



ABRIKOZEN-BITTERKOEKJES

Dutch chewy almond cookies with apricot jam



Makes: 15 cookies

Active time: 20min
Cooling, drying: 30min
Baking: 15min

Equipment:
piping bag,
lined sheet-pan

My husband and I bought our first home in the historical center of Dordrecht, the Netherlands. It was a three story, very narrow, mid-19th century house with a brick façade typical of old Dutch cityscapes. Living downtown, my favorite thing to do on the weekend was to check out the local delicatessen and specialty food shops. The farmers' market, the award-winning cheese shop, and the artisanal bakery were always on the destination list. One day, in the bakery's display case, I spied a stack of pretty little almond cookies filled with a scoop of sweet apricot preserves and decorated with a puddle of icing. The lady at the counter explained they were an invention of the pastry chef and named after his daughter. They were gorgeous. These chewy cookies are called bitterkoekjes in Dutch, i.e. 'bitter cookies', referring to the bitter almonds that are traditionally added to produce the characteristic flavor. My recreation of these little jewels, uses almond extract instead.

1 Preheat the oven to 200°C/395°F.

2 FOR THE ALMOND COOKIES: Stir the **almond flour, powdered sugar, almond extract, salt,** and **egg whites** together to form a sticky paste. Transfer the almond paste to a piping bag with a 1cm piping tip (or cut off the end of a disposable piping bag).

3 Use half of the almond paste to pipe 15 flat disks of about 3cm/1¼ inch diameter on a silicone baking-mat or baking parchment-lined sheet pan. Scoop a ½ teaspoon of **apricot preserves** onto the center of each disk. Then use the remaining almond paste to pipe a ring or dam around the apricot preserves on each cookie. Sprinkle sliced almonds over the almond paste, trying to avoid the preserves, and press gently to adhere.

4 Bake the cookies for 15 minutes until they get some color. Slide the baking-mat or parchment off the sheet pan and onto the counter to let the cookies firm up a little. After a few minutes you should be able to separate them from the mat or parchment by carefully sliding a spatula or sharp knife under each cookie. Finish cooling them on a wire rack.

5 FOR THE ICING DRIZZLE: Mix the **powdered sugar, almond extract,** and 1½ tsp of **water** to make the icing. Stir it together well and test the consistency. Add a few drops of the water at a time to form a pipeable icing that will not run, the consistency of thick honey. Scoop the icing into a small piping bag and snip off a tiny corner. Pipe a zigzag over each cookie and let the icing dry before serving.

FOR THE ALMOND COOKIES:

50g-64g/1.8-2.3oz egg white (~1½-2 large US egg whites)
150g/5.3oz almond flour
150g/5.3oz powdered sugar
1½ tsp almond extract
pinch of fine sea salt
100g/3.5oz sliced almonds, lightly crushed
3 Tbsp apricot preserves

FOR THE ICING DRIZZLE:

50g/1.8oz powdered sugar
A drop of almond extract
1½-2 tsp water