



In the Kitchen

with Barb Agee December 2016

Cookies for Giving

Two international cookies, biscotti and shortbread are versatile and pleasurable treats for any season of the year most especially during the holidays.



Meyer Lemon – Pecan Shortbread

2 cups all-purpose flour
2 tablespoons cornstarch
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 cup butter, softened
2/3 cup granulated sugar

1 tablespoon lemon zest
1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/2 cup toasted pecans, coarsely chopped

Preheat oven to 300°F. Lightly butter a 9-inch square cake pan. Set aside.

In a small bowl, whisk together the flour, cornstarch and salt. In a medium bowl, with a wooden spoon or with an electric mixer, beat the butter until light and fluffy, about one minute. Mix in sugar, lemon zest, lemon juice and vanilla, continue beating until smooth. Gradually add in the flour, cornstarch and salt until just combined.

Press the dough into the prepared cake pan. Using the back of a soup spoon, smooth the dough. Sprinkle on the pecans and press lightly. Bake in the center oven for 42 minutes or until set and lightly golden. Transfer pan to a cooling rack and let shortbread completely cool. Transfer the shortbread from the pan to a cutting board. With a sharp, thin knife, cut into 16 squares.

Heath Toffee McBeth Shortbread

1/3 cup rice flour
1 1/3 cups all-purpose flour
3/4 cup unsalted butter, softened
1/2 cup granulated sugar

2 tablespoons powdered sugar
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract
Half an 8ounce package Heath English Toffee Bits

Preheat the oven to 300°F. Coat a 9-inch round cake pan with vegetable spray. Set aside.

In a small bowl whisk together the rice flour, all-purpose flour and salt. In a medium bowl, with an electric mixer on low speed beat the butter until light in color. Mix in both of the sugars and vanilla extract. Gradually mix in the flour in three additions, scraping down the sides of the bowl after each addition. Press dough in the prepared cake pan. Smooth the top of the dough. With a sharp knife, score the top of the dough into 16 sections. Sprinkle top with Heath English Toffee Bits.

Bake for 42 minutes or until set and pale golden in color. Transfer to a wire to cool completely before cutting into pieces and removing from the pan. *Makes 16 cookies*

White Chocolate Macadamia Biscotti

½ cup butter, room temperature	1½ teaspoons baking powder
¾ cup granulated sugar	¼ teaspoon salt
2 eggs, room temperature	2 tablespoons powdered sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract	⅔ cups macadamia nuts, very coarsely chopped
2 tablespoons Amaretto	⅔ cup white chocolate chips
2 cups + 4 tablespoons all-purpose flour	

Preheat oven to 325°F. In a mixing bowl, cream butter and granulated sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in eggs, vanilla and Amaretto. In a separate bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder, salt and powdered sugar. Add to the creamed mixture in thirds until blended. Fold in nuts and chips.

Divide dough in half. On a 16-inch piece of parchment paper, pat one-half of the dough into a log about ½-inch high, 1½ inches wide and 16-inches long. Place parchment paper with log on a baking sheet. Repeat with the other half of the dough. Space the logs at least 2-inches apart on baking sheet.

Bake on the middle rack of the oven for 25 minutes or until lightly browned. Carefully transfer logs on the parchment paper to a cooling rack. Let cool 10 minutes. Place logs on a cutting board. With a serrated knife, slice diagonally about ½-inch thick. Place the slices upright on the baking sheet and return to the oven for about 8 minutes. Let cool on the rack. Store in a tightly covered container. *Makes about 3½ to 4 dozen biscotti*

Pistachio and Golden Raisin Biscotti

1¼ cups golden raisins**	2 teaspoons lemon zest
¼ cup Amaretto***	3 cups + 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
½ cup + 1 tablespoon butter	2 teaspoons baking powder
1 cup + 2 tablespoons granulated sugar, divided	¼ teaspoon salt
3 eggs, room temperature, separated	1¼ cups whole pistachios*, shelled
2 teaspoons vanilla extract	3 to 4 ounces white chocolate, <i>optional</i>

Preheat oven to 325°F. In a small bowl, marinated the raisins in the Amaretto for 30 minutes. Drain off any excess liquid.

In a mixing bowl, cream butter and ½ cup granulated sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in egg yolks, vanilla extract and lemon zest. In a separate bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder and salt. Add to creamed mixture, mixing just until crumbly. In a third bowl, beat egg whites until soft peaks form. Beat in remaining sugar, 1 tablespoon at a time until stiff but not dry. Fold meringue into the crumbly mixture, mixing until it clings together.

Divide dough in half. On a 16-inch piece of parchment paper, pat one-half of the dough into a log about ½-inch high, 1½-inches wide and 16-inches long. Place parchment paper with log on a baking sheet. Repeat with the other half of the dough. Space the logs at least 2-inches apart on baking sheet.

Bake on the middle rack of the oven for 25 minutes or until lightly browned. Carefully transfer logs on parchment paper to a cooling rack. Let cool for 10 minutes. Place logs on a cutting board. With a serrated knife, slice diagonally about ½-inch thick. Place the slice upright on the baking sheet and return to the oven for about 8 minutes. Let cool on the rack. Store in a tightly covered container.

Makes about 3½ to 4 dozen biscotti

Instructor's Notes: *May use coarsely chopped toasted pecans or almonds; **May use dried cranberries, dried apricots coarsely chopped or dried sweet cherries; ***May use light or dark rum, bourbon or hot water