

Chocolate Hazelnut Rugelach

Makes 24 to 30 cookies

Ellen: *These sweet pastries of rolled, filled crescent dough are another Ashkenazi dish that became popular among American Jews. Growing up, they were the ultimate impulse buy, because they'd be piled up on a cake stand near the cash register, inducing every*

child to nag her mother into buying a few.

Todd: *To this rugelach, I added the love for hazelnuts I acquired working at Galileo for so many years. Rather than adding hazelnut-infused chocolate (gianduja), we opted to use bittersweet chocolate, chopped hazelnuts, and praline paste. This last really kicks up the nut flavor; look for it at a gourmet market or online. Make sure to clear room in the fridge and freezer large enough to fit your baking sheet.*

INGREDIENTS:

2 cups all-purpose flour

3 tablespoons

granulated sugar

Pinch kosher salt

1 cup cold unsalted
butter (2 sticks), cut
into pieces

10 tablespoons cold
cream cheese (5
ounces), cut into pieces

1 cup bittersweet
chocolate, chopped (see
On Chocolate for
Baking, page 208)

¼ cup hazelnut praline paste

1 cup toasted, coarsely chopped hazelnuts
(see Chef's Appendix)

Cream for brushing

Turbinado sugar for sprinkling

Confectioners' sugar for dusting (optional)

Make the dough. Place the flour, granulated sugar, and salt in the container of a food processor fitted with a blade; pulse to mix. Add the butter and cream cheese and pulse until just combined and a dough forms. Scoop the dough into a ball and wrap it in plastic wrap; refrigerate for at least 2 hours (preferably overnight).

Roll out the dough.

Lightly flour a work surface. Divide the dough into 2 pieces and roll out each to a 10-inch diameter round about $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch thick. Cut each round into 12 to 15 equal wedges. Cut a very small vertical slit at the base of each wedge—this will help the dough roll into a crescent shape, like a croissant. Transfer the

wedges to a baking sheet and cover with plastic wrap; refrigerate while you make the filling.

Make the filling. Combine the chocolate and praline paste in the top of a double boiler over (not in) simmering water. Stir occasionally to combine as they melt. Stir in the hazelnuts. Remove the top pan from over the water and set aside until the chocolate mixture cools to room temperature.

Fill the cookies. Line a second baking sheet with parchment paper (the paper will adhere better if you lightly spray the pan with nonstick cooking spray before laying

the paper on it). Remove the baking sheet with the dough from the refrigerator. Working with one wedge at a time, spread some of the filling over each wedge and then, starting at the base, roll it up and shape it into a crescent. Transfer the crescents to the prepared baking sheet. Transfer the baking sheet with the crescents

to the freezer. Preheat the oven to 375°F. **Bake the cookies.** When the oven is heated, remove the baking sheet with the crescents from the freezer. Brush the crescents with a little cream and sprinkle with turbinado sugar. Bake until golden brown— about 35 minutes. Transfer to a wire rack to cool on the baking sheet (crumbs would make a mess on your countertop). When ready to serve, dust the rugelach with confectioners' sugar if you wish.

On Chocolate for Baking

Chocolate nomenclature can be confusing, so I think it's best to stick with percentages (the percent of cocoa solids). I find that chocolate in the 50 to 65 percent range provides the best overall flavor in most recipes, so semisweet would generally be the way to go, sticking as

close to the upper range of that as possible.

Percent cocoa solids

Below 50 = milk chocolate

50-65 = semisweet

65-75 = bittersweet

above 75 = bitter

Melting chocolate

Chocolate melts faster if you chop it first.

Microwave method: Place the chocolate in a small microwave-safe bowl and microwave on high for 30 seconds; remove and stir. If not completely melted, repeat the microwaving. Stir until smooth. Set aside.

Stovetop method:

Place the chocolate in the top of a double boiler, over (but not in) boiling water. Stir occasionally until the chocolate is melted. Melted chocolate will "seize" (separate and become grainy) if even a drop of moisture mixes with it and there's no fix for this, so be careful that no steam or water falls into

the pan with the chocolate. Set aside.