

Native American Cranberry Cornmeal Cookies

- 1 1/2 cups sugar
- 1 1/2 cups butter, softened
- 2 eggs
- 2 tablespoons light corn syrup
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 cup cornmeal
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 1/2 cups sweetened dried cranberries, chopped

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350°F

Combine sugar and butter in large mixing bowl and beat at medium speed until creamy.

Add eggs, corn syrup, and vanilla and beat until well mixed.

Add flour, cornmeal, baking powder and salt; reduce speed to low and beat until well mixed.

Stir in dried cranberries by hand.

Roll teaspoons of dough into balls and roll in sugar.

Place 1 inch apart onto ungreased cookie sheets; flatten slightly with hand.

Bake for 9-13 minutes or until edges are slightly browned.

Yield: 7 dozen cookies

Mexican Wedding Cookies

- 1 cup butter
- 1/2 cup white sugar
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 2 teaspoons water
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 cup chopped almonds or pecans
- 1/2 cup confectioners' sugar

Directions:

Preheat oven to 325 degrees.

In a medium bowl, cream the butter and sugar. Stir in vanilla and water. Add the flour and almonds, mix until blended. Cover and chill for 3 hours.

Shape dough into balls or crescents. Place on an unprepared cookie sheet and bake for 15 to 20 minutes in the preheated oven.

Remove from pan to cool on wire racks. When cookies are cool, roll in confectioners' sugar. Store at room temperature in an airtight container.

Yield: 18 servings

Almendrados (Spanish Almond Cookies)

- 1 lb almonds (ground)
- 1 1/4 cups sugar
- 2 large eggs
- Zest of 1 lemon

Directions:

Heat oven to 360F/180C degrees.

Grate the lemon peel, avoiding the white part of the peel because it is bitter.

Separate the yolks from the egg whites. In a small glass or ceramic mixing bowl, beat the egg whites to a stiff peak.

Place the egg whites into a medium mixing bowl, and gently stir in the egg yolks (No need to mix thoroughly).

Add the granulated sugar, lemon zest, ground almonds, and optionally the cinnamon, mixing thoroughly. Using your hands, shape the cookies into mounds or pyramids and place on a greased cookie sheet, or one covered in parchment paper.

Bake in an oven on center rack for approximately 15 minutes until cookies turn a golden color.

Remove from oven and gently loosen the cookies using a spatula. Do this quickly because if they cool on the sheet, they will harden and become too brittle to remove. Cool them on a rack.

Serve and enjoy or store in a tightly covered container or tin.

Yield: 24 to 30 Servings

French Cinnamon Palmiers

- 1/3 cup sugar (granulated)
- 1 1/2 teaspoons cinnamon (ground)
- 3 tablespoons butter (melted)
- 1/2 lb puff pastry (1 sheet store-bought)
- 1 egg (beaten)

Directions:

Preheat an oven to 400 F.

Stir together the sugar, cinnamon, and melted butter until it forms a paste.

Roll the pastry dough into a large rectangle, about 15-inches by 12-inches. Using a pastry brush or spoon, spread the cinnamon sugar paste in a thin, even layer over the dough. Starting at the long ends of the rectangle, loosely roll each side inward until they meet in the middle. To hold difficult pastry together, brush it with the egg if needed.

Slice the pastry crosswise into 1/4-inch palmiers – they'll look like little scrolls - and arrange them on a parchment-lined baking sheet. Bake them for 12 to 15 minutes, until they puff and turn golden brown. Remove them from the baking sheet and serve warm or at room temperature.

Yield: 30 Servings

Cowboy Cookies

- 1 cup (2 sticks) butter, softened
- 1 cup white sugar
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 2 cups flour, spooned and leveled
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 cup old fashioned oats
- 1 cup corn flakes
- 1 cup pecans, roughly chopped (and toasted!)
- ½ cup coconut flakes
- 1 cup (6 ounces) peanut butter chips (I used Reese's)
- 1 cup (6 ounces) semi-sweet chocolate chips

Directions:

If you want to toast your pecans (you do! you do!) chop them up and throw them in a dry skillet over medium heat. Toast for 3-5 minutes, until fragrant. Don't let them burn! Remove from heat and let cool while you make the dough.

In a large bowl or stand mixer, beat the butter until it is light and fluffy.

Add both sugars and beat well, scraping sides and bottom.

Add eggs and vanilla, beat well.

Add the flour but don't mix it in. Add the salt, baking powder, and baking soda to the flour and use a small spoon to blend it with the flour a bit. Then mix in the flour, but stop before it's fully incorporated.

Add the oats, corn flakes, pecans, and coconut to the bowl. Mix in gently.

Add the peanut butter chips and chocolate chips and mix until everything is incorporated. Don't over mix, it will make your dough tough.

Chill the dough in the fridge for at least an hour, or up to 24 hours.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Line a couple baking sheets with a silpat or parchment paper.

Use a 1/4 cup measuring cup to scoop these onto the pan. Leave at least a couple inches in between each ball of dough.

Bake at 350 for 12-14 minutes, until the cookies are golden on the edges and they are not too shiny in the middle. (A little shine is okay.)

Let cool as long as you can before stuffing your face! These are great dipped in milk.

Yields: 18 Large Cookies or 24 Medium Cookies

Rugelach

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 8 ounces cold cream cheese, cubed
- 2 sticks (1 cup) cold unsalted butter, cubed
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 large egg yolk
- 1 batch filling of your choice
- Powdered sugar

Directions:

Combine the flour and salt in a food processor. Place the flour and salt in the bowl of a food processor fitted with the blade attachment. Pulse several times to combine.

Mix in the cream cheese and butter. Scatter the cubes of cream cheese and butter over the flour. Pulse until coarse crumbs form, 10 to 12 pulses.

Mix in the yolk and vanilla. Place the vanilla and yolk in a small bowl and whisk to combine. Drizzle over the butter-flour mixture. Process until the dough starts to clump together and form large, curd-like pieces.

Refrigerate the dough. Transfer the dough onto a work surface and gather the pieces into a ball. Divide into 4 portions and flatten each into 1-inch-thick disks. Wrap each disk in plastic wrap and refrigerate at least 2 hours or up to 3 days, or freeze for up to 3 months (thaw in the refrigerator before using).

When ready to bake the rugelach, heat the oven to 375°F. Arrange a rack in the middle of the oven and heat to 375°F. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper. Meanwhile, prepare the filling (ideas below).

Roll out the dough. Sprinkle a work surface generously with powdered sugar. Take 1 disk of dough from the refrigerator and let it sit on the counter for 1 to 2 minutes to warm up slightly. Unwrap and then sprinkle the surface of the dough and the rolling pin with more powdered sugar. Roll the dough from the center out into a circle about 1/8-inch thick. Don't worry if a few cracks form near the edges. Use more powdered sugar as needed to prevent sticking.

Spread with filling. Spread the filling in a thin layer evenly over the surface of the dough. Make sure it goes right up to the edge of the dough.

Cut and roll the cookies. Using a pizza cutter or sharp knife, cut the dough into 16 wedges, like a pizza. Beginning at the wide outer edge and moving towards the center, roll up each wedge. Transfer to a parchment-lined baking sheet, spacing them evenly apart. Make sure the tip is tucked underneath.

Refrigerate the cookies for 20 minutes. Refrigerate the cookies on the baking sheet for 20 minutes.

Meanwhile, fill and roll a second disk of dough, filling up the second baking sheet.

Bake the cookies 20 to 25 minutes. Bake the first tray of cookies until golden-brown, 20 to 25 minutes.

Cool on the baking sheet for 5 minutes, then transfer the cookies to a wire rack to cool completely. Bake the second tray of cookies. While the second tray is baking, prepare the third disk of dough, using the same parchment paper from the first batch but making sure the baking sheet is cooled.

IDEAS FOR RUGELACH FILLINGS

Nut filling: In a food processor, pulse 1 cup walnuts and 1 cup pecans until they break into tiny crumbs, 30 to 40 pulses. (Be careful of over-processing and making nut butter.) Combine the ground nuts in a bowl with 4 tablespoons (1/4 cup) melted butter, 1/4 cup honey, 1/4 cup granulated sugar, and 1 teaspoon vanilla extract.

Fruit and jam filling: Warm 1/4 cup marmalade, apricot jam, or raspberry jam in the microwave until it liquefies. Stir in 1 tablespoon sugar. Set aside to cool until no longer steaming, still liquidy. Pulse 2 cups (roughly 10 ounces) dried fruit, such as apricots, cranberries, cherries, or currants, in a food processor until it breaks down into tiny pieces. To assemble, spread the jam onto the rugelach dough and then sprinkle the dried fruit on top.

Peanut butter and chocolate filling: Warm 1/2 cup peanut butter in a microwave until it liquefies but isn't boiling. Spread over the rugelach dough; sprinkle with 1 cup miniature chocolate chips.

Yield: 64 Cookies