VALENTINE chocolate M&M cookies

A red container with cookies and candy

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*We're celebrating the season of love with a delightful twist on a classic favorite -****Valentine Chocolate M&M Cookies****! These soft-baked thick and chunky chocolate cookies are as indulgent as they look: rich and fudge-like with chewy centers, slightly crisp edges, and oodles of melty chocolate chips and colorful red and pink Valentine M&Ms in each glorious bite. So fun and festive, they will surely win over the hearts and taste buds of anyone who bites into them, and they will disappear in a heartbeat! After all, there's no better way to say "I love you" than with a homemade sweet treat straight from the heart. Happy Valentine's Day!*

**INGREDIENTS**:

½ cup (8 Tablespoons; 113g) unsalted butter (softened to room temperature)

1 large egg (room temperature)

1 Tablespoon (15ml) buttermilk (room temperature)

1 cup (125g) all-purpose flour

2/3 cup (55g) Dutch processed cocoa powder

1 Tablespoon (8g) cornstarch

1 teaspoon baking powder

½ teaspoon baking soda

½ teaspoon salt

½ cup (100g) granulated sugar

½ cup (100g) packed light or dark brown sugar

1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

1 cup (163g) Ghirardelli chocolate chips (dark, semi-sweet or milk chocolate)

1 cup Valentine M&Ms (red, pink & white)

**HOW I MAKE THESE**:

1. Set butter, egg and buttermilk out to come to room temperature (this helps them incorporate into the cookie dough better).
2. In a medium bowl, combine the flour, cocoa powder, cornstarch, baking powder, baking soda and salt and whisk together until well combined; set aside.
3. Using a hand mixer or a stand mixer fitted with paddle attachment, beat the butter, brown sugar, and granulated sugar together on medium speed until creamy, about 3 minutes.
4. Add the egg and mix on medium until combined, about 1 minute.
5. Add buttermilk and pure vanilla extract and mix on medium until well blended, about 1 minute. Scrape down the sides and bottom of the bowl as needed.
6. Scrape down the sides and add in the flour mixture, ½ at a time, mixing just until blended; add remaining flour mixture and again mix just until blended. This cookie dough will be soft and sticky!
7. Fold in the chocolate chips and M&Ms and stir by hand until well blended.
8. Cover and chill the dough in the refrigerator for at least 1 hour (and up to 3 days). I recommend just 1 to 2 hours, for the perfect cookie spread. If chilling for longer than 2 hours, allow dough to sit at room temperature for at least 1 hour before rolling and baking because the dough will be quite hard.
9. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line baking sheets with parchment paper; set aside.
10. Scoop with a medium cookie scoop (about 1.5 Tablespoons or 30-35g) of dough each, and roll into balls. Arrange on the baking sheet about 3 inches apart. To ensure a thicker cookie, make the balls taller than they are wide (more like a cylinder or column).
11. Bake for 11–12 minutes or until the edges appear set. Centers will look very soft. Every oven is a little bit different, so watch your first batch when baking and time accordingly. **DO NOT OVERBAKE**, as these will lose their softness.
12. **BAKING TIP**: If the cookies aren’t spreading by 9 minutes, remove pan from the oven and lightly bang the baking sheet on the counter 2-3x – this will help initiate the spread and give you a rippled cookie edge. Return pan to the oven to continue baking.
13. If desired, after removing from oven lightly press a few chocolate chips or M&Ms onto the tops of the warm cookies.
14. Cool for 5 minutes on the baking sheets. Transfer to a wire rack to cool completely. The cookies will slightly deflate as they cool.
15. Store cookies in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 1 week – if they last that long!

**YIELD**: 24 cookies

**RECIPE NOTES**:

**WEIGH INGREDIENTS CAREFULLY FOR BEST RESULTS:** If I can only share one baking secret with you, always use a DIGITAL KITCHEN SCALE. You *can* use measuring cups and spoons for most recipes, but using a digital scale makes for the more consistent and efficient baking. Take this from someone that bakes A LOT!

**DON’T OVERBAKE**: For soft and chewy cookies, remove the cookies from the oven when the edges are set but the centers look *slightly*underdone. Don’t worry! They will continue to bake and set-up as they cool on the cookie sheets – giving you a perfectly soft and chewy texture!

**TO KEEP THESE COOKIES FRESH:** These cookies will stay soft, chewy and fresh for up to 1 week in an air-tight container kept at room temperature.

**MAKE AHEAD TIP:**  You can bake these cookies and freeze ahead of time – simply defrost before you plan on serving.  Baked and frosted cookies freeze well in an airtight container for up to 2 months.

**HOW TO THAW COOKIES:** Remove from the freezer and place the unopened container in the refrigerator overnight to thaw before serving.

**CAN I MAKE** **GLUTEN-FREE CHOCOLATE M&M COOKIES?** You can easily make this recipe gluten-free by substituting your favorite 1:1 gluten free flour for the all-purpose flour - I use and recommend *King Arthur, Measure for Measure Flour* and *Bob's Red Mill Gluten Free 1-to-1 Baking Flour*.

**RECIPE VARIATIONS**:

**GLUTEN-FREE VALENTINE CHOCOLATE M&M COOKIES**: Substitute your favorite 1:1 gluten free flour for the all-purpose flour - I use and recommend *King Arthur, Measure for Measure Flour* and *Bob's Red Mill Gluten Free 1-to-1 Baking Flour*.

**CHRISTMAS DOUBLE CHOCOLATE M&M COOKIES**: Substitute your favorite Christmas holiday M&Ms for red, pink and white Valentine M&Ms.

**PATRIOTIC DOUBLE CHOCOLATE M&M COOKIES**: Substitute red, white and blue Patriotic M&Ms for the Valentine M&Ms. Drizzle or dip with a selection of red, white and blue melted candy melts, and sprinkle with red, white & blue star sprinkles!

**MARDI GRAS DOUBLE CHOCOLATE M&M COOKIES**: Do you have a stash of colorful M&Ms that you save for holiday baking? Substitute purple, violet, green and yellow M&Ms for the Valentine M&Ms. These are ALWAYS a big hit!

**EASTER DOUBLE CHOCOLATE M&M COOKIES**: Substitute your favorite springtime pastel M&Ms for red, pink and white Valentine M&Ms.

**ST. PATRICKS DAY DOUBLE CHOCOLATE MINT M&M COOKIES**: Add ½ teaspoon of pure peppermint extract to the cookie dough, and substitute colorful green Mint M&Ms for the Valentine M&Ms. The dark green, mint green and grass green colors are spectacular nuzzled in chocolate cookies!

**HALLOWEEN DOUBLE CHOCOLATE M&M COOKIES**: Substitute your favorite Halloween holiday M&Ms for the Valentine M&Ms.

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