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Andy's jam thumbprint cookies a perfect holiday treat

By Susie Iventosch



Photo Wendy Scheck

I received this beautiful photo of Andy Scheck's jam thumbprint cookies the other day. That got me thinking . I can always use a great new cookie recipe! Not only are these visually pleasing cookies, but they are delicious too. I asked Andy if he had a good background story to these cookies, thinking perhaps his mom used to make them for him back in Germany, or they were a European tradition that he likes to make for the holidays. But his answer surprised me! I had given the Schecks some homemade huckleberry jam and he says that inspired Wendy to encourage him to make cookies with the jam. Well, that is very nice, but I am all out of huckleberry jam, so I used raspberry jam in half the batch and melted dark chocolate for the other half and the cookies themselves are delicious. It took Andy a couple of attempts to get a dough that worked well for these cookies. The first recipe he tried came out too flat. So, he went back to the drawing board, did some research,

and came up with this recipe. They have a perfect texture and are fun to make. I also learned something new, which is the use of pure vanilla powder, which Andy uses for the powdered sugar dusting on top of the cookies. I'd never bought it before, but he says vanilla powder is widely used in baking in Germany and they often sell it in small paper bags. Here he uses Cook's Pure Vanilla Powder, which is a product manufactured right here in California, in Paso Robles.

I have changed Andy's method for making the cookies, because I usually cream the butter and sugar together before adding the dries, and he is used to mixing all of the dries first and then adding the butter and egg. Other than that, this is his imprint on jam thumbprint cookies and they are yummy!

INGREDIENTS

1 stick butter, softened to room temp (approximately 3.8 ounces)
 1/4 cup granulated sugar
 1/4 cup powdered sugar
 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
 1 egg
 1 2/3 cup all-purpose flour
 Pinch of salt
 Lemon zest from 1 Meyer lemon
 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
 1/4 cup of your favorite jam (I also made these with melted dark chocolate in the middle)

For Sugar Dusting:

1 tablespoon pure vanilla powder
 1 tablespoon powdered sugar

DIRECTIONS

Soften butter to room temperature. In a mixing bowl, beat together butter, granulated sugar and powdered sugar. Add vanilla and egg and beat until thoroughly incorporated. Add flour, salt and lemon zest and mix until integrated. Gather dough into a ball, wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate for 30 minutes. Form dough into small balls about 3/4 to 1-inch in diameter. (If dough is refrigerated longer, that is fine, but it will need to be taken out to soften a bit before rolling into the small balls.)

Place balls on cookie sheet lined with parchment paper and push a dent in the middle with your thumb to form a flattened cookie with an indentation in the middle.

Bake at 390 F for about 15-18 minutes until edges become light brown. Allow to cool for 10-15 minutes. When completely cooled, sift vanilla powder-powdered sugar mixture over entire cookie. Then spoon a bit of jam, or melted chocolate into the indentation of the cookies.

Enjoy!



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