

SCIENCE IN THE KITCHEN

by Alysa Dudley

At a recent homeschool Brownie troop meeting we had fun studying science in the kitchen. First we made two batches of brownies from a mix. The directions called for 1 or 2 eggs. We decided to put one egg in one batch and two eggs in the 2nd batch. We put those into the oven while we proceeded with a cookie experiment.

We had decided ahead of time to make 2 batches of chocolate chip cookies, divide each batch in half and do something different with each one. First we made some strictly according to the original Toll House Cookie recipe. In the second batch we put twice the amount of baking soda that the recipe called for. Because we were splitting the recipe, we had to cut the recipe in half for each bowl before making any changes. We had the girls go around the kitchen table taking turns with putting in ingredients, mixing, and putting the cookies on cookie sheets. After each girl took her turn, she moved around the circle and the next girl got to participate.

While we cleaned up and got ready for the second round of mixing, the girls watched the cookies bake, and appropriately "oohed" and "ahhed" in unison as the cookies came out of the oven. In the second go-round, we made a batch with no salt, and the last batch with 1/2 the sugar in the recipe.

After all the baking and most of the cleanup was done, we sat down to eat milk and cookies and brownies. Of course, everyone liked the regular batch. The batch with extra baking soda tasted a little bit funny but some people couldn't tell the difference. It was interesting to see that the batch with 1/2 the sugar tasted sweeter to some of the girls, was more "cakey" and more buttery. Since sugar melts and makes the whole cookie flatter, leaving out 1/2 the sugar, we found, makes the cookie rise a bit more. Most of the girls agreed that the batch without the salt tasted the worst. We learned that the salt was an important ingredient because it is necessary to react with the baking soda.

As for the brownies (the edible ones that is), one batch was fudgy and the other batch was more cake-like. We learned that the batch with only one egg came out more fudgy. We were able to accomplish all this in about 2 hours with ten girls participating. I think everyone had a good time and went home full of sweets and some knowledge.