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CHEWY PERSIMMON & GINGER COOKIES

MAKES 35

INGREDIENTS

110g unsalted butter, room temperature
1/2 cup of caster sugar
1/2 tsp salt
1 egg
2 cups plain flour, sifted
1 tsp baking powder, sifted
1 tsp ground ginger, sifted
1 tsp ground cinnamon, sifted
1/2 tsp ground cloves, sifted
1/2 tsp ground nutmeg, sifted
2 heaped Tbs of chopped crystallised ginger
1 cup raisins OR dried currants
1 cup chopped walnuts OR pecans
2 ripe persimmons, peeled and pureed

THINGS TO KNOW

Season: March to June

Selection: Choose persimmons that are plump and glossy from pale to deep orange. Surface blemises don't affect flavour and eating quality.

Storage: Store at room temperature for up to five days, do not refrigerate.

Serving: Can be eaten peeled or unpeeled, cut or uncut.

METHOD

Preheat oven to 180°C or 170°C fan forced.

With an electric cake mixer, beat butter, sugar and salt until pale and fluffy. Add egg and beat until combined. Add persimmon puree and mix with a wooden spoon until combined. Add flour, baking powder, ginger, cinnamon, cloves and nutmeg, and mix with a wooden spoon until combined. Add raisins or currants and nuts, and mix until combined.

Drop teaspoons full of the batter onto a baking tray lined with parchment and bake for 15-20 minutes.

Cool on a wire rack before storing in an airtight container.

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PERSIMMON, SAGO & COCONUT PUDDING

INGREDIENTS

 cup sago pearls (available in Asian grocers and at major supermarkets but make sure you look in health foods or cereal section)
 cup coconut milk
 cup caster sugar
 Tbs freshly squeezed lime juice
 very ripe sweet or original persimmons, peeled and pureed
 firm, sweet persimmons, peeled and diced
 5mm cubes

METHOD

Fill a large pot 3/4 full of water and bring to the boil. Rain the sago in, stir immediately, then allow to boil until the pearls have the smallest dot of white at their centres.

Drain sago through a sieve and rinse with plenty of cool running water. Transfer into a medium mixing bowl. Set aside.

Bring coconut milk and sugar to the boil, making sure sugar is dissolved, then remove from the heat and allow to cool. Stir the mixture through the sago with the lime juice and persimmon puree (if using).

Chill and serve with sprinkling of the diced sweet persimmon.

THINGS TO KNOW

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PERSIMMON, ROCKET, BLUE CHEESE & CANDIED WALNUT SALAD

SERVES 4

INGREDIENTS

125g walnut pieces 1/4 cup caster sugar 1 Tbs water 100g rocket 150g blue cheese OR another soft cheese such as brie or camembert 3-4 spring onions (stalks), chopped OR 1/4 of a small red onion, peeled and sliced thinly 4 sweet persimmons, halved then sliced 2-3mm

Dressing

3 Tbs olive oil 1 Tbs good quality balsamic vinegar 1 Tbs lemon juice 1 clove garlic bashed Salt to taste

METHOD

Spread walnuts evenly over a frypan and dry toast on a medium heat, stirring or tossing them continually for about 5 minutes or until they are nicely browned and fragrant.

Using a small saucepan combine sugar and water, stir briefly with a metal spoon then boil on a high heat. When you see the sugar begin to turn pale amber, be very attentive - it will be just moments before it turns a perfect amber. Immediately toss nuts into the sugar and very quickly fold the sugar over the nuts. You must work quickly as the sugar will set very quickly. Allow nuts to cool on some baking parchment, then gently separate the pieces. Set aside. Combine all salad ingredients in a large mixing bowl.

To make dressing, combine all dressing ingredients in a clean glass jar, shake, then pour over salad. Salad is best served in a shallow bowl or plate.

THINGS TO KNOW

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PERSIMMON, SMOKED CHICKEN & HAZELNUT SALAD

SERVES 4

INGREDIENTS

400g smoked chicken breasts, 3mm slices 130g baby cos lettuce 1/2 cup whole hazelnuts 3 stalks spring onions 2 bunches asparagus, ends snapped off, sliced diagonally 3cm pieces 2 sweet persimmons, peeled, sliced into wedges

Dressing

4 Tbs olive oil 3 Tbs apple cider vinegar 1 -2 tsp honey 1/2 tsp of seeded mustard 1 clove garlic, peeled and bashed Salt to taste Freshly cracked black pepper

METHOD

To toast hazelnuts, place nuts in a small frypan and dry toast on medium heat, stirring or tossing continually for about 5-8 minutes or until the skins start to flake off and the nuts smell fragrant. Transfer immediately onto a clean tea towel and rub until the skins come off.

Place asparagus in a medium bowl. Pour freshly boiled water over the spears and cover for 30 seconds. Set aside.

To assemble salad, lay a bed of cos lettuce on the bottom of your plate then layer the remaining ingredients.

To make dressing, combine all dressing ingredients in a clean glass jar, shake, pour over salad.

THINGS TO KNOW

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Season: March to June

Selection: Choose persimmons that are plump and glossy from pale to deep orange. Surface blemises don't affect flavour and eating quality. Storage: Store at room temperature for up to five days, do not refrigerate. Serving: Can be eaten peeled or unpeeled, cut or uncut.