

CHRISTMAS TREATS - PETIT FOURS

Espresso and Dark Chocolate Biscotti - Makes about 32

200g (8ozs) unsalted butter, **at room temperature**
100g (4ozs) sifted icing sugar
1 medium sized **egg yolk**
1 teaspoon vanilla essence
1 teaspoon coffee granules dissolved in 1 teaspoon warm water and **allowed to cool**
250g (10ozs) plain flour - sifted
100g (4ozs) ground almonds
½ teaspoon baking powder
150g (6ozs) plain or milk chocolate

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 170c, gas mark 3
2. Cover two large or three medium sized baking trays with baking parchment
3. Cream the softened butter and icing sugar together until pale and creamy
4. Add the egg yolk, vanilla and dissolved coffee granules and beat again until combined
5. Gradually add the flour, baking powder and ground almonds and mix again until thoroughly combined
6. Turn the mixture out onto a lightly floured surface, knead lightly and divide in two
7. Shape each half into a long sausage about 70cm long (27½ inches)
8. Cut each half diagonally into about 16 slices
9. Place on the lined baking trays and bake for 15 - 20 minutes
10. Leave to cool for 5 minutes and then transfer to a wire rack until cold
11. Melt the chocolate in a bowl over hot **but not boiling** water and dip one end of each biscotti into it
12. Leave to set on baking parchment (reverse the parchment used to line the baking trays for this)

Please Note - You can use a selection of Dark, Milk and White chocolate for dipping to give a variety

Almond Roses - makes about 24

2 large eggs whites
100g (4ozs) ground almonds
75g (3ozs) caster sugar
1 little almond extract
Small pieces of glace cherry to decorate

Method

1. Preheat oven to 180C/160 Fan/ Gas 4
2. Line two baking trays with baking parchment
3. Whisk the egg whites until stiff
4. Fold in the ground almonds, sugar and almond extract
5. Place the mixture into a piping bag fitted with a large star nozzle
6. Pipe the mixture into small rosettes and decorate each with a small piece of glace cherry
7. Bake for about 15 minutes or until golden brown
8. Store in an airtight tin for up to a week or freeze

Chocolate Collettes - Makes 24

200g (8ozs) dark chocolate - 39% cocoa solids
48 paper petit four cases

For the Ganache filling

150ml (¼ pint) Double cream
100g (4ozs) plain chocolate
2 teaspoons Rum, brandy or any liquor

Method

1. Break 200g chocolate into small pieces and melt in a heatproof bowl over a pan of hot (**but not boiling**) water, stirring occasionally until melted
2. With a small fine paintbrush (the type you'd find in a paintbox) coat the insides of 24 petit four cases with chocolate, leave to set and then give them a **second coat**
3. When completely set gently peel off the paper cases and place each chocolate cup into a fresh paper case
4. Break the remaining 100g chocolate into small pieces
5. Place the cream into a small saucepan and bring to just below boiling point
6. Add the chocolate pieces, the rum or brandy and **REMOVE from the heat**
7. Stir until the chocolate has melted - you may need to return the pan to the heat if not completely melted
8. Leave to cool and firm up
9. Place the mixture into a piping bag fitted with a medium size star nozzle and pipe a rosette into each of the chocolate cases
10. Chill until required or freeze