Sugar & Spice Valentine Biscuits – Spread the Love

NIBBLEDISH CONTRIBUTOR

Ingredients

- 8oz plain flour - 1 level tsp. baking powder - 4oz caster sugar - 4oz Cold Butter - 1/2 tsp. nutmeg - 1 tsp. Cinnamon - 1 tsp. rose water (The flavour is very subtle here and is mostly added because I like the idea of using essence of roses at this time of year, you can cut it out altogether, or add another teaspoon as you like.) - 1 tsp. Vanilla Extract (If you want to be fancy, you can add real vanilla seeds) - 1 Egg - Zest of 2 whole Unwaxed Lemons - 1 squeeze of lemon juice (may be ommitted if your dough looks too wet)

Instructions

During my halcyon years at Uni, which isn't too long ago, I started a tradition. Unfortunately, no-one else has taken it up… yet! I decided to bake a huge batch of cookies, flavoured with sweet warm spices and smelling of roses… wrapped them up in a nice rose-patterned napkin, tied with a bow in sweet little parcels… and distributed them to all of my friends, just to let them know how much I loved them all too… 1. Preheat your oven to 190°C or Gas Mark 5 2. Mix the flour, sugar, nutmeg and cinnamon together and seive the lot into a large bowl. 3. Chop up the butter straight out of the fridge and chop into half-inch cubes. Add the butter cubes to the flour mix and rub all of the butter in with the tips of your fingers, ending up with a fine-crumb mixture. 4. Mix the egg, rose water, vanilla, lemon zest and lemon juice in a small bowl. 5. Add your egg mixture to the flour mixture, combine and knead lightly to form a soft dough. 6. Take roughly a quarter of the dough and place on a floured surface and roll out to roughly 5mm thickness, you may want to experiment with this. In the meantime, put the rest of the dough in the fridge. 7. Use your favourite cookie cutters, I used stars and little men here. I suppose you could use hearts if you want… 8. Place your cut-out cookies onto a greased baking tray, fairly widely spread out. I used a tray with a non-stick baking sheet, these are wonderful, and no need for greasing. If you can find them, you should definitely buy them, and let me know where I can get more, ours is a bit old

now, and a tad worse for wear, but we've not been able to find any of them anywhere… 9. Place your full baking tray in the oven, and bake for 10 - 13 mins, or until they're just turning golden. 10. Whilst they're cooking, work on rolling and cutting the rest of the dough. 11. You might want to leave the cookies to cool slightly on a wire rack after you've taken them out of the oven. Eat a couple, just to check they're ok, of course. 12. You don't have to give the biscuits away, you could just snarf them all by yourself, but this recipe makes… uh, loads (30-odd, depending on the size of your cutters and how thinly you roll.)… and I love giving them away to friends.