

Xmas Cake Cookies

Makes 16

Hands-on Time 25 minutes plus chilling (overnight)

Baking Time 15 minutes

Ingredients

300g Sultanas
40g Candied peel
75ml Dark spiced rum
50g Glacé cherries
30g Whole almonds
1 Orange
250g Unsalted butter (softened)
200g Dark brown sugar
175g Caster sugar
3 tsp Almond extract
2 Eggs, large
400g Plain flour
1 tsp Bicarbonate of soda
1 tsp Fine salt
1 tsp Mixed Spice
1/2 tsp Nutmeg
1/2 tsp Cloves
1/2 tsp Cinnamon
1/2 tsp Ginger
200g Icing sugar

Equipment

Saucepan with a lid
Micro-grater
Spatula
Knife
Freestanding mixer with paddle and whisk
Knife
Baking parchment
Baking sheet (ideally aluminium)
Wire rack
Juicer
Bowl

Add the sultanas and peel to the saucepan followed by the rum.

Put the pan over a medium heat and stir the fruit using a spatula until they're all glistening.

When the rum starts to bubble and hiss and becomes fragrant take the pan off the heat, cover with the lid and leave to sit for 30 minutes.

When the time has passed remove the lid and finely chop the cherries and almonds and add them to the pan. Grate half of the orange over the fruits and stir using the spatula.

Add the butter, light brown and caster sugars to the bowl of the mixer and beat on a medium-high speed with the paddle for 5 minutes until you have a very light and fluffy mixture.

Add 2 teaspoons of almond extract and the eggs and beat for a couple of seconds until combined.

Add the flour, bicarb, salt, and all of the spices and again beat for a couple of seconds until combined. Scrape the sides down using a clean spatula to make sure everything is incorporated.

Add the rum soaked fruits to the cookie dough before giving it a final mix. You

shouldn't need to run the mixer for more than 10 seconds. The key thing is not to over-mix.

Take a sheet of baking parchment and place the dough onto. Shape the dough into a wide, long sausage and roll up before popping it into fridge to chill for 30 minutes.

Line a baking sheet with parchment.

Take the dough out of the fridge, slice into 16 equal rounds. Roll each round into a ball and place onto the lined baking sheet.

Pop the sheet back into the fridge, ideally overnight, so the dough balls can firm up.

Preheat the oven to 170°C/150°C (Fan)/325°F/Gas mark 3.

Slide the baking sheet out of the fridge and leave the dough balls on the shelf.

Once the oven has warmed up line the baking sheet with another piece of parchment.

Place approx 6/8 balls spaced about 10cm apart from each other onto the baking parchment.

Pop the tray into the oven on a middle shelf and bake for 15 minutes.

Once the time is up remove the tray from the oven. Slide the parchment carefully, with the cookies, onto the worktop. Re-line with more paper and bake your next batch.

After the cookies have rested for a couple of minutes they should be firm enough

for you to transfer onto a wire rack to fully cool. Don't forget they will get firmer as they cool.

Squeeze 50 millilitres of the orange juice into a bowl. Add 1 teaspoon of almond extract and the icing sugar. Slowly stir until they're combined and the icing is thick, and smooth. If the icing is a little too thin then add a little more icing sugar.

Drizzle the icing over the cookies and leave to set.

Enjoy!