

Salt and Serenity

Cookie Butter and Hazelnut Rugelach

The dough recipe is adapted from the September 1997 issue of Cook's Illustrated magazine. The filling recipe comes from my imagination!

Makes 32 cookies

Dough:

2 ¼ cups unbleached all-purpose flour
1 ½ tablespoons granulated sugar
¼ teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
½ teaspoon ground ginger
½ pound unsalted butter (2 sticks), chilled and cut into ¼-inch pieces
8 ounces cream cheese, chilled and cut into ½-inch chunks
2 tablespoons sour cream

Filling:

1 ⅓ cups cookie butter (also called speculoos spread)
1 cup hazelnuts

Glaze:

2 large egg yolks
2 tablespoons milk

Topping:

1 cup sugar
1 Tablespoon cinnamon

1. Pulse flour, sugar, salt, cinnamon and ginger to combine in food processor fitted with steel blade. Add butter and cream cheese pieces and sour cream; pulse until dough comes together in small, uneven pebbles the size of cottage cheese curds, about sixteen 1-second pulses. Do not over-process. You do not need to form dough into a ball in machine.
2. Turn mixture onto work surface, press into 9-inch-by-6-inch log, divide log into four equal portions and press each into 4 1/2-by-3/4-inch disk. Place each disk between two sheets of parchment paper; roll out to form 8 1/2-inch circle. Stack dough circles on plate; freeze 30 minutes (or up to 1 month if stored in zipper-lock freezer bag).

3. Preheat oven to 325°F. Toast hazelnuts until centers are golden, about 12-15 minutes. Cool to warm, and then transfer nuts to a kitchen towel. Gather ends of towel to make a bundle and rub nuts against each other, vigorously, to remove skins. Transfer skinned nuts to food processor and pulse nuts until finely chopped. Set nuts aside.
4. Open jar of cookie butter and microwave jar (without lid) for about 30 seconds on 50% power, just until runny and easily spreadable.
5. Remove one dough round from freezer and using an offset spatula, spread $\frac{1}{3}$ cup cookie butter evenly over the dough, going right to the edges. Sprinkle on $\frac{1}{4}$ of the chopped hazelnuts and pat down gently with fingers. Using a pizza wheel or knife, cut dough round into eight wedges. Starting at the wide side, opposite the point, roll each wedge into crescent shape and place on a parchment paper-lined rimmed baking sheet, with the point underneath. Leave about 2 inches between each cookie. Freeze crescents at least 15 minutes. (Frozen crescents, if well wrapped, can be frozen in a zipper-lock bag up to 6 weeks.) Repeat with remaining dough rounds.
6. Adjust oven racks to upper- and lower-middle positions and heat oven to 375°F. Whisk egg yolks and milk in small bowl until smooth. Brush top and sides of frozen crescents with egg-milk mixture. Bake crescents, turning baking pans from front to back and top to bottom halfway through baking time, until golden and slightly puffy, 21 - 23 minutes. Immediately sprinkle each cookie lightly with cinnamon sugar mixture. Carefully transfer hot, fragile cookies to cooling rack using thin-bladed spatula. (Can be stored in an airtight container up to 4 days.)