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WHOLE WHEAT TEA BISCUITS

BY ANITA SAHI

This recipe was inspired by my family. In our travels to India, we would often head to local sweets shops and bakeries and find a to-die-for assortment of biscuits, milk cakes and savory rusks. We also welcomed anywhere from 2 to 20 people a day for tea at home (no joke). Each visit from a guest would have us excited over the prospect of snack pairing. For Indians, tea time (or chai time, as we call it) is sacred. Our tea of choice is usually a *Masala Chai*, whose permutation differs from family to family and individual to individual. My specific chai includes influences from my own parents, from Varinder and from his family. In COVID lockdown, we've become even more self-reliant and I have started to bake again (one of my first jobs was baking in a professional restaurant). These Whole Wheat Tea Biscuits were dreamt up for three very specific qualities: 1) They had to be nutty and stand up to strong, aromatic masala chai (ginger, cardamom, cloves, black pepper), 2) They had to be thin and snackable all times of day and 3) They had to have an undeniable crumbliness (think of Biscoff cookies). For the latter, the use of a touch of gram flour did the trick. I mixed these cookies by hand because I love to judge a dough by how it feels, but they are super versatile and, for a less "messy" preparation, can be done in a standing mixer as well.



MAKES 12-18 LARGE OR 24-30 SMALL COOKIES

INGREDIENTS

- ½ c Powdered Sugar
- Pinch Sea Salt
- 5 Green Cardamom Pods
(De-husked, seeds finely ground)
- Pinch Saffron
- 1/8 tsp Nutmeg (Grated)
- 1 c Whole Wheat Flour (Atta)
- 2 T Besan (Gram or Chickpea Flour)
- ¼ Baking Soda
- ½ c Cold Unsalted Butter (Cut into
Cubes)
- 1-2 T Milk



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PREPARATION

1. Preheat your oven to 350° F. Grease a parchment lined cookie sheet with some butter and set aside.
2. Combine your powdered sugar, sea salt, cardamom, saffron, grated nutmeg and keep aside.
3. In a fine mesh strainer, sift whole wheat flour, gram flour and baking soda into a mixing bowl.
4. To your mixing bowl, add your cold butter and lightly mix with your hands until you achieve an even sandy texture. You can also try to do this with a standing bowl mixer with a paddle attachment, but you will have to stop, scrape and start multiple times. Be careful not to overmix your dough. It should resemble crushed graham crackers.
5. Now add your powdered sugar mixture and gently mix together with your sandy dough. I like to use a rubber spatula to work the sugar into the dough.
6. Your dough will still resist coming together a bit. Add 1-2 T of milk until the mixture holds itself together. Don't add all the milk at once, taking care to add as little as you need.
7. Bring your dough together in a ball. Do not knead.
8. Pinch small or medium-sized balls from the dough and lightly roll them between your palms.
9. Place the balls on the greased cookie sheet.
10. Either gently press them with your hand, the bottom of a glass or a cookie press to flatten them. You can leave them as is or make a design over the top with a fork or toothpick.
11. Bake the cookies for 20-25 minutes until light golden brown. Flip your tray around halfway through baking.
12. After a couple of minutes, remove your cookies from the sheet and transfer to a cooling rack.
13. When cooled to room temperature, store in an airtight jar. These are the perfect accompaniment to a masala chai and they are also perfectly tasty all on their own. Enjoy!