

Gifts from the Kitchen

December 2009

Menu:

Savory Parmesan-Thyme-Chili Shortbread Cookies
Pomegranate-Tangerine Liqueur
Dark Chocolate, Toffee, Pistachio Bark with Sea Salt
Orange Blossom Pound Cake



Savory Parmesan-Thyme-Chili Shortbread Cookies

makes 24 cookies

1 3/4 cup flour

3/4 cup grated parmesan or pecorino cheese

1 tsp. kosher salt

1 tbl. chopped fresh thyme

1 tsp. crushed red chili flakes

2 tbl. sugar

2 sticks cold unsalted butter, cut into small pieces

*** Preparation ****

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

In a food processor, combine the flour, cheese, salt, thyme, chili flakes and sugar. Pulse to combine. Add the butter and pulse until dough comes together. Dump dough onto a floured surface and gather into a ball. Divide in half and roll into about a 12-inch log. Cut 1-inch pieces from each log and roll into ball.

Place each ball onto parchment-lined baking sheets and press into a disk (should be about 2-inches). Place sheets into the refrigerator to chill for 10 minutes.

Bake for about 15 minutes or until golden. Let cookies cool completely before serving or packaging.



Pomegranate-Tangerine Liqueur

makes about 7-8 cups

2 cups 100% pomegranate juice

2 cups sugar

4 tangerines, cut into slices (with skins still on)

1 750-ml bottle vodka

***** Preparation ******

In a pot, whisk together the pomegranate juice, sugar and tangerine slices. Cook over medium heat until sugar has dissolved. Pour into a bowl and place into the refrigerator to chill.

Strain the liquid into a larger bowl and add the vodka.

Pour into any size bottle and seal with a cork.

SERVING SUGGESTIONS:

- Serve over ice for an after-dinner drink.
- Mix with Patron Tequila and a squeeze of lime juice for a Pomegranate-Tangerine Margarita. Shake and serve over ice.
- Mix two parts good-quality vodka for a Pomegranate-Tangerine Martini. Shake and strain into a martini glass rimmed with sugar.



Dark Chocolate, Toffee, Pistachio Bark with Sea Salt

Makes 1 1/4 lb bark (8 small bags)

1 lb dark chocolate

1 cup toffee pieces, (or crushed up Heath Bar)

1 1/2 cups toasted pistachios

1 tsp sea salt

***** Preparation ******

In a large bowl over a pot of simmering water, melt the chocolate (be sure the bowl is not touching the water). Stir occasionally until chocolate is melted.

Pour the chocolate onto a baking sheet - keep the chocolate about 1/4-inch thick. Do not spread too thin. While the chocolate is still warm, sprinkle with the toffee pieces, pistachios and salt.

Place in the refrigerator and chill for 1 hour or until hard.

Break into pieces and serve.

Orange Blossom Pound Cake

makes 1 loaf (9x5x3-inch pan)

For the Cake

1 1/2 cup cake flour
2 1/2 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. salt
1 1/2 sticks butter
1 1/2 cups whole milk ricotta cheese
1 1/2 cups sugar
3 eggs
1 tsp. vanilla extract
1 tsp orange blossom water
1 orange, zested

For the Glaze

1 1/2 cup powdered sugar
1 tsp orange blossom water
3 tbl. fresh orange juice
1/4 cup sliced almonds, toasted

***** Preparation ******

For the Cake:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Spray a loaf pan with non-stick spray (or 3 mini loaf pans).

In a bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder and salt.

In another bowl, combine the butter, ricotta and sugar. Mix with an electric mixer until fluffy. Add the eggs and mix to combine. Add the vanilla, orange blossom water and orange zest. Mix to combine. Add the flour and mix until just combined.

Pour the mixture into the pan(s) and bake for about 45 minutes for a full loaf pan or about 20-25 minutes for smaller pans.

Remove from oven and let cool.

For the Glaze:

In a bowl, whisk together the powdered sugar, orange blossom water and orange juice until smooth.

When cakes have cooled about 10 minutes, drizzle with glaze and top with almonds. Let cool completely before serving.