

kourabiedes

I used to make these Greek melt-in-your-mouth cookies with my father every holiday season. You can use regular toasted almonds as he did, but I love the sweeter, more delicate taste of Marconas. Makes about 20 cookies

- 8 oz. (16 Tbs.) unsalted butter, preferably European style, at room temperature and cut into 1-inch pieces**
- 1½ cups confectioners' sugar; more as needed**
- ¼ tsp. fine sea salt**
- 1 large egg yolk**
- 2 Tbs. Calvados or other brandy**
- ¼ tsp. pure almond extract**
- ½ cup Marcona almonds, very finely chopped**
- 10 oz. (2¼ cups) all-purpose flour; more as needed**

Position a rack in the center of the oven, and heat the oven to 325°F. Line a large rimmed baking sheet with a silicone baking mat or a double layer of parchment, and set it inside another large rimmed baking sheet.

In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment (or with a hand-held mixer and a large bowl), beat the butter, 2½ Tbs. of the sugar, and salt on low speed, scraping down the bowl occasionally, until smooth. Increase the speed to medium and mix, scraping down the bowl as needed, until the mixture is pale yellow and fluffy, about 5 minutes. Mix in the yolk, scraping down the bowl occasionally, about 1½ minutes. Mix in the Calvados and extract, about 2 minutes more. Add the nuts and flour on low speed, scraping down the bowl as needed, until just combined. The dough will be soft and pliable, but not sticky. (If it is sticking to your hands, work in additional flour 1 Tbs. at a time, but not more than ¼ cup.)

Portion the dough into 1-oz. balls (about 1 inch in diameter). Roll each ball into a log, then form into a half-moon, about ½ inch thick, 1½ inches wide, and 2¼ inches long.

Put the cookies on the prepared baking sheet about ½ inch apart. Cover lightly with plastic wrap, and chill for 20 minutes. Bake, rotating the pan every 5 minutes, until slightly golden on top and bottom, 30 to 35 minutes. (The cookies will puff and a few may crack a bit, but they won't spread.)

Let the cookies cool on the baking sheet for about 5 minutes. Meanwhile, line a work surface with paper towels. Carefully transfer the cookies to the paper towels to absorb excess butter. Line a clean rimmed baking sheet with parchment, and sift a generous amount (about one-third) of the remaining sugar evenly over the surface. While the cookies are still warm, transfer them to the sugared parchment, and sift the remaining sugar over the top. (Keep extra confectioners' sugar on hand to repowder the cookies once they're moved.)

Store cookies in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 1 week.

—Diana Andrews