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| 10/13/09 - Pistachio Biscotti with Dried Cherries |
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That first bite into biscotti is sublime. These are just sweet enough, with a blend of flavors subtle enough not to interfere with your demitasse of espresso, and crisp enough to stand up to dunking in hot tea. I had an idea to use pistachios, dried cherries, and orange rind. It is a great taste combination. If you like pistachio nuts and biscotti, you will love these.

4 extra large eggs

2 cups sugar

1 cup vegetable oil (I use sunflower or safflower)

3 tablespoons fresh orange juice

2 tablespoons fresh orange zest

2 and 1/2 cups ground pistachios

6 to 7 cups all purpose unbleached flour

2 teaspoons of baking powder

1 teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon powdered anise

1 cup tart dried cherries chopped into medium small pieces

3/4 cup whole pistachios

Preheat oven to 350° F. Line 2 rimmed baking sheets with silpats or parchment paper. I prefer half sheet aluminum pans. Dark colored or non stick coated baking sheets lead to different results.

Combine 6 cups flour with baking powder, orange zest, and salt in a medium bowl and set aside. Reserve the last cup of flour separately. Crack eggs in a glass cup and after checking them for shells or blood spots place them in bowl of stand mixer, add sugar, and beat on medium speed until light in color and thick. Add oil to eggs. Beat the mixture, starting at the slowest speed, until well combined. Add orange

juice. Add ground pistachios and mix. Next, add flour containing baking powder, salt, and orange zest to mixer. Start mixer on the slowest speed. Lastly, add chopped dried cherries and whole pistachios and mix a little more. Remove dough from mixer bowl and place it on a work surface dusted with a little flour. It may be slightly sticky. Add some or the entire last cup of flour as you knead dough lightly with your hands until it is smooth. Roll it into a smooth log and separate dough into 4 equal pieces. Form four logs about 2 inches in diameter and 10 inches in length. Place the logs carefully on prepared baking sheets, two per sheet.

Bake until golden in color 25-30 minutes. Remove the baking sheet from the oven. Reduce oven temperature to 200° F. Carefully remove rolls from baking sheets to a cutting board without breaking them, one at a time. Cut roll immediately on a sharp diagonal with a long serrated knife or very sharp Santoku knife. Return sliced biscotti to clean cookie sheets lined with silpats or parchment paper, being careful not to break them, placing them cut side down in a single layer. I prefer a very long serrated knife that I keep only for slicing biscotti.

When the biscotti are all sliced and placed on cookie sheets again, return them to the reduced heat oven for two hours. After you turn the oven off, leave them in the oven another 45 minutes or even overnight. They should be crisp. One recipe makes 60 to 80 depending on how thick you slice the biscotti. I usually make biscotti in the evening, so that when I am done toasting them I can just leave them in the oven overnight, until morning. In the morning I store them in an airtight container.

These are wonderful for serving with tea, coffee or with fruit as a light desert. They are also great as part of a desert buffet.







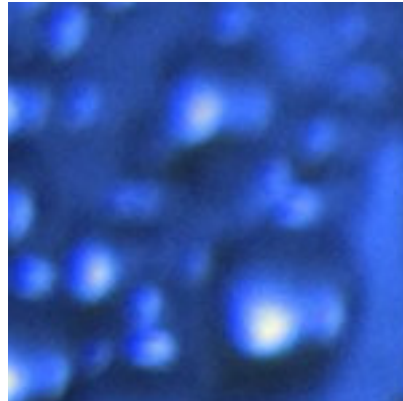


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