

MAYAN MYSTERY COOKIES

SOURCE: Epicurious.com and *The 150 Best American Recipes*, edited by Fran McCullough and Molly Stevens

YIELD 60 cookies

INGREDIENTS

- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (1½ sticks) unsalted butter, softened
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar, plus more for rolling
- 1½ cups all-purpose flour
- 1½ teaspoons baking powder
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon finely and freshly ground black pepper
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon allspice
- $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 large egg
- 1½ teaspoons vanilla extract
- Semisweet chocolate chips (see note, above)

PREPARATION

Line two baking sheets with parchment paper or a silicone baking mat. Cream the butter and $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar in a food processor. Sift the flour, baking powder, salt, spices and cocoa in a medium bowl and add to the butter mixture. Add the egg and vanilla and process until the batter is uniform. Refrigerate the dough for at least an hour. Preheat oven to 350-degrees F. Using your hands, roll the dough into balls about the width of a quarter. Tuck about 5 chocolate chips into the center of each one. Put some sugar on a flat plate and roll the balls in the sugar to cover lightly. Place the balls on the baking sheets. Bake for 8 minutes, being careful not to overbake; the cookies should be delicate and soft in the center. Let cool on the baking sheets. Makes about 5 dozen cookies.