

Cornmeal Vanilla Bean Shortbreads

Holiday Cookies | December 2005/January 2006



At the Magnolia Grill in Durham, North Carolina, Karen Barker is the pastry chef and co-owner with her husband, Ben Barker. She created this dough for cut-out shortbread cookies, varying the cutters seasonally.

- 16 TBSP. (2 STICKS) UNSALTED BUTTER, ROOM TEMPERATURE**
- SEEDS OF 1 VANILLA BEAN**
- 1/4 TSP. KOSHER SALT**
- 1/2 CUP PLUS 1 TBSP. GRANULATED SUGAR**
- 1²/₃ CUPS ALL-PURPOSE FLOUR**
- 1/2 CUP YELLOW CORNMEAL**
- 1 EGG WHITE, SLIGHTLY BEATEN**
- BLUE AND WHITE DECORATING SUGAR**

Using a mixer with a paddle, cream butter with the vanilla bean seeds, salt, and granulated sugar, scraping sides of bowl once or twice.

Combine the flour, cornstarch, and cornmeal and add to the creamed butter in 3 additions. Scrape the bottom and sides of the bowl to make sure the dough is evenly mixed. Gather the dough together, divide in half, flatten into rounds, and wrap in plastic. Chill for 1 hour or until easy to handle.

On a lightly floured surface, roll out dough $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick. Cut cookies into desired shapes using a 2-inch or 4-inch cookie cutter; place on parchment-paper-lined baking sheets. Brush edges of cookies with egg white; sprinkle with decorating sugar. Gather scraps; reroll 1 time.

Bake in a 350° oven 6 to 8 minutes for 2-inch cookies, 8 to 10 minutes for 4-inch cookies, or until bottoms just start to brown. Transfer to a wire rack; cool. Store at room temperature for up to 3 days or freeze for up to 3 months. Makes about 60 2-inch cookies, about 25 4-inch cookies.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: Chill dough for up to 24 hours or transfer to a freezer bag and freeze for up to 3 months. Defrost frozen dough overnight in the refrigerator before using. Let dough stand at room temperature for 30 minutes before using.

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