

THE HISTORY OF

GIRL SCOUT COOKIES

AN EARLY GIRL SCOUT COOKIE® RECIPE

1 cup butter
1 cup sugar plus additional amount for topping (optional)
2 eggs
2 tablespoons milk
1 teaspoon vanilla
2 cups flour
1 teaspoon salt
2 teaspoons baking powder

Cream butter and the cup of sugar; add well-beaten eggs, then milk, vanilla, flour, salt, and baking powder. Refrigerate for at least 1 hour. Roll dough, cut into trefoil shapes, and sprinkle sugar on top, if desired. Bake in a quick oven (375°) for approximately 8 to 10 minutes or until the edges begin to brown. Makes six- to seven-dozen cookies.

December 1917

Girl Scout cookies had their earliest beginnings in the kitchens and ovens of our girl members, with mothers volunteering as technical advisers. The sale of cookies to finance troop activities began as early as 1917, five years after Juliette Gordon Low started Girl Scouting in the United States. The earliest mention of a cookie sale found to date was that of the Mistletoe Troop in Muskogee, Oklahoma, which baked cookies and sold them in its high school cafeteria as a service project in December 1917.

July 1922

In July 1922, *The American Girl* magazine, published by Girl Scout national headquarters, featured an article by Florence E. Neil, a local director in Chicago. Miss Neil provided a cookie recipe to 2,000 Girl Scouts. She estimated the approximate cost of ingredients for six- to seven-dozen cookies to be 26 cents to 36 cents. The cookies, she suggested, could be sold by troops for 25 or 30 cents per dozen.

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1920s and 1930s

In the 1920s and 1930s, Girl Scouts in different parts of the country continued to bake their own simple sugar cookies with their mothers. Cookies were packaged in wax paper bags, sealed with a sticker, and sold door to door for 25 cents to 35 cents per dozen. In 1933, Girl Scouts of Greater Philadelphia baked cookies and sold them at the city's gas and electric company. Just 23 cents for a box of 44 cookies, or six boxes for \$1.24 helped girls develop their marketing and business potential and raise money for local Girl Scout programs. In 1934, Greater Philadelphia became the first council to sell commercially baked cookies.

In 1935, another large group, the Girl Scout Federation of Greater New raised money through the sale of commercial cookies. Buying its own die in the shape of a trefoil, the group used the words "Girl Scout Cookies" on the box. In 1937, more than 125 Girl Scout councils reported holding cookie sales. Girl Scout cookies were sold annually by local councils around the country until World War II, when sugar, flour, and butter shortages led Girl Scouts to begin selling Girl Scout calendars to raise money for their activities.

1940s

Cookie sales continued annually, with the national organization licensing local bakers to produce and package the cookies sold by girls in councils. By 1948, a total of 29 bakers throughout the nation were licensed to bake Girl Scout cookies.

1950s

With the advent of the suburbs, Girl Scout cookies were also sold by girls at tables in shopping malls. By 1956, Girl Scouts sold four basic types of cookies: a vanilla-based filled cookie, a chocolate-based filled one, shortbread, and a chocolate mint. Some bakers also offered an optional flavor.

1960s

During the 1960s, when baby boomers expanded Girl Scout membership, cookie sale volume increased significantly. In 1961, 14 licensed bakers were mixing batter for thousands and thousands of Girl Scout cookies annually. In 1960, licensed bakers began wrapping Girl Scout cookie boxes in printed aluminum foil or cellophane to protect the cookies and preserve their freshness. By 1966, a number of varieties were available. Among the best sellers were chocolate mint, shortbread, and peanut butter sandwich cookies.

1970s

In 1978, the number of bakeries was streamlined to four to ensure lower prices and uniform quality, packaging, and distribution. The national organization, Girl Scouts of the USA, began supplying licensed bakers with a standard cookie package layout and pictures. For the first time in history, all Girl Scout cookie boxes featured the same designs and depicted scenes of Girl Scouts in action, including hiking and canoeing.

Cookies for sale included Thin Mint, Sandwich, and Shortbread cookies and four additional choices. In 1979, the new contemporary Girl Scout logo appeared on cookie boxes. Cookie packaging became more creative and began to promote the benefits of Girl Scouting.

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1980s

In 1982, the four bakers produced a maximum of seven varieties of cookies, of which three were mandatory: Thin Mint, sandwich, and shortbread. Packaging continued to depict scenes of Girl Scouts in action. In 1984, some of the licensed bakers started to produce gift samplings of Girl Scout cookies in special decorative tins.

1990s

In the early 1990s, two licensed bakers supplied local Girl Scout councils with cookies for girls to sell. Eight varieties are now available, including low fat selections. In 1998, Girl Scouts of the USA licensed three bakers to produce cookies. The national organization also introduced official age-appropriate awards for Brownie, Junior, Cadette and Senior Girl Scouts for participating in cookie activities, including an annual Girl Scout Cookie Activity Pin, with requirements featured in an activity guide.

Present day

Girl Scout Cookie boxes are bold and bright and capture the spirit of Girl Scouting. Introduced in Fall 2000, the boxes clearly show girls having fun and growing strong. The licensed bakers produce a maximum of eight varieties, including three mandatory ones (Thin Mints, Do-Si-Dos, and Trefoils). All cookies are kosher and five varieties now have absolutely no trans fat.