

# Mary DeMarco's Chocolate Oatmeal Cookies



For years, Springsong weekend has been a highlight for the DeMarco family—Jerry and Anne (Bell) and their kids Kestrel and Castilleja. They've won the Botham Cup five times, as J&K Rolling and Empty Nesters. "We not only enjoyed the birding and banquet fun on the island," writes Jerry, "but also the associated visit with my mother on the Essex County mainland for Mother's Day. Some of you may recognize her name, Mary DeMarco, from the Nature Conservancy of Canada sign on the north side of Browns Road."

With his mother's recent passing at the age of 94, that annual ritual has come to end. In commemoration, Jerry offers one of her simple recipes. "Raising 12 children was not conducive to her using overly complicated ones!"

## INGREDIENTS

**½ CUP** regular or vegan margarine

**⅓-½ CUP** cocoa

**2 CUPS** sugar

**½ CUP** milk or dairy substitute

Dash salt

**½ TSP** vanilla

**3 TO 4 CUPS** quick-cooking oats

## METHOD

Melt margarine in a saucepan over medium heat. Stirring constantly, add cocoa, sugar, milk, and salt.

Continue to stir as the mixture comes to a boil. Once at a full rolling boil, continue to stir for at least 2 minutes.

Take off the heat and mix in vanilla, then oatmeal to desired consistency. (Some versions substitute one cup of the oats for unsweetened coconut.) Stir well.

Drop large spoonfuls of the mixture onto a cookie sheet covered in waxed paper and cool in refrigerator before serving.

Can be stored in the refrigerator or a cookie tin. In either case, the cookies probably won't last because they will be too irresistible!

**NOTE:** Timing is everything with these no-bake cookies. Boil too little and they'll be a sticky mess; too much and they'll crumble like fudge. The goal is for the chocolate mix to reach the "soft ball stage" of candy-making (235-240°F) before adding the oats. After boiling 2 minutes, drop a dab of cocoa mixture into a glass of cold water. If it forms a soft squishy ball, it is ready. If still thready, boil a little longer. If it forms a hard, cracking ball, you've gone too far. If you bake on a humid or rainy day, boil times may be longer!