
What Geeks Eat...

Hermit Cookies

4 ounces unsalted butter, room temp
1 1/4 cups packed dark brown sugar
1 large egg and 1 large egg yolk
1/4 cup molasses
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 3/4 cups all-purpose flour
3/4 teaspoon baking powder
3/4 teaspoon baking soda
1 tablespoon ground ginger
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg
1/4 teaspoon coarse salt
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1/8 teaspoon ground cloves
1 cup dried cranberries
1 cup pecans, rough chopped

Brown Sugar Icing

1/4 cup packed dark brown sugar
2 tablespoons whole milk, plus more if needed
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
1 cup sifted confectioners' sugar, plus more if needed

Preheat oven to 350°. Line the bottom of a rimmed baking sheet with parchment and butter the sides.

Sift together the flour, baking powder, baking soda, ground ginger, cinnamon, nutmeg, salt, pepper, and cloves and set aside.

Fit your mixer with the paddle attachment and cream the butter and sugar together until well combined. Add the eggs and mix until light and fluffy. Add the molasses and vanilla and mix well. Add the flour mixture and mix just long enough to combine thoroughly. Dump in the cranberries and pecans and whirl about for 30 seconds or so...just enough to get good distribution.

Now comes the hard part...this recipe is much more suited to a drop cookie because of its denseness...but it excels as a bar cookie ...so dump the cookie dough into 4 piles on the baking sheet and slowly and methodically spread it out until it cover the entire sheet. Patience will pay off here. Bake for about 15 minutes and then cool on a rack.

For the icing you'll cook the brown sugar, milk, and butter in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Stir constantly until the butter melts and the sugar dissolves. Remove from heat; whisk in vanilla and confectioners' sugar. If icing is too thick to drizzle, stir in more milk, a teaspoon at a time. If icing is too thin, stir in more confectioners' sugar, a teaspoon at a time. Let cool slightly.

Drizzle bars with icing. Let them sit for at least 15 minutes before cutting into bars.