

Crunchy Almond Strips - *Mazurek Wielkanocny* (Poland) (from The Joy of Cookies)

2 cups all-purpose flour
1 cup plus 2 tablespoons granulated sugar
1/4 teaspoon salt
4 hard-cooked egg yolks, sieved
finely grated zest of 1 small orange
1 cup butter, cut into 16 pieces and softened
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/4 teaspoon almond extract
1 egg, lightly beaten
1 cup sliced almonds

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease and flour a 10 x 15-inch jelly roll pan. In a large bowl, combine flour, 1 cup sugar, salt, egg yolks and orange zest. Add butter and extracts. Rub butter into flour mixture with your fingers until well combined. Use your fingers or the back of a wooden spoon to press dough in an even layer over bottom of pan, flouring fingers or spoon lightly if necessary to prevent sticking. Pour beaten egg over dough; spread evenly with the back of a spoon. Sprinkle with almonds. Use the back of a spoon to press lightly into surface of dough. Sprinkle with remaining 2 tablespoons sugar.

Bake 35 to 40 minutes, or until golden brown. Cut warm cookies into 60 (1 x 2 1/2-inch) strips, cutting 15 strips one way and 4 strips the other way. Cool on racks. Store in an airtight container at room temperature 1 week; freeze for longer storage. Makes 5 dozen cookies.

Variation

Chocolate-Glazed Mazurek: Omit beaten egg. Melt 3 ounces semi-sweet chocolate; cool to room temperature. Drizzle melted and cooled chocolate over dough that has been pressed into pan. Spread evenly with the back of a spoon. Sprinkle with almonds and sugar. Continue as above.