

Chai Tea Crescents

This recipe from Jennifer Smith, 43, of Apex came in third place in the other cookie category.

For cookies:

1 cup (2 sticks) butter, softened

1 cup light brown sugar, packed

1 tablespoon finely ground chai tea leaves (Stash is a good brand to use. Basically one tea bag is enough. A coffee grinder is best if you have one)

1 teaspoon vanilla

1/2 teaspoon baking soda

1/8 teaspoon salt

2 1/4 cups flour

For frosting:

1/3 cup butter, softened

3 cups powdered sugar, divided

1 tablespoon milk or more as needed

1 teaspoon vanilla

Finely chopped candied ginger

Make the cookies: beat butter with electric mixer on medium to high speed for 30 seconds. Add brown sugar, ground chai tea, vanilla, baking soda and salt. Beat until light and fluffy, scrape the sides of the bowl occasionally. Beat in as much of the flour as you can with the mixer and the rest by hand, if needed. Divide the dough in half, cover and chill for about 1 hour.

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Line two cookie sheets with parchment; set aside.

On a lightly floured surface, roll out half the dough at a time to about 1/4-inch thickness. Cut out crescent shapes using a 2-inch crescent shaped cookie cutter or one large circle cutter and a smaller one to do the same. Place cookies 1 inch apart on cookie sheets.

Bake in the oven for about 8-10 minutes or until the edges are firm and lightly browned. I highly recommend using timer and keeping an eye on the cookies. They can get real dark, real fast if you're not paying attention. Cool the cookies on a wire wrack.

Make frosting: Beat 1/3 cup butter with an electric mixer until smooth. Gradually add 1 cup powdered sugar, beating well. Beat in 1 tablespoon milk and 1 teaspoon vanilla. Add 2 cups of powdered sugar, beating well. If needed, beat in more milk, 1 teaspoon at a time until it's a spreading consistency.

Once the cookies are cooled, spread each one, end to end, with buttercream. Sprinkle the top with candied ginger. Ice a few cookies at a time and add the ginger before moving on to ice more cookies; otherwise the icing will get a crust and the ginger will not adhere.

Yield: about 48 cookies.