

Pfeffernüssen

Makes 8-9 dozen

3 c all-purpose flour
1 c cake and pastry flour
½ tsp baking soda
½ tsp ground white pepper
1 tsp ground cinnamon*
½ tsp ground cardamom*
½ tsp ground ginger*
¼ tsp ground cloves*
¼ tsp freshly-grated nutmeg*
¾ tsp salt
¾ c butter, softened
1 ¼ c packed brown sugar
2 eggs (large)

*I use rounded measuring spoons for these measurements

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Combine all dry ingredients and set aside.
3. In a mixer bowl, cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add eggs one at a time, beating thoroughly after each addition.
4. Stir in dry ingredients about a half-cup at a time.
5. Roll into balls about the size of a walnut half (I use a disher that has about a 1-inch diameter: this makes an interesting walnut-like texture).
6. Bake two sheets at a time: 9 minutes, then switch top to bottom and rotate each 180 degrees; bake 6 minutes longer. Cool and store in airtight containers for at least a week (preferably two weeks) to allow the flavors to develop.

If you wish, frost with royal icing thinned to pouring consistency (Martha Stewart's Christmas Cookie publication has a good recipe for pourable royal icing). Try icing only half, then serving both iced and un-iced cookies on the same plate for a nice decorative effect.