HOORVIA — BAKING TROUBLESHOOTING CHART (CAKES, COOKIES & BREAD)

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Quick Reference Cheat Sheet • Symptom -> Root Cause -> Exact Fix Matrix • US Letter (8.5" × 11")

■ CAKE, MUFFIN & BROWNIE TROUBLESHOOTING

Visible Baking Flaw	Primary Chemical / Oven Cause	How to Prevent It Next Time
Cake Sinks in the Dead Center	Too much leavening, underbaked core, or oven door opened early	Measure baking powder level; bake to 200°F internal; don't peek before 25 min
High Cracked Volcano Dome	Oven too hot OR too much flour (crust sets before center rises)	Spoon & level flour (120g/cup); lower temp -25°F; use wet cake strips
Dry, Crumbly & Coarse Crumb	Overbaked by 5+ min OR not enough fat/sugar	Pull cakes right at 200°F–205°F; wrap cooled layers in plastic wrap
Tough, Rubbery & Tunnel-Holed	Overmixed batter after adding flour (excess gluten developed)	Fold dry ingredients in by hand or on lowest mixer speed just until combined
Sticks to Bottom of Pan	Cooled too long in pan (sugars cement) OR un-parchmented bottom	Always trace a parchment circle for the bottom; invert after 10–12 min rest
Blueberries / Choc Chips Sank	Thin batter OR wet heavy mix-ins	Toss berries/chips in 1 tbsp dry flour from recipe before folding in

■ COOKIE TROUBLESHOOTING MATRIX

Visible Cookie Flaw	Primary Chemical / Oven Cause	How to Prevent It Next Time
Spread Into Flat Greasy Puddles	Butter too warm/melted, hot baking sheet, or too little flour	Chill dough 1 hr; use cool parchment-lined pan; add 2 tbsp flour
Hard, Dry & Hockey-Puck Stiff	Overbaked in oven OR cups of flour were dipped & packed	Pull when center still looks pale & soft (9–11 min); weigh flour at 120g/cup
Didn't Spread at All (Thick Balls)	Too much flour OR dough baked rock-hard straight from fridge	Let chilled dough balls sit 10 min on counter; flatten tops slightly
Burnt Bottoms, Pale Tops	Dark non-stick baking sheet OR baked on bottom oven rack	Switch to light shiny aluminum half-sheet pans on the middle rack

■ YEAST BREAD & PIE CRUST TROUBLESHOOTING

Bread / Pastry Issue	Primary Chemical / Oven Cause	How to Prevent It Next Time
Dense, Heavy Brick Loaf	Dead yeast, water >138°F killed yeast, or under-kneaded gluten	Proof yeast at 105°F–110°F; knead until dough passes the 'windowpane test'
Gummy, Sticky Bread Interior	Sliced while still hot OR underbaked below 195°F	Bake lean bread to 208°F; cool on wire rack a full 90 minutes before cutting
Mushroom Top Overhanging Pan	Over-proofed in pan (rose more than 1 inch above rim)	Bake when dough rises 1 inch above rim and holds a gentle finger dent
Tough, Shrunken Pie Crust	Too much water + overworked gluten + not rested before baking	Keep butter ice-cold; chill rolled crust in freezer 20 min before blind-baking

PRO TIP: Baking Powder vs. Baking Soda Expiration Test: Drop 1/2 tsp Baking Powder into 1/4 cup warm water (should fizz). Drop 1/4 tsp Baking Soda into 2 tbsp vinegar (should erupt).
GOLDEN BAKING WEIGHTS: Spooned & Leveled AP Flour = 120g/cup • Granulated Sugar = 200g/cup • Packed Brown Sugar = 213g/cup