

Diana's Pistachio, Dark Chocolate, and Cranberry Biscotti

Diana's recipe is very straightforward, so I will print it just as she gave it to me. I will add, however, the following caveats from my own baking experience last night: 1) I needed 1/4 cup more flour in the batter and at least 1/4 cup more while I was shaping the logs because the dough was very sticky; 2) I'd recommend shaping the logs on silpat-lined baking sheets if you have them. The dough won't stick as much, and you won't have to transfer it; 3) I used (with Diana's permission) a block of dark chocolate, which I cut with a sharp knife. However, for neater biscotti with more well-defined chocolate bits, following Diana's recommendation to use dark chocolate chips or chunks instead would make for an even neater, prettier cookie. Whichever way you go, this is a fantastic cookie, whether you eat it for breakfast, lunch, dinner, or a snack, all of which I have done in the past 24 hours. Finally (sorry!), the recipe yielded 32 biscotti for me, though Diana indicated that she usually gets 40-50 out of the same recipe. Without further ado...

The ingredients:

1 cup of sugar
3 cups of sifted flour
2 tsp of baking powder
1/4 cup of olive oil
4 extra large eggs (or egg substitutes)
1 tablespoon vanilla

Add ins:

1 10 oz bag dark chocolate mini chunks (I buy the ones at Whole foods, but you could use dark chocolate chips as well)
1.5 cup of chopped pistachios (don't toast them first, they can get too dark during the second bake if you do)
1 cup of cranberries (though I sometimes add a few more, depending on how much the dough can handle)

The process: (You may use a stand mixer, hand mixer, or mix by hand)

Combine the dry ingredients and make a well in the center of the bowl; add the wet ingredients. Mix at medium speed until well blended. The dough will be moist, but requires some kneading (don't do it just yet) to really stick together. Add all the "goodies."

Flour your hands and work surface, lift the dough out of the bowl, then knead the dough lightly. Add flour until dough is smooth and only slightly sticky.

Cut the dough in half, and pat out to 4 by 12 inches, about 1/2 inch thick. Do the same with the remaining dough. Place both logs on a cookie sheet lined with parchment paper.

Bake 20 minutes at 350° (the very middle of the log may still seem a little raw; that's ok. If the whole log is still very soft, it needs a few more minutes). Remove from oven, and use a large knife to cut into slices 1/2 inch thick. (Let the dough cool slightly so the chocolate isn't totally oozing, but the dough must be at least somewhat warm to slice easily; I usually let it rest about 5-10 minutes and then transfer to a wooden cutting board to slice).

Turn each slice on its side and bake at 425° for 3-4 minutes. Remove from oven, flip and toast on other side for 3 minutes. This step is VERY oven dependent; watch carefully to see if they are browning (you want them a light brown) or burning. If you want a crisper biscotti, keep them in the oven longer. Remove from oven and cool.

Notes:

Ø Cooking time really varies by oven; the dough may be a bit "raw" looking right at the center, but if it is still raw at the edges, it needs more time on the first bake; the second bake usually crisps things up nicely, but watch closely – it goes from toasty brown to burnt in 30 seconds