THE CURLY CHEF

GOURMET EGGLESS CHRISTMAS COOKIES
BROWN BUTTER · CRANBERRY · PISTACHIO · ORANGE · WHITE CHOCOLATE

Yield: 12 large cookies (85–90 g each) **Chill:** 12–24 hours
Bake: 175°C conventional, approximately 11–14 minutes

Golden edges, a soft chewy centre, nutty brown-butter depth, tart cranberries, toasted pistachios, fragrant orange and creamy white chocolate. Completely eggless and alcohol-free.

1. Ingredients

A. Brown butter

Ingredient	Quantity
Unsalted butter	180 g
Milk powder	8 g

B. Dry ingredients

Ingredient	Quantity
Plain flour	270 g
Cornflour	12 g
Baking soda	4 g
Baking powder	2 g
Fine sea salt	3 g
Ground cinnamon	2 g
Ground ginger	1 g
Ground nutmeg	0.5 g
Ground cardamom	0.5 g
Ground cloves	0.2 g

C. Cookie base

Ingredient	Quantity
Dark brown sugar	145 g
Caster sugar	65 g
Thick Greek yoghurt, room temperature	55 g
Vanilla extract	6 g
Finely grated orange zest	5 g
Molasses	12 g

D. Festive inclusions

Ingredient	Quantity
Dried cranberries, chopped	80 g
Pistachios, toasted and chopped	65 g
White chocolate couverture, chopped	100 g
Candied orange peel, finely chopped	25 g

E. Finishing

Ingredient	Quantity
Flaky sea salt	As needed, sparingly
Extra white chocolate and pistachios	As needed
Fresh orange zest	A little

2. Equipment and preparation

Equipment: Light-coloured saucepan, heatproof bowl, balloon whisk, silicone spatula, mixing bowls, digital scale, fine grater, baking trays, baking parchment, refrigerator, oven and optional large round metal cutter for shaping hot cookies. No stand mixer is required.

Prepare: Bring yoghurt to room temperature. Toast pistachios at 150°C for 6–8 minutes until fragrant; cool completely and chop. Chop cranberries and candied orange peel evenly. Chop white chocolate into small and medium chunks. Line baking trays with parchment.

Oven: 175°C conventional heat. For a fan oven, begin around 160–165°C and assess with a test cookie; ovens vary.

3. Detailed method

Step 1 — Brown the butter

Place 180 g butter in a light-coloured, heavy-based saucepan over medium-low heat. Melt, then add 8 g milk powder. Stir continuously. The butter will foam; continue until the milk solids turn golden to light hazelnut-brown and smell nutty. Remove immediately from the heat. Pour all the butter and browned solids into a heatproof bowl. Cool until thickened and soft, but not hot or fully solid. Do not discard the browned solids.

Step 2 — Mix the dry ingredients

Whisk plain flour, cornflour, baking soda, baking powder, salt, cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, cardamom and cloves in a separate bowl until evenly distributed.

Step 3 — Make the cookie base

Combine cooled, thickened brown butter with dark brown sugar and caster sugar. Whisk for 1–2 minutes until glossy and even. Add room-temperature Greek yoghurt and whisk until cohesive. Mix in vanilla, orange zest and molasses. Scrape the bowl.

Step 4 — Incorporate flour

Add the dry mixture in two additions. Fold with a silicone spatula, scraping the bottom and sides. Stop as soon as the last dry flour disappears. The dough should be thick and slightly tacky. Do not beat or knead; overmixing can make the cookies tough.

Step 5 — Fold in inclusions

Add cranberries, cooled toasted pistachios, white chocolate and candied orange peel. Fold gently until evenly distributed. Avoid crushing the fruit or smearing the chocolate. Reserve a few chocolate and pistachio pieces for finishing.

Step 6 — Portion and chill

Weigh into 12 portions of approximately 85–90 g. Roll gently into balls without compacting. Place on a parchment-lined tray, cover and refrigerate for 12–24 hours. If the dough is too soft to portion, chill for 20–30 minutes first, then portion and complete the longer chill.

Step 7 — Prepare to bake

Preheat to 175°C conventional. Arrange chilled portions on a lined tray with 7–8 cm between them. Bake in batches and keep remaining dough refrigerated. If your oven is unfamiliar, bake one test cookie first.

Step 8 — Bake

Bake for approximately 11–14 minutes. Edges should be set and golden while centres remain slightly soft and puffy. Do not wait for centres to become firm in the oven; residual heat continues cooking them on the tray.

Step 9 — Shape and finish

Immediately after baking, optionally place a large round cutter around each cookie and gently move it in a circular motion to neaten the edges. Do not press the centre. Add reserved white chocolate and pistachios while warm. Finish with a tiny pinch of flaky salt and a little orange zest.

Step 10 — Cool

Leave on the tray for about 10 minutes so the structure sets. Transfer carefully to a wire rack and cool completely. The finished cookie should have golden edges and a soft, chewy centre.

4. Critical pastry notes

• **Brown butter:** Include the toasted milk solids; stop at golden brown, never black.

• **Butter temperature:** Cool until thickened and soft. Hot butter can make the dough greasy and cause excess spread.

• **Yoghurt:** Use thick, strained Greek yoghurt. Thin or watery yoghurt changes hydration.

• **Mixing:** Fold only until flour disappears. Overmixing can produce a firm, bready cookie.

• **Chilling:** The 12–24-hour rest hydrates the flour and firms the fat, improving flavour and controlling spread.

• **Spacing:** Leave generous room between portions; these are large cookies.

• **Carryover baking:** Remove when edges are set and centres still look soft. The hot tray finishes the bake.

• **Chocolate:** Use good-quality white chocolate couverture or baking chocolate; chunks create distinct pockets.

5. Troubleshooting

Problem	Likely cause and correction
Excessive spread	Butter may have been warm or dough insufficiently chilled. Chill portions thoroughly and verify oven temperature.
Cookies stay too thick	Dough may be very cold or compacted, or oven too cool. Test one cookie and adjust the next batch.
Dry or cakey texture	Likely overbaking, excess flour or overmixing. Weigh accurately, fold gently and remove while centres are soft.
Greasy surface	Brown butter may have been too warm when mixed, or not cooled and thickened sufficiently.
Bitter flavour	Milk solids or spices may have scorched. Brown butter only to golden/hazelnut-brown.
Raw-looking centres after cooling	Bake the next batch 1 minute longer at a time, checking the centre. Do not rely on colour alone.

6. Storage and food-safety notes

Once completely cool, store in an airtight container at room temperature for approximately 3–4 days. Freeze baked cookies, well sealed, for up to 2 months; thaw at room temperature. Portion unbaked dough and freeze for up to 2 months. Bake from frozen, adding approximately 2–3 minutes and checking doneness. Keep refrigerated dough covered to prevent it absorbing odours.

Allergen note: Contains wheat (gluten), dairy and pistachios (tree nuts). Check packaged white chocolate and other ingredients for egg and alcohol-containing flavourings, and for cross-contamination.

Recipe identity: Completely eggless and alcohol-free. Greek yoghurt is the binder; do not replace it with ordinary runny yoghurt without adjusting the formula.