Frequently asked questions:

1. **Define cookies and how it is different from cakes?**

Ans: The word cookie means "small cake". Most cookie formulas has less liquid than cake formulas. Cookie doughs range from soft to very stiff, unlike the thinner batters for cakes. This difference in moisture content means some differences in mixing methods, although the basic procedures are much like those for cakes. The most obvious differences between cakes and cookies are in makeup. Cookies means any flat, crisp, baked good and are also referred as small cakes. They are rich in sugar and shortening but low in water.

2. **Explain role of eggs and shortening in cookies?**

Ans: Shortening: Regular hydrogenated fat with a bland flavor gives good result. Butter and vegetable shortening imparts better paste to the cookies. Fat due to its shortening or mellowing action on gluten helps in promoting the spread.

Eggs: Eggs impart structure, flavor and taste. Eggs in large amounts, results more rise to the cookies than spread. Egg yolks produce a tender cookie than whole eggs, but adjustment has to be made with little extra liquid either by adding water or milk or both.

3. **What are the precautions to be taken for making cookies?**

Ans: Cookie dough should be mixed just enough to blend the ingredients homogenously. Improper mixing of ingredients will produce cookies that are spotted.

1. If sugar and shortening are creamed too much, this will reduce the size of sugar crystals. The finer (smaller) crystals or dissolved sugar checks spreading, resulting in smaller and compact cookies.
2. Cookies should be placed far enough apart on the pans to avoid sticking during baking. Sticking produces ragged edges and excess breakage and appearance is spoiled.
3. If the cookie dough is cut thick, the finished cookie will loose the appearance and the flavor.
4. When the pans are greased, the cookie will spread more. To retard spreading, dust the pans with flour after they are greased.
5. Pans used for cookies should be cooled as warm pans will melt the fat in the cookies resulting in inferior products.
6. If cookie dough is made up ahead of time and stored in a cool place, then these doughs should be made little softer as these will tighten up during storage. Such doughs can be handled more easily giving the finished products more tenderness.

7. In order to obtain the best results, cookies should be removed from the oven while they are still soft as they will continue to bake on hot pans.

8. To avoid chances of breakage, cookies should be removed from the pans when they are still little warm.

9. If raisins and currants are used for toppings, they should be soaked in malt solution (1 part malt + 10 parts water). This will help prevent them from being burnt.

4. **List the characteristics of cookies?**

Ans Crispness, softness, chewiness and spread are the desired characteristics of cookies.

5. **What are the factors that contribute to spread of the cookies?**

Ans: Spread is desirable in some cookies, while others must hold their shape. Several factors contribute to spread or the lack of it. These are as follows:

1. High sugar content increases spread. Coarse granulated sugar increases spread, while fine sugar or confectioners' sugar reduces spread.
2. High baking soda or baking ammonia content encourages spread.
3. Low oven temperature increases spread. High temperature decreases the spread.
4. Strong flour or activation of gluten decreases spread.
5. Cookies spread more if baked on heavily greased pans.

6. **Explain briefly the factors which contribute to chewiness of cookies?**

Ans: Moisture is essential for chewiness, but other factors are also important. The following factors contribute to chewiness:

1. High sugar and liquid content, but low fat content.
2. High proportion of eggs.
3. Strong flour or gluten developed during mixing.

7. **What are the cookies mixing method?**

Ans: Cookie mixing methods are similar to cake mixing methods. The major difference is that less liquid is incorporated,thus mixing is easier. Less liquid means gluten is less developed by the mixing. Hence, easier to get a smooth and uniform mix.

There are three basic cookie mixing methods:

A. One-stage.

B. Creaming.

C. Sponge.

8. **What are the procedures for one stage method? Why one stage method is not used frequently for making cookies?**

Ans: One-Stage Method: In this method there is more liquid in cake batters, so it must be added in two or more stages in order to blend uniformly. Low moisture cookies, on the other hand, can be mixed all in one stage. As all the ingredients are mixed at once, the baker has less control with this method than with other methods. Therefore, the one-stage method is not frequently used. When over mixing is not a great problem, as with some chewy cookies, this method is preferred.

9. **How does creaming affect the texture and shape of cookies?**

Ans: Creaming method is similar as for cakes. As, cookies require less liquid, it is not essential to add the liquid alternately with the flour. It is be added together at once.

Creaming is very important as it affects the texture, leavening, and the spread of the cookies. Only a small amount of creaming is desired when the cookie must retain its shape and not spread too much.

10. **What are the steps involved in sponge method for cookies preparation?**

Ans: This method is similar to the egg-foam methods for cakes. The procedure varies considerably, depending on the ingredients. Each batch should be kept small because the batter is delicate. The steps involved are as follows:

1. Weigh all the ingredients accurately which should be kept at room temperature, or warm the eggs slightly for greater volume, as done for sponge cakes.
2. Follow the procedure as per the formula. Whip the eggs (whole, yolks, or whites) and the sugar to the proper stage: soft peaks for whites, thick and light for whole eggs or yolks.
3. Then fold in the remaining ingredients as specified in the recipe, avoiding over or under mixing.

11. **Mention the basic procedures for producing cookie types?**

Ans: Bagged, dropped, rolled, molded, icebox, bar, sheet and stencil

12. **What is the difference between the bagged and dropped cookies?**

Ans: Bagged or Pressed cookies are made from soft doughs. The dough must be soft enough to be forced through a pastry bag but stiff enough to hold its shape.

Like bagged cookies, dropped cookies are made from soft dough. This method is considered the same as the bagged method, and many bakers use the term drop for both bagging out cookies and for depositing dough with a spoon or scoop. This method is opted for cookies, when the dough contains pieces of fruit, nuts, or chocolate that would clog the pastry tube.

13. **How rolled cookie dough is different from dropped?**

Ans: Rolled cookies are rolled and cut from stiff dough. Dough is chilled thoroughly.

Cookies are cut with cookies cutters. The freshly cut cookies are placed on prepared baking sheets. Decorations can be applied before baking, like brushing the tops with egg wash and sprinkle with colored sugars. After baking, cutout cookies are often decorated with colored icing (royal icing, flat icing, or fondant). Cookies has to be completely cooled before applying icing.

14. **What is the best method to retain freshly baked cookies at all time?**

Ans: The icebox or refrigerator method is ideal to have freshly baked cookies. The rolls of dough can be prepared in advance and stored. Cookies are prepared and baked as needed. This method is used to make multicolored cookies in various designs, such as checkerboard and pinwheel cookies.

15. **How cooling and storage are important for good quality cookies?**

Ans: Cookies baked without silicone paper must be removed from the pans while they are still warm, or they may stick. If the cookies are very soft, they should not be removed from the pans until they are cool enough and firm enough to handle. Some cookies are soft when hot but become crisp when cool.

Soft cookies, such as bar cookies, are stored in a container with a tight lid. If they tend to dry out, add a slice of apple to the container. Crisp cookies should be stored in a container with a loose lid, like a cookie jar. If there is a lot of humidity a piece of bread should be added to the container. The bread helps to absorb the moisture.