Cantucci Toscani (Tuscan Almond Cookies)

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The Tuscan answer to biscotti, these twice-baked almond cookies are extra crunchy. In Toscana, cantucci are traditionally dunked in Vin Santo, sweet dessert wine – but they are also perfect for dunking in coffee or tea.

Recipe

Yield: about 60 cookies

1¾ cups raw almonds
5 large eggs
1 1/3 cups sugar
8 tablespoons (1 stick) unsalted butter, melted & cooled

4 cups pastry flour
1 teaspoon baking powder

Preheat the oven or a toaster oven to 350°F.

Toast the almonds in the preheated oven until fragrant and lightly golden, 8 to 10 minutes. Set aside to cool.

Beat 4 eggs with the sugar. Pour in the butter, and beat until combined. Add the flour and baking powder. Mix until well combined, then stir in the almonds. Refrigerate the dough until firm, about 1 hour.

When you are ready to bake the cookies, preheat the oven again to 350°F. Line 2 jelly-roll pans or cookie sheets with parchment paper, and set aside.

Transfer the dough to a work surface, and cut it into two equal portions. Shape each portion of dough into a log the length of the prepared pans. Whisk the remaining egg, and brush it lightly onto the tops and sides of the logs, cleaning the brush of excess egg so it doesn’t drop down the sides.

Bake the logs of dough in the oven for 20 minutes. Allow them to cool on the pans, set on racks.

When the logs are cool, use a sharp knife to cut them at an angle into slices about ½-inch thick. Place the cookies on the pans, cut sides down, and bake at 350°F, turning once, until golden, about 25 minutes.

These crunchy cookies will keep for up to one week in a tightly-covered tin. Serve with Vin Santo, coffee, or tea.

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