

- Prep Time: 20 minutes
 - Cook Time: 15-18 minutes
 - Chill Time: 30 minutes (optional, but recommended)
 - Total Time: 1 hour 5 minutes
 - Skill Level: Easy
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Why This Recipe Works

- **Toasted Pecans:** Toasting the pecans before chopping is non-negotiable. It awakens their oils and deepens their flavor, transforming them from a simple nut to a star ingredient.
 - **Powdered Sugar:** Using powdered (confectioner's) sugar instead of granulated creates that signature, impossibly tender, "sandy" texture. It dissolves easily and prevents graininess.
 - **The Butter:** This recipe relies on high-quality, unsalted butter. It's the primary flavor, so use the best you can find. We'll also chill the dough, which prevents the cookies from spreading too much in the oven, ensuring they stay thick and crumbly.
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Ingredients

For the Cookies:

- 1 cup (2 sticks / 227g) unsalted butter, at room temperature
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (90g) powdered sugar
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons pure vanilla extract

- 2 cups (250g) all-purpose flour
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup (120g) pecan halves, toasted and finely chopped

For Rolling (Optional but Recommended):

- ½ cup (100g) granulated sugar
 - ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon (optional, for a spiced twist)
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Equipment

- Baking sheets
- Parchment paper or silicone baking mats
- Electric mixer (hand or stand)
- Mixing bowls

- Whisk
 - Knife and cutting board
 - Measuring cups and spoons
 - Wire cooling rack
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Step-by-Step Instructions

Part 1: Preparation (Time: 10 minutes | Intensity: Low)

1. **Toast the Pecans:** Preheat your oven to 350°F (175°C). Spread the pecan halves in a single layer on a baking sheet. Toast for 5-7 minutes, until fragrant and slightly darkened. Be careful not to burn them! Remove from the oven and let them cool completely. Once cool, chop them finely. You can use a food processor for a finer chop, but be careful not to turn them into a paste. A few larger pieces are fine for texture.
2. **Prepare for Baking:** Line two baking sheets with parchment paper or silicone mats. Set aside.
3. **Combine Dry Ingredients:** In a medium bowl, whisk together the all-purpose flour and salt. Set aside.

Part 2: Making the Dough (Time: 10 minutes | Intensity: Medium)

4. Cream the Butter and Sugar: In a large bowl using an electric mixer, beat the room-temperature butter and powdered sugar on medium speed until light and fluffy, about 2-3 minutes. Scrape down the sides of the bowl as needed.
5. Add the Vanilla: Beat in the vanilla extract until well combined.
6. Incorporate the Dry Ingredients: With the mixer on low speed, gradually add the flour mixture to the butter mixture. Mix just until the flour is incorporated and the dough comes together. Do not overmix, as this will develop the gluten and make the cookies tough.
7. Fold in the Pecans: Using a spatula or wooden spoon, gently fold in the chopped toasted pecans until they are evenly distributed throughout the dough.

Part 3: Shaping and Chilling (Time: 15 minutes + 30 minutes chilling | Intensity: Low)

8. Shape the Cookies: Scoop rounded tablespoons of dough (about 1 inch in diameter) and roll them into balls.
9. Chill the Dough (Highly Recommended): Place the dough balls on a plate or baking sheet and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes. This step is crucial for preventing spread and ensuring a thick, crumbly texture.

10. Prepare the Rolling Sugar: While the dough chills, combine the granulated sugar and cinnamon (if using) in a small bowl.

Part 4: Baking and Finishing (Time: 15-18 minutes | Intensity: Low)

11. Preheat and Roll: Preheat your oven to 325°F (165°C). Roll each chilled dough ball in the cinnamon-sugar mixture until fully coated. Place them on the prepared baking sheets, about 2 inches apart.
 12. Bake: Bake for 15-18 minutes, or until the edges are just barely beginning to turn a light golden brown. The centers may still look soft. This is perfect.
 13. Cool: Let the cookies cool on the baking sheet for 5-10 minutes. This allows them to set up properly. Then, transfer them to a wire cooling rack to cool completely.
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Recipe Notes & Tips

- The Chill is Key: Don't skip chilling the dough. It solidifies the butter, which is the number one trick to prevent these buttery cookies from spreading into flat, crispy puddles.
- Don't Overbake: Pecan Sandies should be pale and tender. If they look done in the center, they're overbaked. Pull them when the edges are just set and barely colored.

- **Nut Variations:** While pecans are classic, you can substitute them with an equal amount of toasted walnuts or hazelnuts for a different flavor profile.
 - **Storage:** Store these cookies in an airtight container at room temperature for up to a week. They also freeze beautifully for up to 3 months.
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Nutrition Information (Estimated)

Per Cookie (based on 30 cookies):

- **Calories:** 145
- **Total Fat:** 10g
- **Saturated Fat:** 5g
- **Trans Fat:** 0g
- **Cholesterol:** 20mg
- **Sodium:** 40mg
- **Total Carbohydrates:** 13g

- Dietary Fiber: 1g

- Total Sugars: 6g

- Protein: 1g