

Mediterranean Cookie A Heart-Healthy Delight

(NAPSA)—Homemade cookies harken back to childhood memories and delicious indulgences. Endlessly creative and always best fresh from the oven, cookies are crowd pleasers.

Most cookie recipes use butter, the ingredient that gives cookies tenderness and flavor. Instead, try an Italian pine nut cookie that makes use of heart-healthy olive oil.

The Mediterranean diet is known for its healthful benefits thanks in part to the generous use of olive oil. Although not a common ingredient in sweets, the “extra-light” type of olive oil is a good choice for baking. Extra-light olive oil has a very mild, almost neutral flavor.

Studded with golden raisins and chopped dried apricots, this recipe also has a bit of lemon zest, a nice counterpoint to the dried fruits. Another surprise ingredient is the use of fresh rosemary, an optional addition depending on your tastes. Children will likely prefer these cookies without it.

Serve these cookies with a cup of coffee or espresso drink for a satisfying afternoon break.

Raisin and Pine Nut Cookies

Makes 4 dozen

- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup Sun-Maid Golden Raisins
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup Sun-Maid California Apricots, chopped
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup granulated sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup *extra light* olive oil
- 2 egg whites
- 1 teaspoon lightly packed lemon zest
- 1 teaspoon finely chopped fresh rosemary (optional)
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon baking powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon baking soda
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup pine nuts



A traditional Italian cookie uses extra light olive oil.

Combine raisins and apricots with 1 tablespoon water in a microwave-safe dish. Cover and heat on high 1 minute. Let stand covered while preparing dough.

Stir sugar, olive oil, egg whites, zest and rosemary in a medium bowl, stirring vigorously until well blended. Mix flour, baking powder and soda in a small bowl. Add half the flour to sugar mixture; stir until completely combined. Gradually add half of the remaining flour, stirring until combined. Stir or knead in remaining flour to make stiff dough. Mix in raisins and apricots (including any liquid) and pine nuts.

Shape dough into a cylinder about 2x12 inches. Wrap in plastic and freeze several hours until firm, or up to 1 month.

Preheat oven to 375°F. Using a sharp knife, cut frozen dough into $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch-thick slices. Place on parchment-lined or ungreased cookie sheets. Bake 10-11 minutes until golden brown on edges. Transfer cookies immediately to wire rack to cool.

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