

Ricciarelli — Italian Almond Cookies

If you love almond, if you love marzipan, if you amaretti, you'll love ricciarelli. Traditionally made in Italy, the Tuscan/Sienese cookies are nutty, a little crispy and mostly chewy. The powdered sugar coating makes it a particularly festive treat.

6 ounces ground almonds*
1 3/4 cups confectioner's sugar, plus extra for rolling
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 tablespoon flour
1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
2 egg whites, room temperature
1 teaspoon almond extract
1 tablespoon grated orange zest, optional

Preheat the oven to 400°F. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper or Silpats.

Combine the ground almonds, confectioner's sugar, baking powder, flour and kosher salt. Set aside the dry ingredients.

Using a whisk attachment, beat the egg whites until they form stiff peaks.

Fold the dry ingredients into the egg whites. Add the almond extract and mix thoroughly.

Form the dough into 1-inch balls and roll them to coat with confectioner's sugar. Place them on the prepared cookie sheets and flatten them slightly.

Bake for eight minutes or until slightly golden on the edges. Beware of over-baking, as they dry out easily. Let the cookies rest on the cookie sheets for five minutes and then move them to a wire rack to cool completely. They are definitely best on the day they are baked.