

Cayenne Chocolate Coffee Cookies

Shalana Patout

"These are great cookies to bring to holiday parties! They seem like such an unassuming little cookie at first. I have people ask me for the recipe constantly!"

Ingredients

1/3 cup dried cranberries	1/2 tsp. baking powder
1/3 cup dried cherries	1/2 tsp. salt
1/3 cup raisins	1/2 tsp. cinnamon
4 T. coffee liquor (such as Kahlua)	1/2 tsp. black pepper
8 ounces semisweet chocolate, roughly chopped (I used TCHO for something really special. You can use Ghiradelli or another bar type chocolate)	1/8 – 1/4 tsp. cayenne pepper (depending on how hot you like your cookies)
4 tablespoons unsalted butter	2 large eggs at room temperature
1 cup all-purpose flour	3/4 cup packed light brown sugar
	1 T. pure vanilla extract

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line two large baking sheets with parchment paper.
2. In a small saucepan, combine dried fruit, raisins and coffee liquor. Bring to a simmer over medium heat and remove from heat immediately.
3. Heat chopped chocolate and butter in a microwave-safe bowl in 20-second increments, stirring between each, until almost melted; do not overheat. (I've ruined too many good bars of chocolate this way, so I just make a double boiler out of a metal mixing bowl and a saucepan with simmering water).
4. In a large bowl, sift together flour, baking powder, salt, cinnamon, black pepper and cayenne. In a separate mixing bowl, beat eggs, brown sugar, and vanilla on high speed until light and fluffy, about 3 minutes. Reduce speed to low; beat in melted chocolate.
5. Mix in flour mixture until just combined. Stir in fruit and coffee liquor mixture. At this point the batter will seem thing — more like a brownie batter than a cookie dough. Don't worry, it will hold up.
6. Drop heaping tablespoons of dough 2 to 3 inches apart onto baking sheets. Bake until cookies are shiny and crackly yet soft in the center, about 12 to 15 minutes. Cool on baking sheets 10 minutes then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely. Recipe yields about 24 cookies.

Notes: You can use any variation of dried fruit to equal a cup.