



Anise and Apricot Hamantaschen

Ingredients:

!For filling

1 cup dried California apricots

1 cup water

¼ cup sugar

½ teaspoon almond extract

!For cookies

2 1/3 cups all purpose flour

2 ¼ teaspoons baking powder

1 teaspoon whole aniseed

½ teaspoon salt

10 tablespoons unsalted margarine or butter substitute, preferably Earth Balance, softened at room temperature

2/3 cup sugar

2 large eggs

Directions:

Special equipment: parchment paper; a 3 to 3 ½ inch round cookie cutter (the top of a wine or drinking glass also works well)

!Make filling:

Combine apricots with water in a small heavy saucepan. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to medium, and simmer, stirring and mashing apricots occasionally, until fruit is very soft and broken down and most of liquid is evaporated, about 10 minutes.

Add sugar and stir until dissolves. Remove from heat and stir in extract.

Let cool completely.

!Make cookies:

Sift together flour, baking powder, aniseed, and salt into a bowl.

In the bowl of an electric mixer, beat together margarine and sugar at medium speed until light and fluffy.

Add eggs, one at a time, until incorporated. Scrape down sides of the bowl and add flour mixture. Mix on low speed until a dough just comes together. Gather dough into a ball and flatten into a disk. Wrap tightly in plastic wrap and chill until firm, about 2 hours or overnight.

Line 2 large baking sheets* with parchment. Arrange rack in middle of oven and preheat to 350F.

Divide dough in half. On a floured surface, roll one piece of dough with a floured rolling pin to a $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thickness, dusting surface with flour as necessary.

Cut out as many rounds as possible and transfer to baking sheets, arranging them about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch apart. Re-roll scraps and cut out more rounds.

Put 1 teaspoon filling in center of each round and fold up edges to form a triangle shape, pinching corners together firmly but leaving filling exposed.

If dough is very soft once formed, chill 1 hour, or freeze 30 minutes.

Bake one sheet at a time (keeping remaining sheet chilled) until cookies are pale golden, 10 to 12 minutes. Cool completely on a rack.