

Sugar Plums

...as in *The Sugar Plum Fairy* in Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker Suite*, or as in "...visions of **sugar plums** dancing in [your] head." These are supposedly the real thing, gleaned from the cooking magazine *Saveur*, December 1999.

Remember to use the freshest possible spices: for sure, grate your nutmeg on a hand grater.

Makes 75

2 cups whole blanched almonds

¼ cup honey

2 tsp. grated orange zest

1 ½ tsp. ground cinnamon

½ tsp. ground allspice

½ tsp. freshly grated nutmeg

1 cup finely chopped dried apricots

1 cup finely chopped pitted dates

1 cup confectioner's sugar

1. Preheat oven to 400°. Arrange almonds on a baking sheet in a single layer and toast in oven for 10 minutes. Set aside to cool, and then finely chop.
2. Meanwhile, combine honey, orange zest, cinnamon, allspice, and nutmeg in a medium mixing bowl. Add almonds, apricots, and dates and mix well.
3. Pinch off rounded teaspoon-size pieces of the mixture and roll into balls. (Rinse your hands often, as mixture is very sticky.) Roll balls in sugar then refrigerate in single layers between sheets of waxed paper in airtight containers for up to 1 month. Their flavor improves after ripening for several days.
4. Sugar Plums tend to absorb the powdered sugar, so re-dust just before eating, if you like.