



SHORTBREAD COOKIES

(Kourambiethes)

Christmas without kourambiethes is like Easter without lamb! These sugar-dusted butter cookies will melt in your mouth.

1 pound unsalted butter
3 cups confectioner's sugar
2 large egg yolks
1/3 cup brandy or whisky
1 teaspoon vanilla
4-4 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 cup blanched almonds, finely chopped and lightly toasted

In a large bowl and using an electric mixer, cream the butter for 10 minutes, until light and fluffy. Gradually add 1 cup confectioner's sugar and beat another 5 minutes, until very white. Beat in the egg yolks, brandy and vanilla. Combine 2 more cups of flour with the baking powder, and add to and beat into the butter. Mix in the almonds and enough remaining flour to form soft, smooth dough.

Preheat oven to 350°F. Line several cookie sheets with parchment paper. To form the cookies, take a walnut-size piece of dough at a time, flatten it a little, and form either into crescents or into various shapes using a cooking cutter. Place 1 inch apart on the paper-lined cookie sheets, and bake for 15-20 minutes, until the cookies are pale yellow. Remove and cool on a rack for 10 minutes.

Sprinkle 1 cup confectioner's sugar on a large sheet of wax paper. Transfer the hot cookies to the wax paper and sift the remaining confectioner's sugar liberally over them.

Yield: About 8 dozen