

Here's a recipe for cookies similar to what Bethany Harrison makes for her husband Josh in *The Road to Mercy*. This version is actually more like what Alex Hayes, another character in the book, would bake... they're gluten free and low-sodium. There's no shortage of chocolate in either version!

Although I've never made these cookies using wheat flour, the recipe should convert easily by substituting the same amount.

Chocolate Chip Pizzazz Cookies

12 oz. bag of semi-sweet chocolate chips
1 ½ cups multi-purpose gluten free flour
½ tsp. sodium free baking powder
1 stick unsalted butter, softened
½ cup *roasted* or *raw* almond butter
¼ cup firmly picked organic light brown sugar *
1 tsp. pure vanilla extract
1 egg
½ - ¾ cup slivered almonds
About 2 cups bittersweet chocolate chips
Organic turbinado sugar crystals

In a glass measuring cup, melt the semi-sweet chocolate chips in the microwave. Stir and set aside. **

Line cookie sheet with parchment paper. Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Sift flour and baking powder together in a small bowl and set aside.

In a separate bowl, combine softened butter, almond butter, and brown sugar. Beat on low for about two minutes, scraping the side of the bowl as needed. Beat on high for an additional five minutes, scraping as needed. Add vanilla, egg, and melted chocolate; mix thoroughly.

Fold in flour mixture; add the slivered almonds and chocolate chips and mix well.

Drop batter by rounded and compacted tablespoons onto parchment paper. Gently mash each "cookie" with a fork and sprinkle with a smidgen*** of turbinado sugar. Bake for 25 minutes, turning pan, back to front, halfway through baking. *Note: Keep a towel over the remaining batter so it will remain moist until you're ready to use it.*

Take the pan out of the oven and let the cookies cool for a few minutes before carefully removing to a rack to cool completely.

Store in an airtight container. Makes approximately 30 cookies.

* For sweeter cookies, use an additional $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (or a total of $\frac{1}{2}$ cup) packed brown sugar.

** The microwave works fine for my purposes, but some chocolate purists prefer to melt chocolate chips in a double boiler.

*** You can buy measuring spoons for a *pinch*, *smidgen*, and *dash*. If you don't have these, sprinkle each cookie with sugar to taste. The sugar topping adds the "pizzazz" to the cookies.