



Ghriba (Almond Cookies)

MAKES 16 COOKIES

In the port city of Essaouira, I cooked with a woman named Alison at L'Atelier Madada. We spent the morning shopping in the spice souk for ingredients to prepare a fish dinner and ghriba (almond cookies) for dessert. We purchased plump almonds which we ground into flour for the dough scented with orange blossom water. After the meal, Alison wrapped the remaining cookies in paper and sent them with me for the long ride back to Marrakesh. Years later, I returned to Morocco and had ghriba in the home of Zara in Fez. I was reminded how delicious they are, so I began making them at home. I've found that using packaged almond flour results in delicious cookies, as long as you use blanched almond flour. But if you want the authentic Moroccan experience, use the freshest almonds you can find, and blanch and grind them yourself. You can source orange blossom water in many gourmet food shops, but you can substitute orange zest, if desired. These cookies freeze well and make a lovely snack with a cup of Moroccan mint tea.

INGREDIENTS

2 1/4 cups blanched almond flour	4 egg yolks
1/3 cup sugar	2 teaspoons lemon juice
1/2 teaspoon salt	zest of one lemon
1 teaspoon baking powder	1 teaspoon orange flower water (or 1 teaspoon orange zest)
1/3 cup butter, softened	3/4 cup powdered sugar

PROCESS:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a medium bowl, combine the almond flour, sugar, salt, and baking powder. In a large bowl, add the butter and egg yolks, stirring until smooth. Add 1 teaspoon lemon juice, lemon zest, and orange flower water (or orange zest). Add the almond flour mixture to the egg mixture and stir to combine, but do not over-mix. Cover dough with plastic wrap and place in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes to allow it to firm up a bit. Put powdered sugar in a small bowl. Form dough into 2" balls (I use a cookie scoop), then roll in powdered sugar. Place dough balls on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper, about 2 inches apart. Bake for 12-15 minutes, until cookies are golden. Let cool completely on a cooling rack. Cookies can be frozen for up to 3 months.