

Cleo Coyle's Pfeffernüsse

German gingerbread snowball cookies

Text & photos (c) 2011 by Alice Alfonsi,
who writes the Coffeehouse Mysteries as
Cleo Coyle with her husband, Marc Cerasini

*If you love home-baked
gingerbread cookies, but you hate
rolling pins, this is the cookie for you!
Like any recipe that's been around
for hundreds of years, pfeffernüsse
has countless variations. My version takes a kinder,
gentler approach to the cookie, making it softer than
the traditional version and keeping the spice aspect
more sweetly balanced among ginger, nutmeg,
cinnamon, and allspice (with just a pinch of pepper in
these "peppernuts" to keep them lively). May you eat
them with joy! ~ Cleo*

Ingredients

3 cups flour
½ teaspoon baking soda
¼ teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon allspice
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1 teaspoon nutmeg
1-1/2 teaspoons ground ginger
2 pinches of ground white (or black) pepper
¾ cup butter (1-1/2 sticks), softened
½ cup white, granulated sugar
½ cup dark brown sugar, packed
1 egg
1/3 cup molasses, unsulphered (not blackstrap!)
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
2 cups powdered (confectioners') sugar

Yields: 4 to 5 dozen cookies, depending on size



Step 1 - Mix the dough: Preheat oven to 350° Fahrenheit. Whisk together flour, baking soda, salt, and ground spices. Set aside. In a separate bowl, use an electric mixer to cream the softened butter and sugars until light and fluffy. Add in egg, molasses, and vanilla. Now gradually add in the dry flour mixture, blending just until the dough comes together. (Do not overwork this dough or you'll produce gluten in the flour, which will toughen your cookies.)

Step 2 - Chill the dough: Form dough into a disc or ball. Wrap in plastic and rest the dough in the refrigerator for two hours or overnight. (The resting allows the dough to hydrate and the flavors to develop for better tasting cookies.)

Step 3 - Bake the cookies: When ready to bake, break off small pieces of dough and roll into balls. I make mine a little less than 1-inch in diameter. If you prefer a softer cookie, roll balls larger. Bake 12 to 16 minutes, depending on oven and whether you're using parchment or a silicon sheet. You're looking for the cookies to bake up a nice, golden brown and crack slightly on the surface. For softer cookies, underbake them.

Step 4 - Cleo's double-dusting: While the cookies are still warm, roll them in powdered sugar. The heat of each cookie will melt the sugar into a lovely, light crust of glaze. After the cookies cool a bit more, roll them a second time in the powdered sugar and you'll have your final snowball dusting.

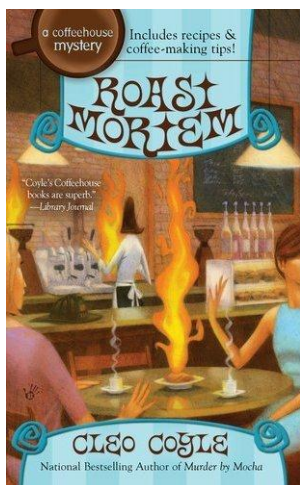
Storage tips: Make sure your cookies are completely cool before storing in an airtight container. When cookies are stored warm, condensation can occur, turning your treats soggy. Of course, you can always serve them warm and...



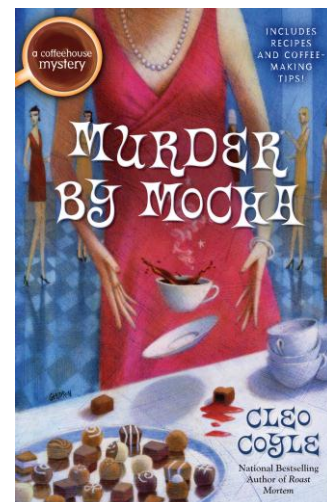
Eat with Joy to the World!

~ Cleo Coyle, author of
the Coffeehouse Mysteries

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