

## Cloud Cookies—Tasty Meringue Magic

By Linda Butler

Whipping egg whites is like magic! The whites of two large eggs, a scant  $\frac{1}{4}$  c liquid, can whip into more than two cups of creamy foamy whiteness. Making Cloud Cookies can teach your kids about clouds, egg protein, and patience.

The main ingredient of Cloud Cookies is whipped egg whites. We'll talk more about this later, but first, let's start cooking!

### Making Cloud Cookies

Ingredients:

Whites from 2 large eggs, room temperature

$\frac{1}{4}$  tsp cream of tartar

$\frac{1}{8}$  tsp vanilla

$\frac{1}{2}$  c sugar

$\frac{1}{2}$  c chocolate chips

$\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$  c chopped walnuts

Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper. Preheat your oven to 300 degrees.

Whip the egg whites (high speed) and cream of tartar until they form stiff peaks. This may take up to 5 minutes. Turn the mixer speed down about half and whip in the vanilla and sugar, adding it in a very slow stream. By hand, fold in the chocolate chips and the nuts. Drop by rounded tablespoons onto the prepared cookie sheet. They can be placed close together because they don't spread while in the oven.

Put the cookies into the oven. **TURN OFF OVEN.**



Here's where patience comes in. The cookies need to sit in the oven for 2-3 hours. Remove from oven then let them cool to room temperature before eating. They're best if the chocolate chips are completely cool. Cloud cookies should be white and firm on the outside and slightly soft and chewy in the center. There can be a bit of variation between softness and brittleness, depending on your oven and the humidity. These are best made in small batches and eaten within 24-48 hours of making.

While your cookies are in the oven is a great time to learn some new things!

### Learn about Clouds

Take a look outside—there are nearly always clouds in the sky. They're made up of tiny droplets of water that are suspended in the sky. A large fluffy cloud may hold barely enough water to fill your

bathtub! Learn more about clouds here: <https://www.plgrove.org/library/docs/clouds.pdf> Once you know the basic cloud forms you can “read” the sky whenever you look up!

### **Eggs’ Wonderful Whites!**

Eggs come from birds and all eggs, whether from tiny hummingbirds or giant ostriches, are made of three parts—the hard calcium carbonate shell, the round yellow yolk, and the slimy clear substance we call the egg white.

Fresh raw egg whites are nearly clear. Cook them and they become white and rubbery. Whip them and they become white and fluffy. How does this happen?

Egg whites are mostly water (about 90%) and protein (10%.) Inside the egg, these proteins are folded chains. When they’re heated or whipped these chains of protein soften and begin to unfold. As you continue to whip the egg whites tiny air bubbles are added to the mix and are enfolded by the soft proteins. These proteins are rather fragile, so adding a bit of cream of tartar to the unbeaten egg whites helps the them get foamy quickly and maintain their foamy fluffiness. Cream of tartar is a powder, not a cream, which has a scientific name of *potassium bitartrate*. It’s an acidic salt that comes from processing grapes into wine or juice. It’s kind of like a power drink that helps those unfolded egg proteins maintain their strength and flexibility.

Even with cream of tartar, whipped egg whites used in Cloud Cookies, meringue pies, or souffles, only hold the air for a short period of time. Baking or cooking the whipped egg whites strengthens the protein bonds so that they solidify and the cookies maintain their puffy cloudlike shapes. (And it’s best to cook or bake eggs before you eat them.)

### **Leftover Egg Yolks**

The two leftover egg yolks can be stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 3 days. Sprinkle a few drops of water on the yolks to keep them from drying out.

Since today, May 22, is National Vanilla Pudding Day, you could use the two leftover egg yolks in this recipe.

### **Vanilla Pudding—serves 4**

1/3 c sugar  
2 Tbsp corn starch  
1/8 tsp salt  
2 c milk  
2 yolks from large eggs, slightly beaten  
2 Tbsp softened butter  
2 tsp vanilla

Mix sugar, cornstarch and salt in a 2-qt saucepan. Gradually stir in milk. Cook over medium heat until mixture thickens and boils. Stir 4-5 spoonfulls, one at a time, of the hot mixture into the egg yolks, then pour this back into the saucepan and boil one minute. Remove from heat and stir in butter and vanilla. Pour into 4 dessert dishes and refrigerate until chilled, about an hour.

### **Pudding Trivia**

Puddings have been around for hundreds of years. Remember the line, “Now bring us some figgy pudding...” from the song, “We Wish You a Merry Christmas?” Figgy pudding was actually more like a porridge, made from bread crumbs, eggs, suet (beef fat), and dried figs or other fruit.

In America and much of Europe, a pudding is generally a sweet, smooth custardy dessert. A French pudding, or boudin, is actually a sausage.

A traditional English Yorkshire Pudding isn’t a pudding at all! It’s more like a savory popover made from eggs, milk, flour and roast beef drippings.

In Barbados, Pudding and Souse is a sausage made from herbed sweet potato accompanied by pickled pork.

The Pleasant Grove Library has some great books to help continue your cooking adventures: “The Star Wars Cookbook” by Robin Davis; “Teen Chef Cooks” by Eliana De Las Casas, “Kids Cook 1-2-3” by Rozanne Gold; “Good Housekeeping Kids Cook!” by Good Housekeeping; “Cooking Class Global Feast!” by Deanna F. Cook.