

Mini Chai Biscotti

These little cookies aren't quite your Nonna's biscotti, but they're not so far off, either. Laced with spices borrowed from classic Indian Chai Tea, they beg to be dunked in tea or coffee or moscato, just like Nonna did. This recipe makes enough to share, so wrap them up and be generous. 'Tis the season, after all.

Ingredients

- 2 cups all-purpose flour (8.5 ounces, spooned and leveled)
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon ground cardamom
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon ground ginger
- ¼ teaspoon ground cloves
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- ¼ teaspoon fine salt
- ¾ cup granulated sugar (5.4 ounces)
- 2 large eggs
- 1 large egg yolk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon orange liqueur, such as Grand Marnier
- 1 teaspoon finely grated orange zest
- 1 egg white, lightly beaten with 1 teaspoon cold water
- 1 teaspoon coarse sugar, such as turbinado

special equipment

- pastry brush (not sure if this is considered special...)

Directions

Place a rack in the middle position of the oven and preheat to 325 degrees. Line a baking sheet with parchment.

In a medium bowl, whisk flour, baking soda, spices and salt until combined.

Place sugar in a large bowl and whisk with eggs, egg yolk, vanilla, liqueur and zest. Using a rubber spatula, fold in flour mixture until a soft, slightly sticky dough forms.

With floured hands, form two 12-inch logs on the prepared baking sheet, about 3 inches apart. Gently press and flatten the logs until they are about 1½ inches wide and ¾ inch high. (Don't worry about making these smooth; any lumps or bumps will disappear when baked.)

Brush the logs with egg white and sprinkle coarse sugar evenly over the tops.

Bake until lightly colored and the tops are beginning to crack, about 35 minutes, rotating pan halfway through cooking time. Transfer logs to a wire rack to cool for at least 10 minutes.

Using a serrated knife, cut each log into 1/2-inch slices on a slight diagonal. Place the slices, cut side down, on the baking sheet. Bake for 10 minutes, turn slices over, and bake 10 minutes longer until golden and crisp (cookies will crisp more as they cool). Transfer cookies to a wire rack to cool completely before storing in an airtight container at room temperature. Serve aside a steaming drink for dunking.

Cook's Notes: Italian biscotti are “twice-baked,” first baked in a log shape, then sliced and baked again until dry and crunchy. They’re meant to be softened with a dip in coffee, tea, or sweet wine. The absence of butter in this recipe makes them especially crunchy and gives them a long shelf life.

In Indian cuisine, tea is often flavored with cinnamon, cardamom and cloves, sometimes with the addition of black pepper, ginger, coriander or fennel. Known as *Masala Chah*, this combination of hot tea and spices warms the body and perfumes the air. *

For a variation, add 1/3 cup unsweetened dried shredded coconut to the flour mixture. Omit the coarse sugar and instead sprinkle tops with more coconut (about 4 teaspoons).

total time: *1 hour 20 minutes*

active prep: *15 minutes*

serves: *makes about 3½ to 4 dozen 2½-inch cookies*

difficulty: *medium*

* information from Julie Sahni, *Classic Indian Cooking*