

Lebanese Butter Cookies, Ghraybeh

a recipe from www.maureenabood.com

The Lebanese butter cookie is one of the least elaborate, yet most delicious, cookies in my holiday parade. These cookies can be shaped in diamonds, as I've done here, or in simple flattened circles (start with a small ball, then flatten). Top with a blanched almond or pine nut (before baking) instead of dusting with powdered sugar. Flavor the dough with vanilla instead of orange blossom water, or nothing at all. Good butter (like Plugra) will always make these cookies taste wonderful. The recipe is easily doubled, and yields about 3 dozen cookies.

1 cup (8 oz.) unsalted butter, room temperature
1 cup powdered sugar
1 teaspoon orange blossom water, mazaher
2 cups unbleached, all-purpose flour

Using a stand mixer with the whisk attachment or sturdy hand-held mixer, whip the butter on high speed until fluffy, creamy and pale, about five minutes. Stop and scrape the sides of the bowl with a spatula for even whipping. Add the sugars and orange blossom water and whip until well combined and fluffy. Using a large rubber spatula or spoon, slowly blend in the flour, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup at a time. Cover and let the dough rest for 30 minutes.

Heat oven to 300 degrees and place rack in the center of the oven. Handle the dough as gingerly and swiftly as possible to shape the cookies. Take a large handful of the dough and shape it into a log about $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch crosswise on a lightly floured work surface. If the dough is crumbly, gently push it together. Use a sharp knife to cut $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch pieces diagonally. Place these diamonds on an ungreased, heavy sheet pan and bake until the cookies are baked through but still pale, 20-25 minutes. They will spread a bit into a flat diamond shape. The cookies should not be browned except for minimally on the bottom. Remove from the oven and cool on the sheet pan. Remove carefully with a metal spatula and sift powdered sugar over the cookies to serve. Ghraybeh keeps frozen or in an airtight container for up to two weeks.