



1. Read your recipe. This sounds silly to even say, but **read your cookie recipe carefully** before starting. I can't tell you how many times I've been in a hurry, glanced over the ingredients and started a recipe, only to discover it has to sit several hours or overnight, or there's a step I'm not quite sure how to do and need to research or ask questions. So be sure you have all the ingredients and that you understand the recipe clearly.

2. Give yourself two days. These **don't have to be two days in a row**. Do all of the mixing on one day and the baking on another. When you try to do all your mixing and baking of several batches into one day, you're more likely to end up exhausted, stressed and feeling a little "bahumg". Another option is to mix up one batch each night throughout the week, and stick them in the refrigerator, then do all the baking on another day.

extra tip: Almost any cookie dough (roll out or drop) can be **refrigerated for a week or so before baking**. Most cookies will actually improve after a day or two in the fridge; like I learned when I researched The BEST Chocolate Chip Cookie Recipe.

3. Don't grease your cookie sheets. Use parchment paper or silpats instead. Makes for **easier clean up** and your cookies come out looking beautiful. Non-stick spray can build up on your pans over time. That black gunk that accumulates in the corners is next to impossible to remove.

extra tip: for drop cookies, **use a cookie scoop** to assure that all of your cookies are the same size and will bake evenly

4. Don't use flour to roll out your cookies. For light colored dough, use powdered sugar, and for chocolate cookies, use cocoa powder. Or you can simply use waxed paper like I do.

5. When rolling dough, use guides to measure the thickness. The secret to nice cut out cookies, it making sure you've rolled the dough thick enough, but not too thick. Use 1/4" wooden sticks from the craft store to lie on each side of your dough as a guide while you roll. When dough is flush with your guides, you know you have the correct thickness.

extra tip: If you don't have the sticks, you can just roll out your dough and use a ruler or handful of change to check your thickness. A stack of three quarters is about 1/4" thick. Two dimes are about 1/8".

6. Freeze cut out cookies before baking. Have you ever baked cut out cookies only to pull them out of the oven and see that they spread and didn't hold their shape? After you cut them out and place them on the cookie sheet, pop them in the freezer for about 10 minutes before putting them in the oven to bake. This will help the cookie hold its shape.

extra tip: Remove your cookies from the oven just before they look done. A tan cookie will be more dense and pliable than a golden cookie.