 10 years old.

My favorite baking mistake? Not having enough pecans on hand to make pecan pie, and throwing in sliced almonds and hazelnuts to make up for the shortage. So incredibly good.

And congrats on making the NY Times list!!

7:22 PM

Tabatha said...

My latest baking oops was when I was making cupcakes for my daughters birthday party. I thought the butter soft enough to put in the mixer but it just chunked up. When baking them of course the butter melted and leaked out of the bottom of the cake cup to the muffin tin and a huge MESS! The one child said it is a little hard but she still ate it. I think she was just trying to be nice. So now I will be sure to melt the butter before hand!

7:25 PM

Libbyhitch said...

I must begin with I was never a baker but I have recently found I truly enjoy it...even if I am not very good at it. For Thanksgiving I decided to make cookies, how hard could it be? In my excitement I confused tsp and Tbsp PLUS the importance of creaming together the first few ingredients. I added the eggs to the mixture and ended up with a salty and very wet mixture...oops. Great times with Mom & lessons learned. Hope to have better luck this weekend with the above recipe! Looks great!

7:25 PM

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7:27 PM

Angie&Evan said...

tee hee hee! This post reminds me of a little mistake I once made... I was baking cookies at a friend's house one day and mistook her big jar of salt for sugar! Needless to say they were the most disgusting things I've ever made (think Play-doh cookies...)! Oops!

7:29 PM

Lora said...

My very first Thanksgiving dinner as a new wife I made 3 lovely pumpkin pies but omitted the sugar. Why? Because I was reaching for ingredients as they were (randomly) arranged on the counter instead of following the list as it was written. I was so sad to have to toss put those pies. We took a picture and I have never left out an ingredient again.

7:32 PM

Cynthia said...

CONGRATS on the Best Cookbooks recognition! That's fantastic!!

Before going gluten free I was an intuitive baker. I grew up in a restaurant/bakery and my first

paying job was as a breakfast cook in a cafeteria. I never used to measure things very carefully. Then enter the celiac diagnosis. I tried baking and gave up in frustration. I lost 30# (a good thing) however when my daughter was diagnosed I had to go back to the kitchen and master this new skill set and conquer the frustration.

I learned two things one to get right down to eye level to measure liquids and if it's the least bit off to use a teaspoon or tablespoon to add or take out liquids and get the level just right and two to have an oven thermometer because temperature is critical. This I learned after too many gummy loaves of bread.

7:36 PM

Kim said...

I love to bake and know exactly how exact it should be-my mistakes come from my oven that has a mind of it's own...Thanksgiving turkey was ready an hour and a half early-translate to baking time 14 minute cookies? you had better not walk away from the oven!!

7:45 PM

Cynthia said...

I have been waiting for this recipe. Before the celiac diagnosis I used to make cranberry pistachio shortbread cookies every year at Christmas. Then I would dip them in tempered chocolate and toasted coconut. My daughter and I have greatly missed them.

We're dairy free too so I'm going to have to use a replacement for the butter unfortunately!

7:48 PM

Ellen said...

one lesson i learned the hard way: label containers and bags. salt does not make an adequate substitute for sugar!

7:59 PM

Sara Pugh said...

My favorite baking mistake was when I was at a friends house using her kitchen. I reached for what I thought was the sugar and put my cups (sorry no scales - but you have converted me!) into the recipe. When the cookies were done, they came out of the oven and tasted horrible. Unfortunately her sugar dish bowl was actually the salt dish bowl. Opps! Perhaps having your cook book will keep me away from any other mistakes like that!

8:08 PM

brooke said...

I have had so many disasters since having to start cooking allergen free for my son. I have discovered that flour does mold and it does affect the outcome of your recipe. sigh.

8:08 PM

Candy said...

Oh, I can't wait for Santa to bring me my new scale!! I'm going to start weighing and weighing...probably in more ways than one.

The thing that taught me to be a better baker (and I'm more of a cook, not a baker) is that the "if a little is good a lot isn't better" when it comes to favorite ingredients. You can add extra mushrooms when you're a cook, but not a ton of almond extract when you bake.

8:17 PM

Äiti said...

Love love love pistachios. This recipe has me excited :-) Congrats on the nod in the NYT!

8:18 PM

gfpumpkins said...

I don't really remember my early GF baking mishaps well. Partly from a crappy memory, but I'm sure also partly to erase those memories in general! I converted a sweet potato roll recipe recently. While I don't think I made any mistakes on the theory, it didn't convert very well. We ate them all, but I won't be making them again.

8:28 PM

Sirena Shamounki said...

Hm. I have plenty of mistakes in the world of cooking, and baking, and plenty more. but the one most apropos to your directive is probably the time I blew it on including enough butter in the recipe for whole wheat chocolate chip cookies. Plump, round and crisp, the cookies were actually delicious. I learned to be more careful about following a recipe until I've mastered it, and enjoying anything I can salvage from a mistake - the bounty of a kitchen takes many mysterious forms! You may not want to serve it to a guest, but it may be really satisfying over coffee or tea in the morning!

8:34 PM

Jorie said...

When I got have gluten I used to make the perfect cookies, chewy, warm, gooey, perfection. I was so good people begged me to take them into school and work. After I started baking gluten free, I figured I could do the same thing, melt the butter, cool on sheet, that sort of thing. I ended up with melted cookies, literally all over the baking pan. I had to throw out two batches before I had to freeze the dough and try again. I have learned more since than, but I still don't make my own cookies for fear of repeats. I could really use a cookbook to help me through the transition.

8:40 PM

Jeri said...

They sound wonderful. I'm new to gluten free cooking. My almost disaster this week was when I was making bread. I laid out all the ingredients but almost forgot the egg replacer and the xantham gum. Then I put in 2 tbsp not 2 tsps. Quick catch. Scooped some out and it did do too bad. Well okay it rose then fell but not too bad..

8:45 PM

Michelle said...

The first time I made GF biscuits I accidentally doubled the butter. Since I'd been expecting the dough to be different from a dough with gluten, I was only mildly puzzled at the consistency. You can imagine that my biscuits were closer to very thin, very wide crackers. Certainly not bad, but certainly not a biscuit!

8:49 PM

Mr. Jackhonky said...

OK. Lu reaching for those dried cranberries? ADORABLE! mistakes in the kitchen? Hmmm. Back in the day, I accidentally swapped out teaspoons vs tablespoons for cinnamon. Man that carrot cake was cinnamontastic. A little too much so. Oh well, there went that dinner party dessert.

But something I learned in the kitchen is that pretty much nothing is completely lost. Whether I turn it into a bread pudding, a crust for a pie or cheesecake or crumbs to decorate the side of a cake, my mistakes often times lead to better end results!

Except for burnt black sugar caramel. You can't do anything with that stuff after it's burnt. Other than open the window, turn on the fan and take the battery out of the fire alarm.

8:57 PM

brenlm said...

During one of my very first attempts at cooking something on my own, I mistakenly used blue food

coloring instead of vanilla in a batch of rice crispie treats. In the long run, it worked to my advantage. Since I was the only one in the family willing to eat blue rice crispie treats, I enjoyed the entire batch myself!

9:02 PM

Janelle said...

Baking mistakes: Well, with gluten free baking items you absolutely, positively must follow the instructions. If it says use two knives to cut the flour, then you must do it. I've learned that I do not, in fact, know more than the people who created the flour and that I should probably listen to what they have to say because the crust/cookies/bread/muffins/biscuits will: burn, dry out, taste funky, etc.

:) Love your blog! I have celiac disease and am currently studying medical dietetics to help people who are just like us!

9:13 PM

Shawna said...

When we moved into our new house, I baked a batch of pumpkin muffins as one of my first baking projects. I came out to the kitchen sometime later only to find that the timer had already gone off and the muffins were burnt! I learned that the timer on our oven is super quiet and I need to set more than one.

Very important!

9:17 PM

Christi said...

I think my worst gluten-free cooking mistake was to accidentally use potato flour instead of potato starch. Most mistakes aren't so bad they have to be thrown away but this one was. It looked like I made bread out of slightly soggy Grape-Nuts but tasted so bad my husband accused me of trying to kill the dogs when I tried to see if they would eat it.

Luckily I was trying to convert the recipe into weight measurements so all I had to do was look at my notes to find out that it wasn't the recipe's fault.

I will never mix up potato starch and potato flour again though.

9:31 PM

Entwined Vines Jewelry said...

I am always baking and my biggest "ooooops" comes from my draw to sweeten with honey. I am also here in the pacific northwest and honey is just so local that I use it a LOT in my baking. This can turn out amazing or well not so much. I have been reminded on more than one occasion that I MUST remember to lesson the other liquids after using so much honey as well as increase the baking soda... the trick is remembering.

9:39 PM

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9:40 PM

Sahnnya said...

Making caramels without a candy thermometer they ended up being hard as a rock

9:42 PM

sondibruner said...

I tried to make a gluten-free microwave chocolate mug cake. My microwave is old, so I had to 'bake' it for longer than the recipe called for. It tasted like a slightly burned hockey puck. The lesson: don't try to bake a cake in a mug in the microwave. Sometimes, the shortcuts just aren't worth it.

9:49 PM

Jen Maraia said...

One time I forgot the COCOA POWDER in a CHOCOLATEY CHOCOLATE cookie! Ok, so I was probably 12 years old, and it was maybe one of the first times I baked, so I give myself a break, but still!

In other news, I want your cookbook!! (I think I'm getting it for Christmas, but I could really use one copy at home and one copy in Boston at college!)

Thanks for all the work you put into this blog I love reading it :)

Jen

10:22 PM

Gaile said...

when I first came to Portland, I was thrilled to find a gluten free bakery. I had missed bread terribly, and happily took home one of their sourdough baguettes to make crostini. I sliced it up and put them under the broiler to toast while I made a batch of toppings for them. Not long after I noticed the strange smell of burnt marshmallow coming from my oven. I opened it to discover a flaming archipelago of tiny toasts on my cookie sheet. They hadn't just burnt - they were on fire! I considered grabbing my camera first, but thought better of it and tossed them out onto the back lawn, where they extinguished and were made short work of by the squirrels in the coming days. Still I was sad to see them go, and learned that gluten free baked goods do indeed behave differently than gluteny ones. it's not a baking story per se, but it's funnier than my pie crust foibles.

10:30 PM

Amy said...

When I first started baking, I tried to melt chocolate in the microwave as stated in the recipe. However, the whole batch of chocolate seized! What a waste. Now I know I should dry the bowl before putting chocolate in it...or better do it in the double boiler! :) I never got seized chocolate after that time!

11:18 PM

hoopyscoopsmom said...

Congrats on the NY Times Cookbook of the year list!!! Awesome!!! And these cookies look absolutely delicious!! I have been printing recipes all day day to make cookies for me and my daughter this year. This is her first year being GF, as well as DF and egg free. I usually skip the yummy stuff as I am not a baker or a cook by nature, so why bother to attempt it for myself! But now my daughter has been diagnosed as well, and my husband has recently gone GF for us, as he has seen how just the smallest amount of gluten can take me down for days. So we are now a completely gluten free family!!! Yay!!

My 2 worst baking experiences were baking bread and biscuits. The bread, well, if you can call it that, mixed together well, rose well, but then when it went in the oven, something happened and it exploded all over the oven. Not sure what happened there!!! Then he biscuits, I was sure I had measured all my ingredients correctly and used the correct ones, but the biscuits came out as hard as rocks, literally, my daughter and I had a contest to see who could crack one open first!!!

So this new adventure in life has definitely been interesting! I am so grateful for all the bloggers and cookbook writers that have helped me so much this past year!!!

11:25 PM

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11:26 PM

Shoshana said...

Something I've been thinking about is cutting down on the amount of sugar I use when baking - it seems like everything I make is taking 1/2 cup of white and brown sugar.

Last night I made these cookies - which are so, so, good...

<http://allrecipes.com/Recipe/Magic-Peanut-Butter-Middles/Detail.aspx>

and by accident I put in 1/3 of a cup of each type of sugar, instead of a half of cup. And you would never know the difference...

Also - I love making INTENTIONAL mistakes in baking :). I'm trying not to use margarine in my baking (we keep kosher so I prefer that most of my baking ends up being dairy free so that we can eat these "neutral" desserts with meat dishes or milk based dishes) and I don't have access to "healthy" brands of margarine. So I replaced the margarine with half oil half unsweetened applesauce, and it was fine. I LOVE the experimentation :).

11:28 PM

Courage Cooks said...

I have definitely learned to use unsalted butter. Very, very important lesson - it's so disappointing having a perfect pie... except for a crust that's just too salty.

I've also learned to always add more cinnamon and vanilla than is called for. Asks for 2 teaspoon vanilla? I add 2 tablespoons. It always turns out great, especially with cakes!

So glad you and your hubby can laugh together. That is key in happy, long-lasting relationships. Keep up the good work (and the great cookies)!!!

11:30 PM

my darling lemon thyme said...

I love that he is the chef, but you the pastry chef :-)

One of my (many) kitchen mistakes happened recently when I made a gf birthday cake for a friend....it wasn't until the cakes came out of the oven that I remembered I had forgotten to put the sugar in!!!!

Now, I have done this once before (back in the wheat eating days) and the cake was a right-off. Dry and yuk. This cake however, still had a really great texture (thanks to the grated apple), so I simply sliced it in half slathered some jam in the middle and topped generously with chocolate icing. My friend absolutely loved the cake...which got me onto thinking, maybe I could get away with using a little stewed dates in place of sugar the next time I baked that cake..making it gluten, dairy and

cane sugar free...oh and yum!

12:38 AM

tbmccranie said...

could you use almond flour instead of the gluten free flour?

3:05 AM

Il Fornaio said...

Just recently I prepared to make a batch of espresso toffee, which I have made dozens of times before (every december). I was out of the light brown sugar the recipe called for but figured no difference if I used dark brown. Oh, there was a difference. The moisture must have been off because the toffee separated and then tasted terribly bitter when I tasted a piece just in case. Lesson learned (plus I dropped my candy therm. in the pot and ruined that too. Not my finest night).

5:01 AM

zonecoach said...

How about the first time I tried making Gluten Free pizza dough and being very p-offed that it didn't come out like regular pizza crust. I kept working at it and working at it and it just didn't happen. We then bit into the pizza. Kept saying it wasn't exactly like regular pizza but we really liked it. I made my own recipe using America's Test Kitchen as the base recipe. It turned out very very good. I can't wait to try your pizza crust. Hoping to get your cookbook for Christmas.

5:26 AM

manuela garcía sánchez said...

I have learned through countless mistakes to never, ever, ignore my instincts when cooking or baking. After years in the kitchen, I know now that no matter what a recipe calls for, if the batter or dough doesn't feel right, it's not going to work, so I have to twick it through what experience has taught me.

6:02 AM

Grig said...

My biggest mistake? There are so many... :) Probably the time when I didn't empty the oven when I started pre-heating it. Turned out, my roommate left his frying pen inside - the poor thing melted. O_o Now I double-check everything.

If I win, my email is grig at gmx dot com

Thanks! :^D

6:22 AM

Rachel said...

Sound delicious! I made a gluten free chocolate butter cake last weekend...and I failed to follow the instructions to make sure that all ingredients were room temperature. When I added the refrigerator cold eggs to the beautifully creamed & whipped butter & sugar mixture the whole thing separated into frozen up little butter bits....bummer! I just submerged the bowl in warm water & continued to beat it until it re-blended. Hah! I learned to have patience with my baking & allow the time for ingredients to reach room temperature for the best results. Cake turned out delish int he end....but I'll know for next time.

I'd love a copy of your book, looks excellent!

7:01 AM

sforme said...

I've made many mistakes in the course of my GF baking. I was making apple muffins for my son,

which is his favorite, and they didn't rise up or look as good as normal. When I tasted them, I knew why. I forgot the sugar. I not only did this once, but two more times before outlining the sugar on the recipe card. Fortunately, he still ate them and said they were good!

7:01 AM

Mandi said...

Congrats on the book announcement! I eyed that book when I was in Ener-G foods a few months ago and would love my own copy.

When I was little I liked to experiment around in the kitchen trying to make cookie recipes. Some were successful but 1 in particular was not. They came out of the oven looking reasonably normal for cookies but 1 bite in and we realized that I had forgotten sugar, completely. We tried frosting them but it still just wasn't the same. Lesson learned? Cookies need sugar!

8:36 AM

Kerin said...

My family loves pudding, so when I was younger I decided to try without my mom.

We had two packages so I decided to try and make it super chocolatey and didn't use enough milk.

I was so excited that after they were chilled I asked my mom to try it, she stuck the spoon in it and all of the pudding came out of the bowl with it, like a jello mold!

I can't even tell you the number of times I've successfully made pudding but every time someone mentions pudding anyone in my family will pipe up and say "hey remember that time Kerin made pudding? Wow that was awful."

9:45 AM

Roz said...

I once made GF cinnamon rolls when rather tipsy and put far too much liquid in - but they rolled up fine (though squashily), and the next morning they baked up very tastily if rather misshapen! mmmm perfect with coffee and the teeny tiny hangover...

Congrats on the NY Times!

Roz xx

9:49 AM

Caneel said...

These look amazing! I love pistachios!

10:02 AM

Heather Brandt said...

Worst mistake was killing my yeast & making an awful batch of bread...my dog wouldn't even eat it!

HEATHERLBRANDT (AT) FRONTIER (DOT) COM

10:14 AM

Catie said...

I have learned that mistakes can still taste awesome - one time I made your cinnamon buns and they just wouldn't cut right - so I put it all in a casserole dish and tried baking it, after all, what did I have to loose right? Those cinnamon buns were delicious and we just ate them with a spoon.

10:19 AM

MidnightAgenda said...

My last baking project was delicious but I did mess it up a bit...

I was making apple pie and when I put the crust together I accidentally dumped the water in without even thinking and the crust ended up coming out really thick. It still tastes delicious but it's not light and flaky as it should be.

The filling was to die for though!

10:29 AM

Mollie said...

Those cookies look so delicious!! I loved reading through all these comments about baking mistakes and lessons learned.

This summer I threw a brunch party for 20 people and needed to multiply a my recipes to feed the whole crew. I used a spreadsheet to calculate the final counts of ingredients to buy at the store, which worked really well. But in the kitchen I just followed the recipes as they were written, and multiplied the ingredients in my head as I went along. Luckily my biggest mistake was making twice the amount of filling for my quiche crust, which meant that I got to make more quiche later that week. But it could have been so much worse!

Now I write out the recipe in the amounts I'm going to use, every time. With holiday baking upon us, I recently unearthed my grandmother's original handwritten pie crust recipe and to my delight it featured ingredient amounts for one crust on the front and two crusts on the back. I guess that lesson runs in the family.

Thanks for the chance to win the book!

10:44 AM

Zee said...

These look delicious! Made me think of my dad immediately...

As the only gluten-free person in my family, my mission this holiday season is to convince everyone how delicious GF baked goods are.

I have made my fair share of baking mistakes: I'm vegan as well as gluten free, so unfortunately baking from a recipe nearly always requires substitutions and changes.

The most recent mishap was when I was making chocolate espresso cupcakes for my boyfriend's birthday. I was in a bit of a hurry making the frosting (coffee buttercream) and didn't wait for the coffee to cool before trying to blend it in. The frosting immediately curdled and looked totally weird!

Some of the strangest looking cupcakes, but they still tasted good! Luckily my boyfriend didn't care about the frosting.

Congrats again on your book!

12:53 PM

Brenda said...

If you buy ingredients in bulk, and store them in tins/jars/etc, don't forget to label them! Our first Thanksgiving, I served my new mother-in-law pumpkin pie, which I had made with salt instead of sugar! That wonderful lady swallowed it politely, then insisted I have some...we laughed that day, and for many, many years after, whenever one of us thought about that beautiful pie!

1:06 PM

dotted lines said...

I don't know if it's really a mistake, but in order to make my cupcake recipe vegan, I just started leaving out the eggs. Sometimes I use ground flax seeds in hot water as a replacement, but I've found that it's not really necessary. Also, OJ works just as well as milk, especially in the chocolate ones!

1:19 PM

Wendy said...

I love making crust with broken recipes!

My first real big baking mistake was to roll out drop biscuits. They were very pale hockey pucks. No body could even take a bite. They laugh and tease me to this day 34 years later! I laugh too!

1:54 PM

Elizabeth said...

When I first started baking, I did not realize that salted and unsalted butters were not interchangeable. I made really salty cookies!

1:55 PM

Janel said...

Always remember to ADD sugar to a cheesecake, especially before baking it and serving it to people!!

6:53 PM

sheila d said...

My scale, which a friend gave me when they moved back to Germany, is in metric! I think it is intended for wieghing portion sizes because it has large calibrations (just un-numbered lines for every 200 ounces) But, it made AMAZING GF Girl Gingerbread People the other night!!! I guess I'll have to convert this recipe....My worst baking disaster is forgetting the pinenuts are toasting.....I do this way too often. I can take days to get the smell out of the kitchen. Oh and forgetting the Yeast, salt and sugar when making bread in the bread machine.

9:41 PM

Ig said...

My recipes aren't as good if I bake after work when I am tired - so I always try to bake in the morning! Easy fix.

7:14 AM

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