

Tenderest Shortbread from “Baking with Dorie”

Ingredients

2 sticks (8 ounces; 226 grams) unsalted butter, room temperature
2/3 cup (80 grams) confectioners' sugar
1/4 teaspoon fine sea salt
grated zest of 1 lemon (optional)
2 large egg yolks, at room temperature
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
2 cups (272 grams) all purpose flour

Directions

Working in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, or in a large bowl with a hand mixer, beat the butter, confectioners' sugar, salt and zest (if using) together on medium speed until soft, creamy, and homogenous, scraping the bowl as needed.

Beat in the egg yolks, one by one, followed by the vanilla.

Turn off the mixer, add the flour all at once, and mix on low speed only until incorporated.

Scrape the dough out onto the work surface and divide it in two—the dough will be soft and sticky. Put each piece on a sheet of parchment and cajole it into a log that's 6-6 1/2 inches long, tightening the log with the paper, and twisting the ends. Refrigerate the logs for at least 3 hours (overnight is better) or freeze them for 2 hours.

(The logs can be frozen for up to 2 months; slice when they're still frozen. You may need to add a minute or two to the bake time.)

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

Using a chef's knife, cut each log into 1/2 inch thick rounds. Lay them out on the baking sheet, leaving about an inch between them.

Bake, rotating the sheet after 10 minutes, for 21-23 minutes, or until the cookies are golden and set. The cookies will still be soft, so leave them on the sheet for 5 minutes before transferring them to a rack and allowing them to cool to room temperature.