

Kourambiedes

Ingredients

- 1½ C slivered almonds (toasted and coarsely chopped)
- 16 oz (2 sticks; ~227g) unsalted butter (room temperature softness)
- 1 C caster sugar (i.e., superfine granulated)
- 1 tsp baking powder
- ¼ tsp salt
- 2 egg yolks
- 1 tsp vanilla extract [Some people like twice this much.]
- 1 T brandy [Likewise, some folks would double this... or leave it out altogether if they don't like/want alcohol.]
- **Optional:** 1-2 tsp vegetable oil [This is a little tricky, but can soften up the cookie for those who have that preference.]
- 500g all-purpose flour (~4C, optionally *to be* sifted)
- 2 C powdered sugar [Any powdery sugar will do as this will be for the outside of the finished cookies.]
- **Optional:** orange water, rose water, or similar

Directions

1. Toast the almond slivers: while heating the oven to 325° F (~160° C), spread the almonds on a baking sheet (on parchment paper), then leave them in the oven for ~8 minutes. These can go quickly, so keep a watchful eye. When done, slide the paper onto a plate and let the almonds cool completely.
1. Coarsely chop the cooled, toasted almonds. (Some people prefer to chop and then toast.)
1. You will probably want to use some sort of mixer for this next bit, because you have to cream the softened butter and caster sugar until it is light and fluffy (and starts to turn white). That can take up to 10 minutes with a machine, or until your arm complains without one; similarly, once that's done...
1. Mix in the baking powder and salt.
1. Stir the egg yolks, vanilla, and brandy together thoroughly, then stir the result into the creamed butter.

1. Stir in the chopped almonds. (You really *do* want them cooled because you *do not* want the butter to start melting.
1. Use a spatula to gradually fold in the flour. A soft dough will start to form (i.e., it should not be left wet and sticky). You want to stop folding/stirring as soon as the dough starts to hold its shape. *If you need to*, add some of the reserved flour, but not so much that it becomes dry. I wish that I had a better way to describe this. There should be a point where you're like, "Oh yeah, that's a soft ball that I could drop into a bowl," because...
1. Let the dough ball stand in a bowl at room temperature for an hour, covered with a clean cloth.
1. That should get it to rise a bit, then wrap the dough ball with cling film and stick it in the fridge. Let it stay there long enough for the butter to firm up again and not be at risk of being melty.
1. While the dough is chilling, take a moment to line a baking tray with parchment.
1. When the dough is chilled, take it out of the fridge and make your crescent cookie shapes. You'll nab about 1 T per cookie (30g), roll it between your palms into a bit of a flattened ball, and then curl it into a crescent.
1. Leaving about a finger's width between them, lay the cookies out on the baking tray.
1. Bake in the middle of the oven at 350° F (~180° C) for 15-20 minutes. Stop when the narrow parts start to lightly brown and the wide part is still pale.
1. Take them out and optionally sprinkle them with the orange water (or a variant, like rose water or even ouzo).
1. Let them cool before handling them or they will break apart.
1. Dredge through the powdered sugar.

After plating, more sugar is often dusted over them, so you do not want to inhale while bringing these up to your mouth. Don't leave them just sitting around, or the powder into a thin layer of icing, which is not terrible, however the moisture can also make the cookie less delicate/short in the moment.