



Cucidati Italian Fig Cookies – Nick Malgieri

The Dough

4 cups all-purpose flour
2/3 cup sugar
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon salt
8 ounces cold unsalted butter or 1/2 pound cold lard, cut into pieces
4 large eggs

The Filling

One 12-ounce package dried Calimyrna or Mission figs
1/2 cup unblanched almonds, toasted and coarsely chopped
1/3 cup apricot preserves
1/4 cup plump golden raisins
1/4 cup candied orange peel, diced
2 ounces semisweet chocolate, chopped
1/4 cup dark rum
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1 large egg beaten with a pinch of salt, for egg wash
Confectioner's sugar, for dusting

Makes about 5 dozen cookies

Method

Put flour, sugar, baking powder, and salt in a food processor fitted with the metal blade;

pulse just to mix. Add the butter pieces and pulse 20 times. Add eggs and pulse until dough forms a ball on the blade. Remove from processor and knead briefly on a lightly floured work surface until smooth. Shape dough into a log and wrap in plastic.

Remove stems from figs and cut the figs into medium-size dice. Put figs and remaining filling ingredients into the food processor and pulse with the metal blade until finely chopped. Scrape filling onto a lightly floured work surface. Knead to blend it, and shape it into a rough log. Cut the log into 12 pieces.

Position racks to divide oven into thirds and preheat to 350°F. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper. Divide the dough into 12 pieces. Working with one piece of dough at a time, on a lightly floured work surface, roll the dough under your hands to form a 12-inch rope.

Use a rolling pin to roll the rope into a 3- by 12-inch rectangle. Run a blunt knife under the dough to make certain it hasn't stuck to the work surface and brush the top of the dough with egg wash. Roll a piece of filling into a 12-inch rope and center it on the rolled-out dough. Pull the dough up around the filling, making a seam, and roll it into a cylinder, about 15 inches long. Cut into 3-inch lengths.

Place a cut piece of dough vertically in front of you, seam side down, and make two 1-inch-long cuts, one from the bottom, the other from the top, toward the center. Use your fingers to separate the slashes and create an X-shaped cookie. Transfer the cookies to the prepared baking pans and repeat with the remaining portions of dough and filling.

Bake cookies for 15 minutes, or until a light golden color. Transfer to racks to cool. Just before serving, dust with confectioner's sugar.