

Salt and Serenity

Maple Pecan Shortbread Cookies

Recipe adapted from marthastewart.com

Makes 14 five-inch cookies or about 20 three-inch cookies.

Cookies:

330 grams (2³/₄ cups) all-purpose flour
½ teaspoon kosher salt
85 grams (¾ cup) pecan halves, finely chopped
227 grams (1 cup) unsalted butter, room temperature (removed from fridge for 30 minutes)
148 grams (¾ cup) maple sugar or plain granulated sugar
85 grams (¼ cup) pure maple syrup
1 large egg yolk
¼ teaspoon maple extract

Topping:

113 grams (1 cup) pecan halves
85 grams (¼ cup) pure maple syrup
¼ teaspoon kosher salt
170 grams (1 cup) milk chocolate, coarsely chopped
1 teaspoon coconut oil

1. In a medium sized bowl, mix together flour, salt and pecans.
2. In the bowl of an electric mixer, fitted with the paddle attachment, cream butter and sugar on medium speed for about 1 minute. Increase speed to high and continue beating until smooth and light, about 2 more minutes. Add maple syrup, egg yolk and extract and beat on medium speed until combined. Turn mixer down to low speed and gradually add flour mixture, mixing until just combined.
3. Turn dough out onto the counter and knead for just a minute to bring the dough together and it is smooth and pliable. Divide dough into 2 pieces. Working with one piece at a time, roll the dough, ¼ inch thick, between 2 sheets of parchment paper. Leaving the dough sandwiched between the parchment layers, stack on a baking sheet and freeze until firm, 15-20 minutes.
4. While dough is chilling prepare maple pecans for the topping. Adjust the oven racks to the upper and lower middle positions and heat the oven to 350°F. Mix together pecan halves, maple syrup and salt. Spread coated pecans out on a parchment lined baking sheet and bake for about 10 minutes. Remove from oven and set aside to cool. When nuts are completely cool, coarsely chop, either by hand, or in the food processor. I did it in the food processor and pulsed the machine 10 times to get the texture I wanted. Set chopped candied nuts aside.
5. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper.
6. Remove 1 dough sheet from the freezer; place on work surface. Peel off top parchment sheet and gently lay it back in place. Flip the dough over; peel off and discard second parchment layer.
7. Cut the dough using cookie cutters of your choice. Transfer shapes to prepared baking sheets, using a wide metal spatula, spacing them ¾ inches apart. Chill cut cookies in freezer for about 10 minutes to firm them up. Set scraps aside.
8. Bake the chilled cookies for 10-12 minutes, until they are golden brown around the edges. The baking sheets should be rotated from front to back and switch positions top to bottom, halfway through the baking time. Do not overbake. Cool cookies on the sheets for 2 minutes, then remove the cookies with a wide metal spatula to a wire rack to cool completely.
9. Gather the scraps; repeat rolling, chilling, cutting and baking.

10. While the cookies are cooling, place chopped milk chocolate and coconut oil in a glass or other microwave-safe bowl. Microwave on medium power for 1 minute. Stir and microwave for an additional minute until smooth and melted.
11. Cut a small sheet of parchment paper and lay it diagonally across one of the cookies. Spoon melted chocolate on the uncovered part of the cookie and using a knife or small offset spatula, smooth the chocolate into an even layer. Sprinkle wet chocolate, quite heavily, with chopped candied pecans. Remove sheet of parchment paper and admire the perfectly straight line of chocolate that you have created. Repeat with remaining cookies.

Cookies will keep, stored in an airtight container, at room temperature for a few days. For longer storage, keep in the freezer,