

CAPPUCCINO SANDWICHES: ESPRESSO-HAZELNUT COOKIES WITH VANILLA FILLING

INGREDIENTS

Cookies

1 cup butter, softened
1 1/4 cups sugar
1 egg
1 egg yolk
4 teaspoons instant coffee granules
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
1 cup finely ground hazelnuts

Filing

1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, room temperature
1/2 cup solid vegetable shortening
3 1/2 cups confectioners' sugar
1 tablespoon pure vanilla extract

Glaze/Drizzle

1 11.5 oz package semi-sweet chocolate chips
4 tablespoons butter

DIRECTIONS

In the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, cream butter and sugar. Beat in the egg, yolk, espresso granules and vanilla. Combine flour, salt and baking powder; gradually add to creamed mixture mixing well. Stir in hazelnuts. Divide dough into thirds; flatten each portion into a circle. Wrap each in plastic wrap; refrigerate for 1 hour or until easy to handle.

Preheat oven to 375F. On a lightly floured surface, roll out one portion of dough to 1/8 inch thickness. Cut with a floured 1 1/2 inch cookie cutter; place 1/2 inch apart on ungreased baking sheet. Repeat with remaining dough. Bake at 375F for 10-12 minutes or until edges begin to brown. Remove to wire racks to cool.

To make the filing, in the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, cream butter and shortening until well combined. With mixer on low speed, gradually add the confectioners' sugar, and continue beating until light and fluffy, about 2 minutes. Add the vanilla, and beat to combine. Set aside at room temperature until ready to use; do not chill. Spread filling over the bottom of half of the cookies; top with remaining cookies.

To decorate, melt semisweet chocolate chips and butter in a double boiler; careful not to let the mixture break; drizzle over cookies. Let stand until set.

Store in an airtight container. Yield: approximately 3 dozen cookies.