

ALMOND CRANBERRY COOKIE SQUARES

Soon after developing my first WIBC Cookie Square products I became tempted by the idea of making an almond version. Although I knew to base it off of my Toasted Almond Biscotti, the cookie in my mind lacked something. This changed around mid-June 2016 when I had the opportunity to see Ellen – a friend through the Scottish community who I had not seen in a few years and was an early supporter of my baking business. I wanted to bring some cookies to show what I had accomplished with my company, so I found out her favourite flavours. This launched an experiment – to make a batch of Almond Cranberry Biscotti! When I ran short on time preparing for the visit, I realized two things ... I could make a round of Cookie Squares faster than biscotti, and dried cranberries were EXACTLY the inspiration that my Almond Cookie Squares had been looking for. On my first attempt, the recipe was a hit – this one is for you, Ellen!

U.S. STANDARD – METRIC	INGREDIENT
12 Tablespoons – 180 ml.....	Unsalted Butter, softened
1 1/2 cup – 360 ml.....	White Sugar
2.....	Large Eggs
4 Tablespoons – 60 ml.....	Water
4 teaspoons – 20 ml.....	Pure Almond Extract
4 teaspoons – 20 ml.....	Pure Vanilla Extract
1 1/2 teaspoons – 7.5 ml.....	Baking Powder
2 1/3 cups – 650 ml.....	All-Purpose Flour
1 cups – 240 ml.....	Sliced Almonds
1 cups – 240 ml.....	Dried Cranberries

MIXING

1. In a mixing bowl, cream butter and then combine the sugar. It may be necessary to stop mixing and scrape the bottom of the bowl so that butter and sugar are mixed uniformly.
2. Beat in eggs, water, almond and vanilla extracts and baking powder.
3. While mixing, add one cup of flour at a time. Avoid over-mixing the flour; if necessary, stop mixing between making measurements and adding flour.

4. Add the sliced almonds and dried cranberries as the last of the flour becomes completely blended.

BAKING

1. Heat oven to 325° F/165° C/Gas Mark 3.
2. Using cooking spray or lining with parchment paper, prepare a 9 x 13 inch baking pan. Transfer the dough from mixing the bowl to the center of your pan and spread evenly.
3. Place pan in the middle of the oven and bake for 45 minutes.
4. When a knife blade or toothpick comes out clean, remove pan from oven and set on a cooling rack.
5. Once completely cooled, cut into 32 even pieces. This may be done in the pan. Alternatively, the entire non-cut baked good can be removed from the pan and cut on a cutting board. Store in a tightly sealed container.

TIPS & THOUGHTS

In place of the dried cranberries, I encourage you to experiment with other dried fruits and berries. Apples, apricots, açai, or blackberries – use your imagination and let me know how it goes! Hmm... almond and candied-ginger?

PAIRINGS

Experiment – let me know what you think!