

## Ever-so-Versatile Chocolate Shortbread

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*Yield: 3 dozen cookies (using a 2-inch cookie cutter)*

### What You'll Need:

3/4 cup (4 ounces/120 grams) bittersweet chocolate (chips will do), melted and cooled

2 cups (240 grams) all-purpose flour

1/2 teaspoon kosher salt (I used Diamond)

1 cup (226 grams) butter, room temperature

1/2 cup (100 grams) granulated sugar

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

### Optional:

- Seedless raspberry jam, or good-quality apricot jam
- 2 cups (or so) semisweet, bittersweet or milk chocolate chips
- crushed candy canes or peppermint candies

### What You'll Do:

1. In a small bowl, whisk together the flour and salt.
2. With a stand- or hand-mixer, cream the butter and sugar together until light and creamy, 2 to 3 minutes. Scrape down the sides and beaters on occasion.
3. Stir in the melted chocolate and vanilla until the mixture is uniform. Add the flour and salt in two additions, scraping the bowl between each addition. Ja, sure I'm a little obsessive about the scraping down bit, but I don't want you to have a streak of chocolate or pile of flour at the bottom of the bowl.
4. Divide the dough in half, wrap each in cling film and refrigerate for at least an hour.
5. When ready to bake: Heat the oven to 350° F/180°C and line two baking sheets with parchment paper.
6. On a lightly floured pastry board or clean counter, roll the dough 3/8" to 1/4" thick and cut with cookie cutters. (See notes for alternate method of rolling out dough.) Place the cookies on the prepared sheets 1 1/2" apart and refrigerate for 15 minutes. Bake for 8 to 11 minutes until the cookies are just firm to the touch. If you touch the cookie with your finger you shouldn't leave an indent.
7. Cool on rack. When completely cool, you can sandwich them together with jam and dip them in melted chocolate, or dip them in chocolate and sprinkle with crushed peppermint candies, or leave them simple and plain.

8. Store in an airtight container in a cool place where you don't walk by them all the time and feel tempted to try one, just to see how the flavors are developing. Um.