

Elfie Visits Kentucky



Lightly Spiced Fruitcake Cookies

Spice cookies with just a touch of candied fruits

- 3/4 cup golden raisins
- 2 to 3 Tablespoons finely chopped orange citron
- 1 cup chopped candied cherries, mixed red and green
- 2 to 3 Tablespoons rum
- 1/2 cup unsalted butter, softened
- 1/2 cup firmly packed brown sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1-1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup chopped pecans

- Put raisins, orange citron, and cherries in a bowl. Stir in the rum; let stand for 1 hour.
- In a mixing bowl, cream the butter, add sugar and eggs; beat until fluffy.
- Sift flour with baking soda, spices, and salt. Slowly add to the butter mixture and blend well.
- Stir in nuts and the rum-soaked fruit. Cover and chill in refrigerator overnight.
- Preheat oven to slow 325 degrees F. oven.
- Line cookie sheets in parchment paper. With a 1 to 2 Tablespoon scooper, form batter into balls the size of walnuts. If dough is sticky, lightly flour your hands while forming into balls. Lightly pat tops of cookies with damp hands.
- Bake on cookie sheets for 10 to 12 minutes. Cool on wire racks.
- Sprinkle with confectioners' sugar. Yield: about 42 small cookies

About the Recipe: This classic of a recipe first appeared in a 1975 issue of Family Circle magazine and quickly became a holiday favorite. Plump raisins, bright red-and-green candied cherries, and a whisper of orange citron are soaked in a splash of rum, then folded into a lightly spiced dough, fragrant with cinnamon, cloves, and nutmeg. After an overnight chill, the dough is shaped into walnut-sized balls, baked until barely golden, and given a snowy dusting of powdered sugar. The result? A soft, chewy cookie that captures all the nostalgic flavors of traditional fruitcake, yet even fruitcake skeptics find themselves reaching for “just one more.”

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Just One More

As I neared Kentucky, the most wonderful wave of holiday scents rolled over me: cloves, nutmeg, and my absolute favorite, cinnamon. I followed that delicious trail straight to a cozy little house with a white picket fence.

I slipped through a slightly open kitchen door just in time to hear Kay singing jolly Christmas carols while she chopped candied fruits and nuts in her flour-dusted apron. Fruitcake in the making? That's what I thought too, until I watched her scoop chilled dough into walnut-sized balls and pop them onto cookie sheets. Too small for cake... oh, winner, winner! Fruitcake cookies!

When they were cool, she gave each one a snowy dusting of powdered sugar. One bite-sized, rum-soaked, spice-kissed treasure, exactly elf-sized. This stop is definitely earning five stars on Santa's list... and I might just beg him to bring an extra one home for me!

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