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Two Greenwich friends team up to make a 'real' cookie that is both healthy AND delicious

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GREENWICH — Everyone loves cookies, but not everyone loves the processed sugar and the unpronounceable ingredients that come with a lot of today's baked goods.

And some people become downright ill while munching the often grain- and dairy-laden treats.

Enter REAL Cookies, a new company started by two Greenwich women that represents a full three years of stirring, baking and returning to the almond flour-dusted drawing board to create a treat that was both tasty and good for you.

“Everything is from the Earth. It’s real,” said Marla Felton, a former attorney who started the business with her longtime friend Lauren Berger. “But when people eat it, they have no idea it’s a healthy cookie. It tastes ... like a cookie!”

Felton and Berger, who formerly worked at Godiva and Pepperidge Farm and founded her own City Girl Country Girl cookie company, first lit on the idea of starting their own cookie business during family get-togethers. The pair, who enjoyed cooking nutritious but delicious fare for their loved ones, found that they required 10 different desserts to cover everyone’s tastes.



“We’re more and more careful about what we’re eating,” said Berger. “One was gluten-free. One was grain-free. One didn’t eat dairy.”

Armed with information on dietary restrictions and modern strategies for healthy living, the pair started “baking and baking and baking,” enlisting about 25 friends and family members to join in the effort as an informal tasting panel.

“There was no shortage of people who wanted to try them,” Berger said.

Three years later, they have created a line of cookies that are consistently getting an unabashed thumbs-up from everyone who has ever tried them, Felton said.

Made with non-GMO ingredients, REAL Cookies are also gluten-free, grain-free, dairy-free, vegan, kosher and paleo-friendly — practically every special category you can think of. The pair took pains to not add empty replacements, such as tapioca starch, to fill the void of gluten in their baked goods.





Sweetened with pure Vermont maple syrup instead of refined sugar, the cookies are made with almond and coconut flours, which also add a mild sweetness to the batter. The healthy cookies now come in three flavors: chocolate chip, peanut butter chocolate chip and lemon blueberry.

Felton and Berger consider the cookies to be an appropriate anytime treat that is equally at home on the breakfast table, in a gym pack for a post-practice pick-me-up or on a dessert tray.

Unveiled earlier this month, the cookies are available in single-serve two-packs and boxes of 12 single-serve packs at the REAL Cookies website at realcookiesco.com and Amazon.com. The creators are now in talks to bring their products to grocery shelves across the area soon.

As the company develops, they hope to support positive community efforts, said Felton, who is executive director at Common Circles, a nonprofit providing interactive experiences to improve intergroup relations and increase empathy and respect.

Berger and Felton are especially pleased with the packaging for the cookies, which features images of water, mountains and “yoga bears” in healthful stretches.

Berger, a yoga instructor, said she hope the packaging offers a gentle reminder to customers to indulge wisely.

“We make hundreds of little decisions each day,” she said. “We hope our super-cute yoga bears are a reminder to make the best ones.”

