

Chocolate-Chile Cookies

These are a Texas favorite: a heat spike in an otherwise intensely chocolate cookie. Makes 32 cookies

Ingredients

2 ounces unsweetened chocolate, chopped
1 cup all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper
1/2 cup sliced almonds
1 cup packed dark brown sugar
1/3 cup granulated sugar
2 large eggs, at room temperature
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1. Position racks in the top and bottom thirds of the oven; preheat the oven to 350°F. Spray two large cookie sheets with nonstick spray.
2. Place the chocolate in a small bowl and microwave on high for 15 seconds. Stir well, then continue microwaving in 15-second increments, stirring after each, until half the chocolate has melted. Remove the bowl from the microwave and continue stirring until the chocolate has fully melted. Set aside to cool for 5 minutes while you begin making the cookie dough.
3. Whisk together the flour, baking soda, salt, and cayenne in a medium bowl; set aside.
4. Place the almonds in a skillet set over medium-low heat; cook, stirring often, until lightly browned and aromatic, about 4 minutes. Set aside.
5. Beat both sugars and the eggs in a large bowl with an electric mixer at medium speed until thick and pale brown, about 5 minutes. Beat in the melted chocolate and vanilla until smooth.
6. Remove the beaters and stir in the flour mixture with a wooden spoon, just until all the flour has been moistened. Stir in the toasted almonds.
7. Drop by rounded teaspoonfuls onto the prepared baking sheet, spacing the mounds about 2 inches apart.
8. Bake in the top and bottom thirds of the oven for 5 minutes. Reverse the cookie sheets top to bottom and back to front, and continue baking until firm and slightly puffed, about 10 minutes. Cool on the baking sheet 5 minutes before transferring to a wire rack. Wait for the cookie sheets to cool again, approximately 5 minutes, before spraying with nonstick spray and making more cookies.

Serving size: 2 cookies. **POINTS** value: 3 per serving