



**NUTRITION:  
IT'S ALL GOOD**  
ANN BLOOM

## Tips for succeeding with your resolutions for this year

The number one resolution many people make is to get in shape in the New Year, which could mean lose weight or improve their physical health through more physical activity. The chances most people will have abandoned these resolutions — good as they are — by mid-February are quite good. Why? People have good intentions, but their goals tend to be too broad and nonspecific to be achievable. People get discouraged and give up.

Goals need several things to be able to work. One, goals need to be as specific as possible, and realistic. Two, there needs to be a time element. Three, there needs to be an element of accountability. Four, there should be reward built in to the goal, so that when it is achieved, the person receives encouragement to continue and something for their effort, so they feel their efforts have been worthwhile.

As an example, let's say you say your goal for 2021 is to get in shape. You say, "I will run three miles a day, and be in shape in two weeks." This goal has several flaws. Is it realistic and doable? Ask yourself, can you really commit (with all your other responsibilities and obligations) to running three miles a day, every day? Have you ever been a runner in the past? This goal does not have a realistic time element, accountability or reward in it. And, finally, is it realistic and doable from the start? Will you stick with it? Research indicates it takes about three weeks to make something a habit. Another question to ask: who am I doing this for? Am I choosing this activity because I think/believe I will enjoy it, or am I choosing it because everyone else is doing it?

Instead, the aforementioned goal might sound something more like this: "I will start walking for three days a week (your choice of which days), walking for 10 minutes and building up to an hour by the end of the month. I will call my friend to ask them to walk with me." If this is not doable, begin with one day a week. The point being, that you start, and build from there. This will also avoid injury, from trying to do too much, too soon. Injury is one reason people abandon any attempts at physical activity. If it hurts, why do it?

As always, before you begin a new physical activity, check with your primary care provider to be sure you are physically capable of beginning an activity regimen. Be sure you know how to warm up and cool down before and after your workout, both of which are equally important to avoid injury. The OSU Extension Service has a walking program which is suitable for anyone who is beginning a walking program. It is called Walk With Ease. For more information call the Extension Service Office at 541-426-3143.

Once you have worked your way up to your goal of walking for an hour three times a week, your reward might be a new pair of walking shoes.

The second resolution, lose weight, has many of the same flaws as "get in shape."

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Colter Peterson/St. Louis Post-Dispatch-TNS

Salted butter and chocolate chunk shortbread cookies made by Dan Neman.

# COOKIES AND COVID: PANDEMIC PROMPTS 'YEAR OF THE COOKIE'

**Daniel Neman**  
St. Louis Post-Dispatch

The year 2020 has finally come to its decaying, putrescent end. So now is a good moment to look back and contemplate just what it was that helped get us through this most abhorrent of times.

In a word, it was: cookies.

I'm a little surprised, too. I would have guessed the answer would have been deep reserves of resourcefulness and imagination, or perhaps mankind's indomitable spirit, or possibly alcohol.

But according to an organization called Top Data, the year 2020 has been the year of the cookie.

Ordinarily, I pay little or no attention to pseudo-scientific surveys that aim to do little more than light up the pop-culture synapses in our brains' parietal lobes.

But this one is different. This one is about cookies.

Top Data is an international marketing company (they have an office in St. Louis) that tracked data of shoppers in cookie stores and online shoppers, and also surveyed 1,000 Americans to determine their cookie-eating habits. And what they found was, frankly, a little shocking.

During our current COVID crisis, demand for cookies has risen a full 25%. Ninety-five percent of all Americans say they eat at least one cookie a month, and one out of every five of us eats at least three cookies a day.

That's nearly 1,100 cookies a year. No wonder we have a problem with obesity.

Admittedly, some of the numbers on this survey are kind of cockeyed. The part about one out of five of us eating at least three cookies a day is somewhat contradicted by the survey's own figure of 16.1% eating that many cookies.

That's one out of six of us, not one out of five. Perhaps we should not place too much faith in a marketing company, even one with an office in St. Louis.

Still, the study is compelling in other respects. For instance, American cookie consumption turns out to be a function of geography.

The states leading the nation in cookie

eating are generally in the west: Utah leads the country, followed by Idaho, Oregon and Montana. Meanwhile, the states that eat the fewest cookies are all in the south: Louisiana is the least cookie-crazed, followed by South Carolina, Florida, Georgia and Mississippi.

Missouri ranks 18th in cookie consumption; Illinois is No. 26.

Incidentally, the person who drew the study's map is no more accurate than the person who did their math. North Carolina has taken the shape of a crazed sea monster, a giant chasm has mysteriously erupted between otherwise adjoining parts of Maryland and Delaware, Long Island has become freakishly large, Connecticut has disappeared and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan does not seem to be part of any state at all. And don't ask when the Potomac River became so wide, because I don't know.

The study also noted which states are fondest of a number of different varieties of cookies.

Chocolate-chip cookies are the favorites in Maine, followed by Alaska, South Dakota, Iowa and Kansas.

Snickerdoodles are craved most in Oregon, Hawaii is tops for shortbread and Vermont is the top state for both oatmeal raisin and butter cookies. You'll find biscotti eaters in Rhode Island, and the residents of Delaware are fondest in the nation of both wafer cookies and macaroons — which Top Data naturally illustrates with a picture of a macaron, which is not remotely the same thing.

Neither Illinois nor Missouri was listed in the top five consumers of any of the 10 varieties listed. That just shows that when a pandemic hits, we don't play favorites.

Please pass the milk.

## SALTED BUTTER AND CHOCOLATE CHUNK SHORTBREAD COOKIES

18 tablespoons (2 1/4 sticks) salted butter, cut into 1/2-inch pieces  
1/2 cup granulated sugar

1/4 cup light brown sugar  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
2 1/4 cups all-purpose flour  
8 ounces semi- or bittersweet dark chocolate, chopped into chunks (do not chop too fine)  
1 large egg, beaten  
Demerara or turbinado sugar, for rolling  
Flaky sea salt, or kosher salt

- Line one or two rimmed baking sheets with parchment paper.
  - Using an electric mixer and a medium bowl or a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat the butter, both sugars and vanilla on medium-high until it's very light and fluffy, 3 to 5 minutes. Use a spatula to scrape down the sides of the bowl. With the mixer on low, add the flour, followed by the chocolate chunks, and beat just to blend.
  - Divide the dough in half, placing each half on a large piece of plastic wrap. Fold the plastic over so that it covers the dough (this will protect your hands from getting sticky). Use your hands to form the dough into a log shape about 2 to 2 1/2 inches in diameter. Rolling it on the counter will help smooth it out; it does not have to be perfect. Refrigerate until very firm, about 2 hours.
  - Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Brush the outside of the logs with the beaten egg and roll them in the demerara or turbinado sugar.
  - Slice each log into 1/2-inch-thick rounds, place them on the prepared baking sheets about 1 inch apart and sprinkle with flaky or kosher salt. Bake until the edges are just beginning to brown, 12 to 15 minutes. Cool on the baking sheet for 1 minute, then transfer to a wire rack.
- Yield: About 32 cookies

Per cookie: 147 calories; 9 g fat; 5 g saturated fat; 23 mg cholesterol; 1 g protein; 17 g carbohydrate; 9 g sugar; 1 g fiber; 55 mg sodium; 8 mg calcium

— Recipe from "Dining In," by Alison Roman



**BETWEEN THE ROWS**  
WENDY SCHMIDT

Last night I had the most cheerful dream about sunflowers. I was going to go out and immediately plant some seeds for the giant sun-

flowers over by the fence. Then I realized that it is winter and the little sprouts would surely be killed by frost sometime between now and May (when we could be sure of frost-free nights).

A gardening friend suggested

that I plant Jerusalem artichokes instead, since the blossoms look like small sunflowers. I'm not sure if that can happen soon, as the ground may be too frozen at the moment to plant anything. (This is still all in my dream).

It does seem that I'm anxious

to plant something and see brand new life in the brand-new year. Life with cheerful blossoms in the dead of winter.

Hopeful dreams mean that I'm looking forward and planning. A really good sign in spite of all the virus stress.

The cats are glad I brought cat grass home from the store for them. Another bit of green cheerfulness in the house.

The neglected sweet potato on the counter has sprouted leaves.

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## Dreaming of sunflowers in the depths of winter