

JAM THUMBPRINTS

I found the original recipe for this cookie in an American dessert book back in Germany in the late 1990s. I eventually realized why the cookies were coming out so dense. I changed the mixing of the ingredients and now it is perfect. It's extra delicious with homemade jam, but if you don't have any, store-bought will do.

If you use homemade blueberry jam, the color does run through, leaking into the cookie. Test your jam first on one cookie by letting the jam sit in the "thumbprint" for 10 minutes.

Makes about 80 cookies.

INGREDIENTS

Set 1

1 1/3 c. butter, soft (about 2 sticks + 5 1/2 tablespoons)
1 c. granulated sugar
4 egg yolks, room temperature (save egg whites for below)
2 tsp. vanilla extract

Set 2

3 c. all-purpose flour

Set 3

4 egg whites, slightly beaten
2 1/2 c. walnuts, measure then chop

Set 4

Your favorite jam, jelly or preserve

Tools: cookies sheets, non-stick baking parchment, large bowl, electric beater, 1/2 tablespoon measuring spoon, 2, 1/2 teaspoon measuring spoons, 1 large dinner plate, rubber spatula, 2 dinner bowls, cereal bowl

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 375 degrees Fahrenheit

1. Cream the butter in the large bowl. Add the sugar, egg yolks and the vanilla. Beat till thoroughly combined.
2. Pour the flour into the bowl of creamed ingredients then use one hand to completely incorporate all of the ingredients. Use the rubber spatula to clean sides of the bowl. Divide the dough into two balls then flatten each into a disc.
3. Wrap each disc separately with plastic wrap. Place both discs in the fridge for 1 hour.
4. Place chopped walnuts into a dinner bowl. Place the egg whites into another dinner bowl. Set both bowls aside.
5. Take one disc out of the fridge. Keep it wrapped as you squeeze and knead it until it becomes pliable.
6. Place the dough in the cereal bowl. Use the 1/2-tablespoon measuring spoon to portion out enough dough to fill the dinner plate; the dough should be flush with the rim of the measuring spoon.
7. Portion enough dough to fill one cookie sheet.
8. Shape each piece of dough into a ball.
9. Roll balls in the bowl of egg whites then in walnuts.
10. Place each ball on a parchment-lined cookie sheet. Space them about 1 1/2 inches apart. Repeat to fill the cookie sheet.

11. Use the back of a ½-teaspoon measuring spoon to make an indentation, pressing down at the center of each walnut-covered ball.
12. Bake for 13 minutes; the edge of each cookie should be lightly browned.
- 13. Remove the tray and immediately make the indentation again on each cookie with the back of the other ½ teaspoon.**
14. Place the cookies on a wire rack to cool completely.
15. Store in an air tight container. Fill the center with jam just before serving.

Recipe courtesy Paula Quinene of PaulaQ.com.