Maize and Peanut Cookies

A crunchy-edged, tender-center cookie that marries Zambia's love
of maize and groundnuts with a familiar American peanut-butter cookie—
warm, kid-friendly, and impossible to resist.

Country, Zambia
Serves 24 cookies

Prep Time: 15 minutes / Inactive Time: 30 minutes (chill) / Cook Time: 12–14 minutes

Dry — Ingredients
1 C all-purpose flour
½ C fine maize meal (cornmeal)
1 t baking soda
½ t kosher salt
Wet — Ingredients
1 C creamy peanut butter
½ C salted butter, softened
¾ C granulated sugar
½ C packed light brown sugar
1 large egg
1 t vanilla extract

Optional Mix-Ins — Ingredients
½ C roasted peanuts, roughly chopped (optional)
2 T honey or golden syrup (optional, for extra chew)

Method

Whisk 1 C flour, ½ C maize meal, 1 t baking soda, and ½ t kosher salt in a bowl and set aside.
Beat 1 C peanut butter and ½ C softened salted butter until smooth; add ¾ C granulated sugar and ½ C brown sugar and beat until light.
Add 1 large egg and 1 t vanilla extract and mix until combined; stir in 2 T honey if using.
Fold dry ingredients into the wet mixture until just combined; stir in ½ C chopped roasted peanuts if using.
Cover dough and chill 30 minutes to firm up for easier shaping.
Preheat oven to 350°F and line baking sheets with parchment.
Scoop rounded tablespoons of dough and place 2 in apart on prepared sheets; flatten slightly with the back of a fork in a crisscross pattern.
Bake 12–14 minutes until edges are golden and centers are set; cool on the sheet 5 minutes, then transfer to a rack to cool completely.

Cook's note
Use creamy peanut butter for the classic texture; if your peanut butter is very salty, reduce added salt elsewhere. For chewier cookies, include the 2 T honey and bake at the lower end of the time range.

Peanuts (groundnuts) *are a beloved pantry hero across Zambia—roasted, ground into sauces, folded into stews, and celebrated at markets and family tables. Pretty much, anything you do to a peanut is alright in Zambia as well as in my house!*

These cookies are a playful, family-friendly way to bring that warm, nutty connection into an You'll love this little Zambian wink in every bite.

Cultural note
Maize and groundnuts are foundational ingredients in Zambian cooking; combining them in a sweet cookie keeps the flavors approachable for kids while honoring this country's everyday tastes.