

Name: _____

Class: _____

A Sweet Invention

By Tracy Vonder Brink
2022

In this informational text, Tracy Vonder Brink explains how a popular treat came to be. As you read, take notes on how people learned about Ruth's cookies.

- [1] Ruth Wakefield wanted a cookie, but not just any cookie. Ruth wanted something new. Something different. And she was just the person to create¹ it.

In the 1930s, Ruth and her husband owned the Toll House restaurant in Whitman, Massachusetts. Toll House was a well-known stop on the way between Boston and Cape Cod. Actors, singers, and other celebrities of the time all ate there. Ruth was in charge of the restaurant's great food.

Ruth had studied cooking in college, and she was good at it. People said that all Ruth had to do was taste a dish, and then she could make it without even looking at a recipe.² She was always learning and trying new things. Every January, Ruth and her husband took a trip overseas to try foods in different countries, such as France and Egypt.



"Untitled" by Shakti Rajpurohit is licensed under CC0.

Toll House was especially known for its desserts. Ruth made lemon meringue pie, Boston cream pie, and gingerbread. The restaurant served a thin butterscotch cookie, but Ruth wanted to create something brand-new. On the way home from one of their trips overseas, she planned out a new recipe.

- [5] At that time, chocolate was used in desserts, but it was always melted and mixed in. What if Ruth could use chocolate a different way? She thought back to a college class on cooking where she learned how foods work together. She also recalled her past experiments with chocolate.

Back home, Ruth ordered bars of semi-sweet chocolate from the grocery store. Then she used an ice pick to break the chocolate bars into pieces and added the bits to cookie dough. She tried batch³ after batch until she had one she liked. Ruth named her new cookie the Chocolate Crunch Cookie.

1. **Create (verb)** to make or invent
2. **Recipe (noun)** a list of materials and steps to follow to make a food
3. an amount of something created at one time

Chocolate Crunch Cookies were a hit! Customers at her restaurant loved them so much they asked her to make them at home. They shared the cookies with their friends. People wrote to Ruth and asked her for the recipe. She was happy to give it to them.

Ruth's cookies grew even more famous after she was invited on a radio show to talk about them. Then the recipe was printed in the newspaper. The cookies were so popular that the chocolate bar company saw their sales go up 500% in the region⁴ where Ruth lived! In 1939, the company asked Ruth if they could use her recipe and the Toll House name on their chocolate bars. Ruth agreed.

Everyone who made the cookies from Ruth's recipe had to break up the chocolate bars the way Ruth did. It wasn't always easy — Ruth's daughter remembered her mother's hands turning red and sore from chopping up chocolate when making a big batch of cookies for the restaurant. Then, in 1940, the chocolate bar company made chocolate chips for the first time and put them on sale with Ruth's recipe on the bag.

[10] Nobody had seen anything like chocolate chip cookies. Other companies began making their own chocolate chips and cookies. Chocolate chip cookie mix appeared on store shelves. Ruth's cookies became popular and stayed that way. Chocolate chip cookies are still named as one of people's favorite types of cookies.

Ruth retired⁵ in 1967 and sold her restaurant. Today, the Toll House name and Ruth's recipe still appear on bags of chocolate chips and on chocolate chip cookie products. Her skill at cooking and experimenting with new tastes gave us one of our favorite treats. The next time you enjoy a chocolate chip cookie, thank Ruth Wakefield.

"A Sweet Invention" by Tracy Vonder Brink. Copyright © 2022 by CommonLit, Inc. This text is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

Unless otherwise noted, this content is licensed under the [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/)

-
4. **Region** (*noun*) an area of land
 5. **Retire** (*verb*) to stop working