

A Chip off the Old Block

As Carol's Cookies introduces its newest flavor, toffee crunch, we take a moment to deconstruct what may be the official cookie of the North Shore. By Maggie Allen

That's 7 ounces of 100-percent-pure cookie you're salivating at right there. Not some malnourished 2-ounce factory-formed imposter you can buy off the shelves at Jewel.

Granted, the shape's not perfect. It's got hills and valleys and is far from being a perfect circle, but that's because it was made the old-fashioned way, kneaded and baked by human hands in a family-run factory in Highland Park.

That's the only way Carol Goldman, founder of the Highland Park-based Carol's Cookies, knows how to make them — carefully yet imperfectly.

When she was young, her mom, who had the patience needed to properly frost cakes and create perfectly molded desserts, put little Carol on cookie duty. A 7-ounce mound of dough slapped onto a cookie sheet was just fine with her as long as the taste wasn't compromised.

So years later, when Carol, on a lark, started selling chocolate-chip and oatmeal-raisin cookies at a snack bar at a gym called The Firm in Highland Park (hey, it was the '80s — oatmeal was good for you, no matter how much butter and sugar it came with), that's the way they remained: big, tasty and imperfectly shaped. Working out of her home kitchen in Highland Park, business really got going when she began selling her cookies to Sunset Foods. Quickly, she ran out of space. She moved to a facility by Highway 41 and then, six years ago, to a bigger space on Old Deerfield Road. But that's only one interesting little tidbit. Carol's got a baker's dozen more. Grab a big glass of milk and enjoy.

For more information on Carol's Cookies, visit www.carolscookies.com, or call 847/831-4500.

HEIGHT 1 1/2"



COOKIE CRUMBLES:

THE TEAM AT CAROL'S COOKIES FINDS INSPIRATION FOR NEW FLAVORS IN THE STRANGEST OF PLACES. A BOX OF DRIED CHERRIES SENT FROM CAROL'S COUSIN IN TRAVERSE CITY, MICH., RESULTED IN THEIR CHOCOLATE CHERRY COOKIE. THEIR SNICKERDOODLE-LIKE CINNAMON SWIRL COOKIE, ON THE OTHER HAND, WAS BORN WHEN ONE OF THE BAKERS, IN AN ACT OF KEEBLES-LIKE CAPRICE, DECIDED TO TOSS SOME CINNAMON INTO A BATCH. THEY TASTED. THEY LIKED. IT STAYED.

NOT ALL OF CAROL'S COOKIES LIVE LONG, FRUITFUL LIVES. SOME ARE FORCED INTO EARLY RETIREMENT. DUE TO LACKLUSTER SALES, HER M&M, CAPPUCCINO-CHIP AND CHOLESTEROL-FREE OAT-BRAN COOKIES HAVE ALL GONE TO THAT GREAT BIG COFFEE MUG IN THE SKY. BUT IT SHOULD BE NOTED, THOSE OAT-BRAN COOKIES DID SELL VERY WELL IN HOSPITAL GIFT SHOPS.

YOU WON'T FIND THESE THREE FLAVORS IN ANY OF CAROL'S COOKIE TINS: LEMON, MINT OR MOLASSES. SHE HATES THOSE FLAVORS. BUT WHEN VOGGES HAUT-CHOCOLAT ASKED HER TO MAKE THEM A WHITE-CHOCOLATE COOKIE MADE WITH LAVENDER AND LEMON UNDERTONES, SHE RELENDED. HEY, IT WAS FOR VOGGES, RIGHT?



DIAMETER 4 3/4"

CAROL'S COOKIES ARE EVERYWHERE; OFTEN THEY'RE JUST NOT LABELED. CAROL'S CHOCOLATE-CHIP COOKIES ARE USED IN THOSE FAMOUS "COOKIE IN A BOWL" DESSERTS SERVED AT R.J. GRUNTS AND PJ CLARKE'S. ALL THE GHIRARDELLI CHOCOLATE SHOPS SELL THEM, AS DOES, BELIEVE IT OR NOT, MARG' CHEESE CASTLE IN KENOSHA.

THE SMALL COMPANY GOT A BOOST WHEN PEOPLE MAGAZINE

RANKED THEM THE FOURTH-BEST COOKIE IN THE NATION IN 1983, BEHIND THE LIKES OF MRS. FIELDS AND FAMOUS AMONG.

IN 1982, WHEN GOLDMAN BEGAN THIS LITTLE ENTERPRISE FROM HER HOME KITCHEN IN HIGHLAND PARK, SHE BAKED ABOUT 300 COOKIES A WEEK. THIS YEAR, CAROL'S COOKIES WILL PRODUCE APPROXIMATELY ONE MILLION COOKIES. THAT'S 19,230 EACH WEEK, ALL KNEADED AND BAKED BY HAND.