

Salt and Serenity

Fillings for Meneina Cookies

These recipes are from Alice Medrich's book, "**Chewy, Goopy, Crispy, Crunchy Melt-in-Your Mouth Cookies**"

Date and Walnut Filling

2 cups chopped, moist pitted dates
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
Pinch of salt
Zest of 2 small clementines
Juice of 2 clementines
1 cup toasted walnuts, coarsely chopped

Combine dates, butter, salt and clementine zest in a medium saucepan. Add clementine juice and enough water to cover the fruit by about 1 inch. Cook over low heat, mixing and mashing (a potato masher is the best tool for this), to form a smooth stiff paste. Off the heat, stir in the walnuts. When cool, taste and adjust the salt to your liking. This keeps well in the fridge for a month.

Spiced Fig Filling

2 cups lightly packed chopped pitted figs (I like black mission figs)
3 tablespoons sugar
1 tablespoon honey
1-2 teaspoons fennel seeds
1/8 teaspoon whole white peppercorns
1/4 teaspoon whole coriander seeds
1/8 teaspoon ground cloves
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon ground ginger
1/4 teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
Zest of 1 small lemon
Zest of 1 medium orange
Pinch of salt
1 cup toasted walnuts, coarsely chopped
1/2 teaspoon orange flower water

Put all the ingredients except the walnuts and orange flower water into a medium saucepan. Add water to cover the fruit generously. Bring the mixture to a simmer. Cook, stirring and mashing with a potato masher from time to time until mixture is a thick jammy paste. Remove from heat and add walnuts and

orange flower water. When cool, taste and adjust the salt to your liking. This keeps well in the fridge for a month

Pear-Almond Filling

2 cups gently packed diced dried pears
1 ½ tablespoons honey
Zest of 2 small lemons
2 teaspoons sugar
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/8 teaspoon ground cloves
Pinch of salt
1/8 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
½ cup toasted almonds, coarsely chopped

Put all the ingredients except the vanilla and almonds into a medium saucepan. Add water to cover the fruit generously. Bring the mixture to a simmer. Cook, stirring and mashing with a potato masher from time to time, until mixture is a thick jammy paste. Remove from heat and stir in the vanilla. When cool, taste and adjust the salt to your liking. Stir in almonds. This keeps well in the fridge for a month.

Sour Cherry Filling with Black Pepper

2 cups gently packed dried cherries
1 tablespoon unsalted butter
½ teaspoon grated lemon zest
Pinch of salt
½ teaspoon pure vanilla extract
¼ teaspoon fresh finely ground black pepper

Put the cherries, butter, zest and salt in a medium saucepan. Add water to cover the fruit. Bring the mixture to a simmer. Cook, stirring and mashing with a potato masher from time to time, until mixture is a thick jammy paste. Remove from heat and stir in the vanilla and pepper. When cool, taste and adjust the salt to your liking. This keeps well in the fridge for a month.

Apricot Vanilla Filling with Cinnamon and Almonds

2 cups dried apricots, chopped
1 tablespoon unsalted butter
4 -inch piece of vanilla bean, split

½ teaspoon ground cinnamon

Pinch of salt

1 cup almonds, toasted and coarsely chopped

Put all the ingredients except the almonds into a medium saucepan. Add water to cover the fruit generously. Bring the mixture to a simmer. Cook, stirring and mashing with a potato masher from time to time, until mixture is a thick jammy paste. Remove from heat. Fish out the vanilla bean and use the tip of a paring knife to scrape the seeds into the pot. Discard or save the pod for another use. When cool, taste and adjust the salt to your liking. Stir in almonds. This keeps well in the fridge for a month.