

Filled Fig Bars

This is a variation on David Lebovitz's recipe, as published in his fine, fine book, Room For Dessert.

Ingredients:

Filling:

2 cups fresh fig puree*
½ cup honey
zest from half of a lemon

Cookie Dough:

6 tablespoons unsalted butter, soft
⅔ cup brown sugar
½ teaspoon vanilla extract
2 each whole eggs, at room temperature
2 cups unbleached all-purpose flour
1 ½ ounces toasted almonds**
½ teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon Kosher salt



*If fresh figs are unavailable or prohibitively expensive, David suggests using 2 cups halved dried figs, ⅓ cup white sugar, lemon zest and ¼ teaspoon vanilla: cover with water in a medium saucepan and simmer until figs are tender and filling has thickened.

**or walnuts, or ½ cup flour and omit food processor step.

Procedure:

1. Combine fig puree, honey and lemon zest in a medium-sized saucepan.
2. Bring to a boil, reduce to a simmer and cook, stirring occasionally, until very thick.
3. Remove from heat and chill until thoroughly cold.
4. Cream butter and brown sugar until fluffy.
5. Gradually add eggs and vanilla, beating very well until mixture is uniformly smooth and velvety.
6. If using nuts, combine with flour in workbowl of food processor, fitted with the metal blade. Run until nuts are well ground and mixture is as even as it's gonna get. Measure total contents to 2 ½ cups.
7. Combine nut/flour mixture with salt and baking powder and add to egg mixture.
8. Combine thoroughly.
9. Knead a few times and turn out in quarters onto plastic wrap.



10. Form each quarter into a flat rectangle, wrap tightly, and chill at least thirty minutes.
11. Preheat oven to 350°F.
12. On a lightly floured surface (*I used a pastry cloth – it comes in handy later*), roll the first piece of dough out to about five inches by nine inches. Spread one quarter of the fig filling evenly in a lengthwise strip down the center of the dough, keeping it piled up a bit in the center.
13. Brush all exposed surfaces of the dough lightly with water.
14. Fold the dough around the filling: fold the long top edge toward you to cover at least half of the filling, then fold the bottom edge up over the rest of the filling, overlapping the top edge a little and completely encasing the filling.
15. Place roll seam side down on a lined baking sheet (*here's the handy pastry cloth part! You can pick up the cloth and roll the cookie log onto the sheet pan, thus avoiding probably breakage when picking the roll up with your hands*).
16. Pinch the ends together to [again] completely enclose the filling. Repeat the process with the remaining three pieces of dough, putting two cookie rolls on a baking sheet.
17. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes, until the dough is coloured a deep golden brown.
18. Remove the cookie rolls from the oven and cool for at least 15 minutes.
19. Slice.

