

My Favorite Invention: The Measuring Cup & Spoons!

I can't remember when I started baking, but I can remember that baking has always brought me pleasure and happiness. Every time I mix that batter, knead that dough, or get a whiff of that finished pastry, I'm filled with great delight! Baking is definitely not for everyone—it requires a great deal of patience, precision, and passion. You have to love what you're doing, follow the steps in the recipe, and do it well.

Patience and passion for baking is a quality that you either have or don't have, but precision is something that everyone can have. One essential tool in baking that is also my favorite invention is that of the measuring cup and spoons. Not only do they provide precision for each recipe, but they also allow bakers repetition of their recipes and ability to share these new recipes with others.

Invented in 1879 by Fannie Farmer, the measuring cup and spoons provided new methods for measuring various ingredients. Before 1879, no measurements were invented to fit under and between the ounce and the pint. Farmer first studied the units scientists used in order to measure solids and liquids. She also studied the techniques they used to make these measurements. After that, she averaged a fist, lump, and bit to eventually decide on actual measurements, which became the measuring cup and spoons.

The measuring cup is used primarily to measure the volume of such liquids as water, milk, and juice, but can also be used to measure the volume of dry ingredients including flour, sugar, and bulked ingredients like chocolate chips. Having a capacity of usually two cups or five hundred milliliter, the measuring cup also includes a capacity

line for ingredients measured in ounces. The cup ranges from a fourth of a cup, half of a cup, two thirds of a cup, and three fourths of a cup.

Measuring spoons are used to hold smaller volumes of liquids including vanilla extract, almond extract, and water; and dry ingredients such as baking powder, cinnamon, and nutmeg. Like the measuring cup, they could be made from plastic, metal, or other materials. Measuring spoons also usually come in a set of four spoons including a fourth of a teaspoon, a half a teaspoon, one teaspoon, and one tablespoon.

Baking is such a passion of mine, and I'm so grateful to Fannie Farmer for inventing the measuring cup and spoons!