

COFFEE-CARDAMOM COOKIES

If spice cookies are good alongside coffee—and they are—then wouldn't they be even better with coffee in them? That was the question I asked myself and these cookies are the affirmative answer.

These have freshly ground espresso in the dough (you can use whatever coffee you'll be drinking with the cookies or, in a pinch, instant espresso—but don't use as much: 2 teaspoons does the trick) and I love that you can see the specks in the cookies. And although there's cinnamon in the mix, it's the addition of cardamom that makes these cookies extra special. The cardamom blends so beautifully with the coffee and cinnamon that it's elusive, but it adds spice and warmth.

I bake these until they're set around the edges but still have a little give at the center. If you'd like them a bit chewier, bake them for less time. But don't bake them longer, since they crisp after a couple of days.

The glaze is optional, but I like the look and the extra bit of sweetness that it brings to the cookies.

A word on the glaze: The recipe calls for half an egg white. The easiest way to divide the white is to beat it lightly to break it up, and then measure out 15 grams. Or put it in a mini liquid measuring cup and pour off half.

Makes about 30 cookies

FOR THE COOKIES

2 cups (272 grams) all-purpose flour

1 tablespoon ground espresso or coffee beans (or 2 teaspoons instant espresso) (see headnote)

2 teaspoons ground cinnamon

½ teaspoon ground cardamom

½ teaspoon fine sea salt

1 stick (8 tablespoons; 4 ounces; 113 grams) unsalted butter, cut into chunks, at room temperature

½ cup (100 grams) packed light brown sugar

¼ cup (50 grams) sugar

1 large egg, at room temperature

1½ tablespoons unsulfured molasses

1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

FOR THE OPTIONAL GLAZE

½ large egg white (see headnote)

¾ cup (90 grams) confectioners' sugar

1½ teaspoons unsalted butter, melted

½ to 2 teaspoons warm water, if needed

TO MAKE THE COOKIES: Whisk the flour, espresso, cinnamon, cardamom and salt together.

Working with a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, or in a large bowl with a hand mixer, beat the butter and both sugars together on medium speed until smooth, about 3 minutes. Add the egg and beat until well incorporated, about 2 minutes. Beat in the molasses and vanilla; don't be concerned if the mixture curdles. Stop the mixer, scrape down the bowl and add the flour mixture all at once. Pulse until the risk of flying flour has passed, then mix on low speed just until the dry ingredients are fully blended into the dough. You'll have a thick, very moist dough.

Turn the dough out, gather it together and shape it into a disk.

Roll the dough between pieces of parchment paper to a thickness of $\frac{1}{4}$ inch. Slide the parchment-sandwiched dough onto a baking sheet and freeze for at least 1 hour, or refrigerate for at least 2 hours.

GETTING READY TO BAKE: Center a rack in the oven and preheat it to 350 degrees F. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper or silicone baking mats. Have a 2-inch-diameter cookie cutter at hand.

Peel away both pieces of parchment paper and put the dough back on one piece of paper. Cut out as many cookies as you can and place them on the lined baking sheets. Gather the scraps together, re-roll, chill and cut.

Bake the cookies one sheet at a time for 11 to 13 minutes, rotating the sheet after 6 minutes, or until they are toasty brown on both the bottoms and tops. Poke them gently—they should be firm around the edges and softer in the center. Transfer the baking sheet to a rack and allow the cookies to cool for at least 20 minutes, or until they reach room temperature, before glazing (or serving) them. Repeat with the remaining dough, always using a cool baking sheet.

TO MAKE THE GLAZE AND FINISH THE COOKIES (OPTIONAL): Working in a medium bowl, whisk the egg white until it's foamy. Pour in the confectioners' sugar and, continuing with the whisk or switching to a flexible spatula, stir, mash and mix until the sugar is thoroughly moistened. It looks like an impossible job, but a little elbow grease will get it done. You'll have a thick mass. Push the mixture down and stir in the melted butter. If the glaze looks too thick to brush, stir in a bit of water a little at a time until you get a workable consistency; you'll probably need less than 2 teaspoons of water, so go slow.

You can spread the glaze over the cookies with a small icing spatula or butter knife (to get the same look as the cookies in the photo), or you can use a brush. Dip a pastry brush into the glaze, picking up $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon of glaze, and brush it over one cookie, brushing in one direction. Without taking any more glaze, and working perpendicular to the original direction, brush the glaze until you have a nice crosshatch pattern. Repeat with the remaining cookies. You can serve the cookies 15 minutes after they're glazed, but if you want to save them for later, place them on a lined baking sheet and allow them to air-dry for at least 1 hour before storing.

STORING

The rolled-out dough can be refrigerated for up to 2 days or, wrapped airtight, frozen for up to 2 months. Cut and bake directly from the freezer. Covered with a piece of plastic wrap pressed against its surface, the glaze will keep at room temperature for about 4 days. Packed in a covered container, the cookies will keep at room temperature for 5 to 7 days. They'll get drier, but they'll remain delicious. Unglazed cookies can be wrapped airtight and frozen for up to 2 months.