

Salt and Serenity

Cinnamon Brickle Rugelach

Recipe barely adapted from Mindy Segal's stellar new book, *"Cookie Love."*
Makes 32 rugelach

Cream Cheese Dough

2 sticks (1 cup) unsalted butter, room temperature
8 ounces cream cheese, room temperature
⅓ cup plus 1 tablespoon sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 cups unbleached all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon kosher salt

Brickle

2 tablespoons unsalted butter, room temperature
1 cup sugar
8 ounces (1 ¾ cup) mixed, roasted, salted nuts (try to find without peanuts)
Pinch of cinnamon

Caramel Sauce

4 cups heavy cream
1½ cups granulated sugar
¾ cup light corn syrup
1 ½ cups granulated sugar
1½ teaspoons kosher salt
½ teaspoon sea salt flakes
½ teaspoon vanilla extract

To Assemble Rugelach:

1 recipe Cream Cheese Dough, divided in half and chilled
1½ cups Brickle
¾ cup Caramel Sauce
1 large egg white, lightly beaten
½ cup sugar
1 teaspoon cinnamon
Sea salt flakes for sprinkling

1. Make the Cream Cheese Dough: Place the butter in the large bowl of an electric mixer and beat at medium speed for 10-15 seconds. Add the cream cheese and beat on medium again for 10-15 seconds. Add the sugar and beat on medium for about 3 minutes, until the mixture is very well combined. Scrape the sides and bottom of the bowl with a rubber spatula. Add the vanilla on medium speed and mix briefly. Scrape down the sides and bottom of the bowl again.

2. In a small bowl, whisk together the flour and the salt. Add the mixture all at once to the cream cheese mixture and mix on low speed for about 30 seconds until the dough comes together but is still sort of crumbly. You don't want to over mix. Use a spatula to bring all the dough together.
3. Tear off two lengths of plastic wrap and place them on the counter. Divide the dough in half and place each half on the plastic wrap. Using your hands, form the dough into two flat discs, wrap them tightly and refrigerate for at least 2 hours and up to one week.
4. Make the Brickle: Line a large rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper and spray lightly with vegetable cooking spray. Set aside.
5. Melt the butter in a heavy, 3-quart saucepan over medium heat. Stir in the sugar until it looks like wet sand and then stir in the nuts and cinnamon. Keep stirring until the sugar melts and coats the nuts, about 4 minutes. Then remove from the heat, stir a few more times and turn the mixture out onto the prepared baking sheet. Let the mixture cool to room temperature and harden. Break brickle into chunks and pulse in a food processor until the brickle becomes a coarse meal. You'll have about 3 cups, which will definitely leave you with leftovers. No worries, they taste great over ice cream or yogurt. Store at room temperature in an airtight container or glass jar for up to 1 month.
6. Make the Caramel Sauce: Place the cream in a medium pot and place it over a very low heat, just to warm it. Into a 6-quart (or larger) heavy saucepan, combine 1½ cups of sugar and the corn syrup. Turn the heat to medium-high and stir the mixture every now and then with a wooden spoon, until it comes to a boil. Continue to cook, no longer stirring, until the mixture turns a rich amber color, but not black. This should take anywhere from 6-8 minutes.
7. Turn down heat to very low and in three additions, add in the remaining 1½ cups of sugar, stirring to dissolve the sugar well between each addition. Once all of the sugar is added, turn the heat up until small bubbles start to appear at the sides of the pot. In 3 stages, add the warmed cream, allowing it to simmer and partially reduce between each addition. Be careful, because the caramel will bubble up between each addition. Stir it to keep it from boiling over. Keep cooking until the caramel is thick and coats the back of the spoon and registers 225°F on a candy thermometer. Remove from the heat and stir in the vanilla and salt. Let cool completely and store in a jar in the refrigerator. This makes way more caramel sauce than you need but the extra will last in the fridge for up to 6 months. Leftover caramel sauce is never a problem for me.
8. Assemble Rugelach: Place a large sheet of parchment paper on your work surface and dust it lightly with flour. Remove one piece of dough from the refrigerator, unwrap it and place it on top of the paper. Cover with a second sheet of parchment paper and using a rolling pin, roll the dough into a large thin

circle, about ¼ inch thick and around 13 inches in circumference. If dough starts sticking to parchment paper, lift off top sheet of paper, dust dough lightly. Replace top sheet of parchment. Flip dough over.

9. Repeat on second side of dough and continue rolling. Repeat the process with the other dough half. If you are a perfectionist like me, you can use a plate or bowl, measuring 13 inches to trim your dough into a perfect circle. Stack the two pieces of dough and chill for about 30 minutes.
10. If you've chilled the caramel sauce, place the jar or container in a small pot of hot water to make it easy to spread.
11. Preheat oven to 350°F and line a few rimmed baking sheets with parchment paper and spray the parchment with nonstick cooking spray. Set aside.
12. Remove one circle of the dough from the refrigerator and carefully peel off the top sheet of parchment paper. Spread half the caramel sauce evenly on the dough. Sprinkle about ¾ cup of the brittle over the surface of the dough. Cut circle into 16 wedges using a pastry or pizza wheel or a very sharp knife.
13. Using a spatula to help separate one triangle from the rest of the others, start rolling each wedge from the base to the tip, into a loose crescent. Place the tip-side up on the prepared baking sheets and repeat the process with the remaining triangles. Space the cookies about 2 inches apart because the caramel needs room to spread. Repeat with second dough circle.
14. Brush the tops of the rugelach with the egg white. In a small bowl, mix together the sugar and cinnamon and spoon it generously onto the rugelach. Sprinkle rugelach with a tiny bit of sea salt flakes.
15. Bake only one sheet at a time for 15 minutes. Then rotate the pan and bake for another 6-8 minutes or until the tops of the cookies are golden brown and the caramel has seeped out and formed circles around the cookies. Transfer the tray to a cooling rack to cool completely and repeat with remaining sheets. When cookies are completely cool, cut through hardened caramel with a sharp knife, so that rugelach are surrounded by a ring of caramelized brittle. These are best on the day they're made but pretty great for 2-3 days afterwards too. Store in an airtight container at room temperature.

I have successfully frozen these cookies and can attest to the fact that they are still just as addictive in the frozen state.